



# **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

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

## **HANSARD**

**Wednesday, February 10, 2010**

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**The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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(Hay River North)

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(Sahtu)

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**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Wednesday, February 10, 2010****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:36 p.m.

**Prayer**

---Prayer

**SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey):** Good afternoon, colleagues. Welcome back to the Chamber. Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Bob McLeod.

**Ministers' Statements**

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 64-16(4):  
2009 NWT COMMUNITY SURVEY –  
HOUSING RESULTS

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to provide Members with information on the housing needs data that has been collected through the 2009 NWT Community Survey.

According to this new data, core housing need in the Northwest Territories has risen from 16 percent in 2004 to 19 percent in 2009. Household need varied across our Territory from a high of 36 percent in the Nahendeh to a low of 14 percent in the North Slave. Approximately 27 percent of households in the Beaufort-Delta were in core need compared with 36 percent in the Sahtu and 17 percent in the South Slave.

The increase in core housing need is the result of increases in the number of dwellings that do not meet our adequacy standards, meaning that a unit is either in poor physical condition or lacking the basic facilities for a healthy living environment. This problem continues to be more prevalent in our smaller communities than in regional centres. Between 2004 and 2009, adequacy problems in smaller communities increased from 27 percent in 2004 to 37 in 2009.

Mr. Speaker, the increase in core housing need between 2004 and 2009 was anticipated by the NWT Housing Corporation. Though this period saw the Housing Corporation spend over \$155 million in federal and territorial housing funding to build or repair approximately 1,750 units replacing or repairing older public and private housing units.

As well, Mr. Speaker, it should be noted that the downturn in the economy in the months prior to the

collection of this data also has an impact on this data, as a household is considered to be in core housing need only when household income is not sufficient for the residents to deal with on their own. The increasing cost of living in our communities has made housing in general less affordable. As affordability problems continue to grow, the ability of the corporation's homeownership programs to meet the needs of some residents is impacted, leading to gaps in programming and services. As Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, I have asked my officials to closely examine the gaps that exist between our housing programs and to come up with solutions to fill those gaps.

Mr. Speaker, it is also important to note that eight communities in the NWT saw their overall core need decline from 2004 to 2009. Those communities are Fort McPherson, Sachs Harbour, Tsiigehtchic, Norman Wells, Hay River, Hay River Reserve, Lutselk'e and Kakisa. Four of these communities -- Fort McPherson, Sachs Harbour, Tsiigehtchic and Kakisa -- have seen the number of households in core need drop below 30 percent. These are positive developments for these communities and we will continue to invest in all of our communities in an effort to improve housing conditions.

Mr. Speaker, the increase in core housing need reaffirms the message we have been sending to the federal government as recently as this past December during the federal/provincial/territorial Housing Ministers meetings. While the investments made in northern housing by Canada in recent years are welcomed, they are not enough even to maintain housing need as it currently stands, let alone to make progress in improving conditions.

We will need new federal housing programs for the North that deliver based on need rather than on a per capita basis. I have joined with my territorial colleagues in calling for a new approach to northern housing as the only way that we will improve housing conditions north of the 60<sup>th</sup> parallel. This new approach would include investments in new capital construction as well as the reinstatement of funding for the operation and maintenance of new and existing units.

As Members are aware, I have expressed my concern with the continuing and escalating decline of federal funding through CMHC for the operation

and maintenance of public housing units. It should also be noted that while we appreciate the funding provided for housing through the Northern Housing Trust and Canada's Economic Action Plan, at the end of this coming fiscal year, this funding, which provided our Territory with \$100 million between 2006 and 2011, will end. There is no indication that funding for new construction will be extended beyond this date and the only federal assistance for new construction will come in the form of much smaller programs that are allocated on a per capita basis. This will greatly impact the ability of the NWT HC to address housing need in our Territory.

However, Mr. Speaker, we cannot continue to sit back and wait for the federal government to make investments, or to simply continue to cost-match these investments and hope that our housing conditions will improve. This government must continue to forge partnerships with all levels of government, with individual households and with all relevant stakeholders, in an effort to aggressively tackle the housing needs facing our communities. Our approach must include programs and housing designs that are created by Northerners for Northerners. It must find ways to address the unique needs of our smallest communities as well as our largest centres and it must ensure that where gaps exist in the ability of residents to house their families, that this government is there to provide meaningful solutions to housing problems.

Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table the first report from 2009 NWT Community Survey which provides information on housing needs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 65-16(4):  
SUPPORT FOR MINING

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, 2009 was a challenging year for the Northwest Territories mining industry. The economic downturn saw spending on exploration and deposit appraisals go down significantly in our Territory.

But it's during tough times that we must not lose our focus. We must not waver in our efforts to ensure our economy remains strong, and we must not waver in our attention to one of the largest sectors of that economy: mining.

That is why I will talk today about some of the work this government is doing to support the mining industry and ensure we have a sector where development occurs, where that development is done responsibly and where Northwest Territories residents benefit from it.

One way we are working to keep our mining sector strong is through constant dialogue with industry

stakeholders such as the Northwest Territories and Nunavut Chamber of Mines. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to see the chamber's new president, John Kearney, who is also president of Canadian Zinc, join us today in the House along with some of their chamber directors.

---Applause

I have met with Mr. Kearney and we have agreed that the chamber and the government will work together to raise awareness of the importance of mining in the Northwest Territories with the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased with some of the good work the chamber is doing on a number of fronts, such as this work to improve relations between the mining industry and our aboriginal communities and its promotion of infrastructure development in the North.

Through this dialogue, we can find ways to work together to ensure we have win/win scenarios for both the Territory and the mining industry. Both Mr. Kim Truter, president of Diavik Diamond Mines, and Mr. Paul Harvey, president and chief operating officer of Ekati Diamond Mine, who are with us today, can attest that a good example of this kind of cooperation is the Northern Mining Workforce Initiative Memorandum of Understanding between our government and three diamond mines. The goal of the memorandum of understanding is to improve the skills of our Northwest Territories workforce and attract and retain our residents to work at the mines.

Other government initiatives that support the mining industry include our partnership with the federal government on gathering new geoscience data through the Strategic Investment in Northern Economic Development program. This work is critical to the success of exploration projects and I'm pleased the funding for this program has been renewed.

We are also supporting the mining industry through our involvement in the Northwest Territories Mine Training Society as we work towards training more aboriginal people and Northerners for jobs in the mining industry.

We also continue to lobby the federal government to build much needed infrastructure in our Territory, like the Taltson Hydro Expansion Project. It is projects like this that will contribute to sustainable and responsible development.

Finally, we continue to push the federal government to address the issues that are impacting the effectiveness of our regulatory regime. In fact, the federal Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs, Mr. Chuck Strahl, recently announced in Yellowknife that the federal government will be releasing a series of responses to the McCrank report on regulatory improvement in the North this spring.

Our government, industry and all Northerners await the federal government's response to this report.

Mr. Speaker, the mining sector is a source of significant employment in the Northwest Territories, creating over 2,000 direct jobs each year. And aside from the direct benefits, the industry generates significant employment in the transportation, services, trades and construction sectors.

We also have a wealth of mineral potential with world-class deposits in everything including gold, diamonds and tungsten.

Some of that potential, like the rare earths deposit that is being pursued by Avalon Ventures, could lead to mines that will be open for decades and employ hundreds of Northwest Territories residents.

Mr. Speaker, a prosperous mining industry, one where mining companies and Northwest Territories residents benefit, will go a long way towards providing our Territory with a diversified and healthy economy that provides all regions and communities with choices as envisioned by the 16<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly through Northerners Working Together. That is why we must continue to do what we can to support a strong mining sector here in the Northwest Territories.

In closing, I would like to congratulate Mr. Kearney on his new role as president of the chamber and I look forward to working with him and his board. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTERS STATEMENT 66-16(4):  
NOT US! CAMPAIGN

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mr. Speaker, this Assembly is well aware of the damaging effects of drugs on our communities. Drug dealers prey on the most vulnerable among us. They target young people who think bad things will never happen to them. They go after people with mental illnesses who are struggling just to get through a day. They knowingly sell drugs that are laced with other drugs to people who already have addictions. They do this on purpose, so they have more people to sell to. And if this weren't troubling enough, we know more deadly drugs such as crystal meth is already here.

The substance abuse problem is not the same in every community. In some regions, bootleggers are causing trouble for communities. In other regions, people with gang affiliations sell crack and ecstasy on the streets and in drug houses.

What is the same is this: Wherever I go in the North, people tell me they want to take action. They want support for community-based responses. And

they want information about what works in other places. That's why this government has developed a unique campaign to meet those needs. The campaign is funded as a strategic initiative under Building our Future and it has ties to the Healthy Choices Framework, another strategic priority of this government. Its development has involved the departments of Health and Social Services, Education, Culture and Employment and Municipal and Community Affairs, as well as the RCMP.

The theme of our campaign is "Not Us!," not our families, not our schools, not our communities, not our Territory. Not us! We are tired of watching drug dealers hurt our friends. It's time to come together and say that we won't let it happen anymore. Not us! is the campaign that will help people make commitments to themselves and their families and with others in their community so that drugs don't take over. We're focusing on prevention by promoting healthy choices and lifestyles and the role of personal and family responsibility.

Although this campaign will have some common features throughout the Northwest Territories, it is designed to help communities take a stand against drugs in a way that recognizes their unique needs and strengths. We knew this had to be different, so the focus is on providing support and resources that will help one community at a time. It's a community first, community-driven campaign.

Here's how it works. Our community justice division will help interested community groups, including community justice committees, to develop a plan for fighting drugs. It will be different in each place. Some communities want to work with kids. Other communities want help to get their local social agencies working together more efficiently. There's no right or wrong plan to deal with drugs. Local people know what local needs are.

To support the community work, we're developing a website, public service announcements, and promotional items communities can use. We're also developing kits that can be used to create community-level campaigns. Schools can make their own posters using Not Us! themes. Youth groups can make their own Not Us! T-shirts. Even individuals can create their own items. Our website will have community sections, run by communities. They decide what they want their sections to be. Some will want to post their customized resources there. Others will want to link back to their own websites. All of these actions, whether they be community-wide or by an individual, are great. This campaign is all about supporting these actions. It strengthens local programs that address addictions and mental health.

As Minister of Justice and Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, I am pleased to see the partnerships on the campaign in tackling drug problems. As well, the involvement of the

Department of Health and Social Services, Municipal and Community Affairs and the RCMP is essential to this work. We have very talented staff in our communities who work on addictions issues every day. We want to support them.

We are working with a group of Hay River residents to launch the territorial Not Us! campaign there on March 29<sup>th</sup>, while also profiling the work the community has done. I'll be there and I invite the Members to attend too. After that, we'll start visiting communities all over the NWT and help those who are interested in launching their own campaigns. In some places, people will want to talk about alcohol. In others, we'll talk seriously about hard drugs like crystal meth, crack and ecstasy. Wherever we go, we'll work with families, communities and schools to improve the physical and mental well-being of our youth. We'll encourage people to find common-sense solutions that will work in the long term.

Reaching every community in the Northwest Territories will take time. But it will be worth it to give communities new ways to protect their families from dangerous drugs. I am looking forward to working with Members of the Legislative Assembly and every community in the Northwest Territories on this important initiative. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

### Members' Statements

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ANTI-POVERTY STRATEGY

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to offer my thoughts today on why combating poverty requires a strategy for coordinated action across all government departments. The face of poverty tends to be seen as a crowd of statistics and social indicators, percentages and rates. We deal with the aspect of poverty through some very good and necessary programs, but unless all these programs are locked together in a united approach, the chances of success are poor.

Poverty happens on a person or family at a time. Let's consider an example of the challenges out there. Take the case of a single mom or dad who's finally had the courage to overcome substance abuse through a territorial treatment program. That person goes home sober, but finds her problems have just begun. Through repeat applications with assistance from an educated cousin, arguing with government people, and downright desperate persistence, she manages to get housing and some income support for food. No child care spaces are available, though, and with poor literacy, good work is hard to get. With no local transportation, medical

appointments and an important job interview are missed, but she didn't have the clothing or confidence anyway.

Having no money for her kids' sports equipment or activities to build health and with a lack of good parenting skills, her level of stress as a mother increases. How long will she be able to stay sober and how the heck can she get ahead?

Mr. Speaker, we can't deal with our problems in isolation. We may have the basics of a roof over our heads and some food on the table, but just as people have to tie together all the elements of their approach to life, this government has to coordinate all its efforts to effectively reach the one goal: eliminating poverty, one person at a time. I can't think of a bigger priority for this government nor one with such huge benefits than ending the tragic poverty of so many of our citizens. An informed and well-implemented plan can get us there.

Looking through the lens of poverty we need to identify and fill the gaps, ensure the coordination and target our resources if we are to succeed in eliminating poverty. When we consider modest actions like reducing the cost of living through tax credits or making public transit available, support for small businesses, making land available for local food production, a key consideration must be the elimination of poverty.

Other jurisdictions taking this approach are achieving remarkable success. It's time we developed an integrated approach in consultation with business, interest groups, the public, and all government. Let's get it done.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON WEALTH OF RESOURCES IN THE NWT

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My Member's statement is on the wealth of the Northwest Territories, the wealth of enriching culture and resources, non-renewable resources.

When I was looking at the Sahtu atlas the other day, again I was looking at the amount of resources the Sahtu have to offer to the people of Canada and the Northwest Territories. I was thinking about this. How could such a rich country as the Northwest Territories, or even the region of the Sahtu or any other region in the Northwest Territories, how could we be so poor? We fight hard for people. How could we be so poor? We ask for houses that Mr. McLeod has given his ministerial statement on housing issues in the Northwest Territories. Or when the Minister of Health gives a statement of health in the Northwest Territories. Or even our Education Minister. How is our region here in the Northwest Territories, the Sahtu, so poor?



You know that in the Northwest Territories, the Norman Wells oilfield pumps about \$500 million every year in oil down from Norman Wells to Zama. We pump \$500 million a year. Yet there are things like health care, education, teachers, paved roads for the communities for dust for the elders. We aren't able to get that. Now they're looking at other potential oilfields, natural gas fields. They are in the billions, if we're to get this pipeline and anchor them into the line. They are in the billions of dollars that this region of the Northwest Territories could have.

Even with the mining, they discovered tungsten up in the Yukon/Northwest Territories border. It's the world's largest deposit of tungsten. Even in solvent resources on the Yukon/Northwest Territories border there's the lead and zinc discovery, the world's largest. I will be having questions on this issue here on how the Northwest Territories, especially the Sahtu, can start benefiting from these resources in the North.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON UPGRADING NWT HC PROGRAMS

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation a number of years ago introduced new programs such as CARE, HELP, STEP, to improve the delivery of assistance programs to homeowners in the Northwest Territories. There was a lot of praise, a lot of hope, and a lot of expectations from the residents of the Northwest Territories, especially homeowners, that they were going to see a real improvement in the programs. Yet today I still have a lot of my constituency coming forward and applying year after year and being refused on one excuse after another.

The aging infrastructure in our communities is some 30 or 40 years old, especially when you look at the old HAP units, the SHAG units. This infrastructure needs repairs. I know we put a lot of repairs into public housing infrastructure, but the intent of these programs was to find a way to assist homeowners by doing these important retrofits and making their homes energy efficient, bringing them up to existing regulations by way of health standards, electrical standards and safety standards. Yet we continue to see a gap in those people who have taken the time and own their homes.

A lot of our seniors, who we praise to stay in their own homes, shouldn't be in an institution. Yet, Mr. Speaker, today we still have elders in our communities, and I'll use an example in Fort McPherson of an elder who's 96 years old, his wife is 95 years old. They live independently. They have a wood stove in their house. The old man is 96 and still packs wood into his own home. He requested a

Monitor heater so he'd have a secondary heat system so he doesn't have to pack wood into his home. He applied for a program about a year ago but he's still waiting for an answer.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's critical that this government does everything it can and if we have to revamp the program again, maybe do an assessment of what the program is to ensure that it is doing what we intended it to do, but, more importantly, are we reaching the people it was supposed to: the homeowners, the people that have made the investment, the people that remain in their home communities and have taken the risk, raising their families and staying in our communities? But again the affordability is there. So, Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time I will be asking the Minister of Housing questions. Thank you.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ANTI-POVERTY STRATEGY

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier today I presented the Premier with a belated Christmas present, one that I had been safekeeping for him. In December of last year, in the absence of any Members of the Executive Council, I accepted a present from a group of people, people representing social organizations in Yellowknife and the NWT as a whole. This informal alliance of 14 organizations had come to the Legislative Assembly to give the Legislative Assembly a Christmas present, a gift of past reports which detail the causes and effects of poverty in the NWT, and they asked for only one present in return. To quote the group: "All we want for Christmas is an end to poverty." That present for the alliance -- an end to poverty -- is one that this government needs to start work on.

There's no doubt that poverty is the root of all kinds of social ills. The effects of poverty are evident in our schools, in the overloading of our health care system and so on. If the NWT government turns its mind and its considerable power to a coordinated attack on poverty in our Territory, the results will be positive both from a fiscal point of view and for the well-being of our people.

In trying to determine if we had a poverty strategy or a policy with the GNWT, I discovered an income security report from 2007 titled "Breaking Down the Barriers to Poverty: Promoting Self-Reliance." From the Minister's message in that report comes the following quote: "Self-reliance is the key to the success of our Territory."

This paper outlines a new philosophy in the vision we have for breaking down the barriers to self-reliance and eliminating poverty in the Northwest Territories. The Minister goes on to say poverty is

difficult to escape. As this paper lays out, it's not just an issue of money. In order to eliminate poverty, our governments, agencies and communities will need to work together to align the supports and services needed by individuals to succeed. This work will take some time, but the philosophy outlined in this paper and the changes to our system that will follow represent an important step for our government, but one that we believe is worth taking.

But now, in 2010, I don't believe we're any closer to eradicating poverty than we were three years ago. The changes referred to by Minister Dent have not taken place. I don't believe that the coordination of departments and agencies and services has taken place. Our people are no more self-reliant than they were in 2007. It's time for us -- and by that I mean the government, non-government organizations, local governments and NWT residents -- to take a serious look at how poverty impacts our Territory, our government and our people.

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

---Unanimous consent granted.

**MS. BISARO:** We need to take a serious look at how poverty impacts our Territory, our government and our people. It's time for us to take some real action. Minister Dent was correct in one thing in 2007: our governments, agencies and communities need to work together. And as my colleague Mr. Jacobson likes to say, let's get 'er done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON UPGRADING OF NAHENDEH HIGHWAYS

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

Mr. Speaker, I have spoken many times in the past about the need to improve the roads that link the communities of the Nahendeh riding and I would like to speak about it again. I am pleased with the chipseal work to be done on Highway No. 1 this year and the improvements to the access road to Jean Marie River, the construction of the access road for Nahanni Butte and the Shale Creek Bridge upgrade. I trust that the Department of Transportation will have everything scheduled by now and the work will be completed without a hitch this spring. These improvements will help make part of the Deh Cho safer for driving. These roads also link our communities to our neighbouring provinces and territories and to the Mackenzie Valley.

You might understand better why my constituents are impatient about road construction if you recall that in 1972 the federal government announced that

they were going to build a highway from Fort Simpson to the Dempster in four years. The construction of the Mackenzie Highway began but was stopped in 1977, with the completion of only 210 kilometres. It didn't get quite as far as Wrigley. However, this year the federal government and the GNWT are funding the preparation of a project description report for the construction of an all-weather road all the way down the Mackenzie Valley to Inuvik and from Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk.

This is a very important step and when this road is built, and also if and when a pipeline is built, it will certainly be important to have good roads for access by the workforce and transportation of equipment. There should also be consideration and support of upgrading our highways leading to both Alberta and British Columbia, especially the needs of Fort Liard to have the final 18 kilometres of Highway No. 7 reconstructed towards the B.C. border.

Mr. Speaker, I recognize the work completed by the Department of Transportation to date. I urge early completion of our projects in the Nahendeh riding this spring. There will be many benefits to the region, our NWT economy, tourism, and to the safety of the travelers this summer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PUBLIC HOUSING RENTAL SUBSIDY PROGRAM

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week, Cabinet announced the transfer of public housing and rental subsidy from Education, Culture and Employment back to the NWT Housing Corporation. Mr. Speaker, I completely agree with the decision.

I know many of my colleagues support this transfer. Since public rental subsidy moved to Income Support, there has been a disconnect between the rental subsidy and the local housing organizations. A gap was caused when subsidized rent changed to market rent. The market rent and the gap wasn't something the client did, but was caused by the lack of communication between ECE and the LHO. There were serious delays in getting rental subsidies to the people who rely on the program. These people had to contact two offices to accomplish one thing -- pay rent -- and the result was that many clients and LHOs developed arrears. Some people even got evicted because of this, Mr. Speaker, and the rigid policies that surrounded the record of assessment.

Mr. Speaker, the arrears that people developed since the transfer of the program in 2007 should be forgiven. Seventy-five percent of housing tenants do not receive income support. These tenants are

now called income support clients, and a lot of people feel their dignity has been compromised. They fell into arrears that developed because of the administration problems created by the Government of the Northwest Territories. We should own up to this mistake, Mr. Speaker, and forgive the debt.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister told us he wants us to keep some of the improvements ECE tried to make when the program returns to the Housing Corporation. That might be a good idea, but when they sit down to review the policy, they should consider the people first, Mr. Speaker. The Cabinet should bring forward a bill to forgive all the arrears that are a result of the transfer in the 15<sup>th</sup> Assembly. Mr. Speaker, our people deserve a fresh start. Thank you.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HIGH COST OF LIVING IN THE NWT

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to again discuss the high cost of living here in the Northwest Territories today, and especially the community I am most familiar with, and that is Yellowknife.

Mr. Speaker, let me be clear; as a government with shrinking revenues, we cannot afford to lose one person from our Territory. It costs us \$22,500 every time someone packs up and leaves, usually broke, because they are sick and tired of all their money going to pay bills. If a family of four leaves, it's over \$90,000 that leaves with them. This is happening. People are leaving and our government has got to pay attention to the main reason why, and that is the high cost of living.

We seem to have our heads buried firmly in the snow when it comes to finding any meaningful or tangible ways we can help people reduce the cost of living. "Working poor" is a term that accurately reflects many people in this city. They work hard every day, some of them with two or three jobs in the service industry. Others are our own government workers who, after paying rent, mortgage, utility costs, gas, food, taxes, child care and other monthly expenses, are left with nothing to put away for their family's future. In fact, even though people are earning more today than 10 or even 20 years ago, there's little question people today are worse off and we seem like we're tripping over ourselves to try to make people pay more.

From the smallest items, as if we're not paying enough for food, charging 25 cents for a plastic bag at the grocery store and for which most people have many other uses for, or spending -- oh, yeah - - we're not quite sure how much yet on a bridge that will undoubtedly increase the price of

everything that is transported across it. We are creating ways to make people pay more.

We need to be all over the federal government to get some relief for people. Like how about tax credits for interest paid on mortgages? How about government-run child care centres? And please, let's get this heritage fund established already. It's long overdue. But, then again, savings is a foreign concept to this government. Let's get the federal government to help fund it from the hundreds of millions of dollars they take every year off of our resources .

This government has not done enough to address the high cost of living. We can't wait for a Cabinet committee to come forward with ways we can address this.

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Like I said, we can't afford to wait any longer. I think the time has come. We can't wait for a Cabinet committee to deliver on this. I think the time has come for this government to form a joint committee with Regular Members of this House, to finally get a cost of living special committee off the ground and try to find a way and means in which we can help people out here in this Territory and this city.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ORGAN DONATION IN THE NWT

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to use my Member's statement to talk about a frustrating experience that a number of Members in this House share. It's about a bureaucratic approach that continues to drag success down when people are trying to do the right thing.

The issue I would like to discuss in this House is about organ donation in the Northwest Territories. Now, I know that we have a small population and that Stanton cannot provide the highly specialized transplant services that many people do need in the world. But, like most organ harvesting and transplant operations that do have to happen, we send people to Edmonton. Like many of us, we've assumed that our health care services would be there, but it's a sad story when I have to tell they are not.

Organ donation and transplant process we had thought was supported through the medical travel, but a number of Northerners who have tried to donate keep running into a wall when they try to support their loved ones. Some Northerners are transplant recipients. Some Northerners are

transplant donors. The NWT health care system needs to pay particular attention to this system. We need clear policies and procedures that help people who want to do the right thing.

In absence of the policy, I could tell this House endless stories about people trying to get support and hitting a wall of pre-op care, medication for post-care, travel assistance with their loved ones. It's a frustrating experience when it's a very emotional time. I could tell you a story about a family who had to have a kidney operation and a child was giving it to their parent. They were upset to the point that they wondered if it would ever happen. In the end, they made the decision of saying they would do it if the government won't help. Fortunately enough, the process did kick in as a one-off in that experience. I think that's part of the problem. It's turned into a one-off experience without a clear policy.

I think there's leadership in the department that could help solve this problem. With National Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness Week coming forward this April 18<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup>, I'd like to hear the Minister maybe talk about the fact that we're now going to have a policy in place to make sure that any NWT citizen that wants to go through this process, whether they want to be a living donor or they need a donation of a specialized organ, that the territorial government will be there for them, to help them in that time of need and crisis. I believe we can do better for our citizens and I'm sure we can.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HIGH COST OF POWER IN THE NWT

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In keeping with some of my colleagues' talk about the cost of living today, I want to talk about power. This is something that's been on the minds of many Northerners and this government in recent months, that's for sure.

When knowledge of the unsolicited proposal came out, it sent the employees at NTPC into a state of wondering about their future. Mr. Premier came to Hay River and met with staff and management and communicated the GNWT plan as we were moving forward. Work is now proceeding on the electricity rate review as we attempt to wrap our thoughts around the challenges of delivering reliable, affordable, and sustainable energy to our residents and businesses. Residents and businesses in communities large and small, remote and urban, thermal and hydro, and definitely on a wide spectrum of differences, all of this to the backdrop of our constituents appealing to us, as legislators, about the high cost of living in the North. Our

population decline must be partially related to the high cost of living, which necessarily includes the cost of power.

So the NTPC review is done. But it's only one piece in a much larger puzzle. No review of NTPC or any search for potential efficiencies within that organization is going to be the entire answer to our high cost of power. We need to look at the whole issue of electricity regulation, generation, distribution and costs.

Power is an essential service. The GNWT, in some schizophrenic role in a bad movie here, actually plays all the main parts in this movie. The GNWT in some way either controls or owns the regulation, the rate levelizing, the generation, the distribution, and, to top it all off, they are the main customer as well. We take great pains to put ourselves at arm's length from all of these processes. How much does this cost to put all of this at arm's length? What is the added value of putting all these processes at arm's length?

Enough studies, enough reviews. Let's get to the most straightforward way to get affordable power to our residents.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON GNWT HIRING PRACTICES

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

Today I would like to talk about the GNWT's hiring practices. As mentioned in this House before, the economies and employment opportunities in our smaller communities like Fort Resolution and Lutselk'e can only realize limited potential. Yet, in spite of this, many of the residents continue to live in these communities because it is home and has been their home for many generations. It is true that some migrate to larger centres, but for a good many, they remain committed to their community and will go out and get their education and return to their community. However, with only limited GNWT positions up for competition every so often, many of these individuals, for some reason or another, are overlooked.

I understand the GNWT's hiring practices are guided by principles of fairness and equality, but in reality this is not the case. It places greater emphasis on education than it does on experience. Unfortunately, the reality of this is that many aboriginals do not possess a masters or even a degree-level education as compared to non-aboriginal persons that come north. So when these competitions come up, many aboriginal applicants are screened out because they do not have that degree or a masters.

The hiring practices of the GNWT do not reflect the population it serves and, therefore, can be seen as serving only a certain sector of the population and failing others as far as GNWT employment opportunities go.

Mr. Speaker, even though many do not possess a masters or a degree level of education, they possess many years of direct hands-on experience in the area they are applying for. In addition to this, they also possess the ultimate grasp on the dynamics associated with living and/or working in the smaller, isolated communities. Too often the non-aboriginal hires only last a few years before moving. Doing so means added cost to the GNWT and additional expenses related to turnover. The hiring practices of the GNWT are flawed and need to be...

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

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

---Unanimous consent granted.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Mr. Speaker, the hiring practices of the GNWT are flawed and need to be reviewed so it can reduce the high turnover costs and, more importantly, allow equal opportunity for those who do not possess specific education requirements but do possess the related experience to do a good job. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bob McLeod.

### Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to recognize members of the Northwest Territories mining industry that are here today: Mr. John Kearney, president of the NWT and Nunavut Chamber of Mines and president of Canadian Zinc; Mr. Lane Dewar, prospector and a director of the Chamber of Mines from Yellowknife; Mr. Chris Hrkac, senior geologist and exploration manager, GGL Resources, Yellowknife, and a director of the Chamber; Mr. Trevor Teed, prospector and a director of the Chamber here from Yellowknife. Also joining us today: Mr. Paul Harvey, president and chief operating officer, Ekati Diamond Mine; Richard Morland, vice-president, operations, Ekati Diamond Mine; Mr. Dave Nickerson, former MLA, Member of Parliament, also sits on the board of Tyhee and Canadian Zinc; Mr. Mike Vaydik, long-time general manager of the Chamber; and Deborah Archibald, director, minerals, oil and gas, with the Department of ITI. Welcome.

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

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize a friend of mine, Trevor Teed.

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

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know he's been recognized already, but I'd like to make a special mention of Mr. Paul Harvey, who's the president of Ekati. He and his wife worked here two years back, moved to Australia, probably transferred, but they liked it so much they moved back to Yellowknife, to the Territories, in my riding of Range Lake. So I would like to welcome him and his wife back. Thank you.

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

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to recognize Mr. John Kearney, president of Canadian Zinc and frequent visitor to the community of Fort Simpson. Welcome to the gallery. Mahsi.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize a couple people. First off I'd like to recognize Mr. Mike Vaydik, our executive director of NWT and Nunavut Chamber of Mines. As well, I'd certainly like to do a special recognition to both Richard Morland and Kim Truter. They're more than just leaders of their individual mining corporation; they're also community contributors that make a difference in our Territories. Thank you.

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

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize Weledeh resident Trevor Teed and former resident Dave Nickerson. I'd also like to recognize Julie Green, a freelance reporter and worker with the YWCA, I believe.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. If we 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 Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

### Oral Questions

#### QUESTION 286-16(4): GNWT HIRING PRACTICES

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I talked about the hiring practices of the GNWT and how it places a higher emphasis on education and less on equivalencies and

experience. I have a question for the Minister of Human Resources.

Mr. Speaker, almost all of the GNWT job ads have the "equivalent combination of education and experience will be considered." If you ask an aboriginal applicant who does not have a degree or a masters but has years of related experience, they would say that equivalencies are not taken into account. I'd like to ask the Minister: how does the department assess the value of equivalencies and/or experience when reviewing job applications? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to assure the Member that the Government of the Northwest Territories uses equivalencies in almost all of its competitions except for those competitions where there's a statutory requirement to have certification; for example, medical positions or legal positions. Usually it's a combination of related work experience and years of service. It's something that we review on a regular basis for all of our jobs that we have in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Mr. Speaker, many applicants do not possess a bachelors or a masters degree but do possess diplomas or certificates and certainly possess the experience, and they live in the smaller communities where they plan to live for years to come. Can the Minister commit to placing a greater emphasis on equivalencies and experience, even some emphasis on the ability to communicate effectively with aboriginal communities? Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** This is an area that we've obtained some funding in for this year, where we're working much more closely with not only aboriginal governments but also municipal governments. I think that this is something that we want to advance quite a ways in. Under normal practices, we are trying to develop processes, working with our Aboriginal Employment Advisory Committee, to find ways to increase aboriginal employment. But certainly looking at a combination of training and under fills and equivalencies, we are looking to give a much greater focus to hiring aboriginal people at the local level. Because what we're finding is unless we can find Northerners to put into jobs, there are other issues that become involved such as housing and so on. Thank you.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Mr. Speaker, can the Minister commit to looking at options for increasing GNWT positions in smaller communities, whether it be by creating, replacing or reallocating positions so that these jobs can be filled by aboriginal people and increase aboriginal content in the GNWT? Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** We've looked at this a number of times. Our government has looked at this a number of times over the years through the process of decentralization and I think that working through Refocusing Government this way we can look at the possibility of moving jobs around. The problem with increasing positions or moving positions around is that there are winners and losers in terms of communities, so that is where the problem comes in. I think, when it comes to looking at new positions that are created, this is certainly something we can look at. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister agree to, in order to increase the content and allow these positions to be in the smaller communities, customize jobs in smaller communities with the end result of assisting people in smaller communities to work better with government? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, over the years, we have done that on a number of occasions where we have found we had the greatest success in training Northerners to fill northern jobs. We identify the important elements that we can work with Aurora College so that we can train people up to take these positions. We find that we have been very successful in doing that. This is an area that we are prepared to do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 287-16(4):  
RESOURCE REVENUE SHARING

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Premier in regards to my Member's statement on the amount of resources that are coming out of the Northwest Territories. In particular, I made mention of the Sahtu oil and gas minerals of \$500 million leaving every year from Norman Wells to Zama and the state of the people living in the Sahtu, in terms of the poverty issue. I want to ask the Premier about giving hope to the people in the Sahtu and the people of the Northwest Territories having a sense that our resources here in the Northwest Territories are going to stay here in the Northwest Territories rather than go it to the Government of Canada in terms of getting a grant. After everything is said and done, they give us a grant to say, here, continue on living. But it seems like someone is being better than our own rich Territory. I want to ask the Premier in terms of his discussions with the leaders in terms of going forward in terms of seeing that there is a resource revenue sharing deal at hand here.

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

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The area of resource revenues in the Northwest Territories has been ongoing for over a couple of decades now. At one point, I believe before it became resource revenues, it was called a Northern Accord of one nature. So it is something that we continue to work on. In fact, at the regional leaders' table, we have addressed it a number of ways. For example, we now had meetings with almost every regional group and government around that, where the old discussions were left at, at the 15<sup>th</sup> Assembly, with the federal government wanting to re-engage. We are going to see how we would re-engage the northern group from the Northwest Territories and hopefully be able to look at trying to bring an AIP before the end of our term. Thank you.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Speaker, has the Premier had any discussions with the federal government in terms of, for example, just even the discussion with the Norman Wells oilfield? The Norman Wells oilfield portion of percentage is owned by the federal government in terms of making this issue a priority with the federal government in terms of keeping our resource revenue in the Northwest Territories rather than every year we hand a cheque over to the federal government. Later on they give us another cheque, an income support cheque to keep us busy here. Has the Premier had any type of creative solutions in terms of keeping our resources here in the North?

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Mr. Speaker, as the Government of the Northwest Territories has quite a number of programs through our Minister's responsibility under ITI, we do a number of things, whether it is through the Business Incentive Policy, so we have contractors in the North taking advantage of the work that we have available as the Government of the Northwest Territories. Our SEED program, for example, that we put in place to help businesses in our smaller communities. So we have done quite a number of things to enhance businesses in the North. We know we need to do a better job.

The other things we have tried to do, for example, is when we have socio-economic agreements in place, to again give preference to hiring in the North, not only hiring of employees but the contractors as well, as we know that we have tried to help when it comes to groups looking at IBAs, as we call them, or impact benefit agreements as well.

The other thing we have in place, Mr. Speaker, is an approach that I took with the Prime Minister, specifically with Norman Wells and the oilfields. That was to look at trying to recoup some of those dollars that go to the federal government under an equity program, and reinvest those dollars in the

North in infrastructure. That would see us expand on our critical infrastructure needs in the Northwest Territories. We have had a commitment to have discussions on that, but there has been no further movement in that area. Thank you.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Speaker, with the sunset of funding with the Department of Health with millions of dollars that are not going to be renewed with the federal government, the federal government is also increasing our funding for social housing in the Northwest Territories. There are other programs that the federal government is going to be cutting back in the Northwest Territories. I want to ask the Premier in terms of raising the level of this issue, the urgency of this issue in terms of our revenue leaving the Northwest Territories every second of this day here. How do we get the attention of the federal government with all the people of the Northwest Territories saying that this is a serious issue and it is not acceptable in this day and age? How can the Premier get our leaders to rally behind him to take this strong message to Ottawa?

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Mr. Speaker, I believe the approach that we have undertaken with regional leaders is to have them work with us presenting a northern package on resource revenue sharing. Right now, Mr. Speaker, the land claims that have been settled have a portion of the resource revenue going back to those claim organizations, but it is very small compared to what the potential is. We see this as an opportunity to get some of those dollars to stay in the North so we can do the reinvestments in projects we believe are necessary for themselves. I am hoping that through our work with regional leaders, we will be able to pull them together and we will be able to present a common package, a design for Northerners by Northerners and engage the federal government at that level. Thank you.

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

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The mine industry and the oil and gas industry have a huge potential in the Mackenzie Valley. I ask the Premier in terms of his discussions with the proponents of the Mackenzie Gas Project, proponents who are drilling in the Northwest Territories, mining companies, in terms of them lending him a hand in terms of going to Ottawa and forcing the government to sit down and have a good resource package for the people in the Northwest Territories. Has the Premier approached our partners in those areas?

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Mr. Speaker, in the early days of project development of the Mackenzie Gas Project, for example, and others, we have talked about devolution and resource revenue sharing is one way to help streamline the regulatory maze that

is out there, as well as streamline the processes we can put in place and capture the benefits of development and keep them in the North. Unfortunately, as the record clearly shows, numerous governments have tried to move this along and we have not been able to get to that last hurdle. One of the issues that I addressed at the last regional leaders' meeting is we need to have a fundamental discussion. Is the capture in the sense of the dollars that we want to capture and keep in the North or is it the authority? Is that the driver so that we can effect change as the future goes on? Thank you.

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

QUESTION 288-16(4):  
ANTI-POVERTY STRATEGY

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are addressed to the Premier. I mentioned in my Member's statement that I had been holding a Christmas present for him for some time and that I had given that to him today at noon. I thought it was pretty nice too. Now that the Premier has his Christmas present, or that the Legislative Assembly has the Christmas present -- because it is addressed to all of us -- I would like to ask the Premier if he could advise us, and I mean Members and also the representative of the presenters of the present, what he will do with his or our present now that he has it. Thank you.

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

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Member for her question and the event that she organized and the hand-off of the Christmas present, which is work by the organizations around the Anti-Poverty Strategy. When this issue first came up prior to Christmas, I became aware of what was being done and at that time asked the folks in the Department of Executive to start to begin to look at how we could try to address this issue. Now, with this package, and as I've talked with my Cabinet colleagues, we're going to officially put it in the system with this information.

As we were at the presentation this afternoon, as it was highlighted, the effort is to be a part of the solution through these organizations and looking at the dollars we have put available as a government over a number of departments. We know that through a number of initiatives through our budget exercise, we've put in the area of about \$145 million as a government. But through a number of departments and programs, coordination and working together is going to be important as we try to stretch our resources to better serve the people that are in need of these services. I will formally put it in the system, as we say, to the Ministers and start pulling that information together and prepare

to open a dialogue with Members and the organizations in seeing how we can better pool our resources to have a better impact on the lives of the people who are in the most need.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you to the Premier for his answer. He mentioned that the government will start a dialogue with these parties. It's imperative that we have the involvement of parties outside the GNWT. We're not going to get anywhere without their participation. I know it's really early within this process, but I wonder if he could give us some idea of how he's going to involve NGOs and the other organizations that are part of the group that want to develop an anti-poverty strategy.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** It is early days and I would say that once we start to gather and the initial work has been done and touching base with departments with this package of information we'll be able to get the departments to pull something together and prepare to come to Members to say how do we engage the collective in the sense of the body of people and organizations with expertise along with our own. We are a ways away. We need to pull the initial pieces together and go to Members and seek their advice and what are sort of the next steps we can look at taking.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks to the Premier. I know that he's mentioned that he would come to Members. I'm not so sure that this requires the approval, so to speak, of Members. I think to reach out to NGOs is something that could be done without letting us know, but I don't know we need to give you the approval to do that. I will be tabling a list of the anti-poverty supporters later on this afternoon, so that will give the government a list to work from.

A number of years ago the government established a Coalition Against Family Violence. In my estimation, it's been a very successful coalition and the actions that came out of that. I wonder if the Premier could see that the same process that was used to develop the coalition and the Action Plan Against Family Violence, could that cooperation, that coordination, that kind of a process be used to develop this anti-poverty strategy.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** I thank the Member for the opportunity to make a decision on my own and move forward with a plan of action. But I would prefer, as has been practiced, to go back to the committee to at least inform them of what we have pulled together and ask for suggestions on where we go. Not necessarily approval, but just presenting the work that is starting to be formed and look at those next steps that can be taken. How do we bring in the expertise out there to help formulate an approach or revised approach in best using our resources? You have my commitment. We will get back to Members with our initial piece of work and looking for the next steps of how we engage the expertise out there. The list that the Member is



talking about would help us in looking at those first pieces of how we would look at next steps.

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

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be short. I want to thank the Premier for his commitment. Again, my tendency is to go towards a definite time. I look forward to the Premier coming to us and then asking for the advice of Members, but when would that be?

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Here would be a great opportunity to use that phrase "in the fullness of time." But, realistically, the fact is that the work has been started at least initially from Executive touching base with departments. Now, with this package, we'll be able to put a little bit more to it and ask the departments responsible to start putting some energy into this. I will get back to Members after speaking with my Cabinet colleagues as to some time frames. I'll be pushing them to have a quicker response than the normal and, hopefully, we can get some response back within a month or two with Members to discuss those next steps.

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

QUESTION 289-16(4):

PUBLIC HOUSING RENTAL SUBSIDY PROGRAM

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Housing. Does the report recommending the return to the Public Housing Rental Subsidy to the Housing Corporation identify development of the arrears as a problem?

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

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The report, which I'm tabling this afternoon, makes no specific reference to the arrears that may have been accumulated during the period when the responsibility for assessments was with ECE.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Does the Minister acknowledge that some of the problems with the arrears were created by the system and not necessarily the tenants themselves?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** I do acknowledge that there is a serious arrears problem, to the tune of about \$10 million. A lot of these arrears may have been accumulated before the transfer, so we can't say that this was a direct response of the transfer. The local housing authorities, when the transfer first went over, realized there were issues with the assessment. This was all new being rolled out. They were very good at recognizing that if you weren't assessed properly, they would adjust it and

your arrears would automatically go down. So they've taken steps to deal with that when the transfer first happened. I admit there is a serious problem with arrears.

**MR. JACOBSON:** I don't think it was Housing's problem; I think it was ECE's problem. The gap between market rent and the subsidized rent is too much for some clients. When the Public Housing Rental Subsidy is returned to the Housing Corporation, will the Minister ensure that the rents are not too high so clients could be able to manage?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** I have discussed previously that we will be looking at the rent scale and some of the issues that are raised by the tenants out there. I can commit to the Member that the process is in place and we're looking at ways to work with clients to make sure that they are paying the rent that's due and that the local housing authorities are receiving rents so that they can continue to operate. Because with the declining CMHC funding, the collection of rental arrears becomes even more important now and that gives a lot of the LHOs more funding and ability to deliver the programs and maintenance to the units.

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

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Some families in the communities that I represent, since 2007 they're telling me they had no arrears prior to that 2007 changeover from the Housing Corporation to ECE. We've got people that have been evicted already. You have 20 people in some houses in the communities. That's not right. Will the Minister consider bringing forward a bill to forgive the arrears that have developed because of this gap that was created in the system since 2007? Thank you.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, we fully understand that there was an accumulation of arrears during this time. As far as bringing a bill forward, I do know that some LHOs sometimes will write off arrears, but that then goes to the Housing Corporation to collect the arrears. As far as forgiving the bill, we have to be very careful here that if we do this, we set a precedent, and even arrears that were accumulated before the transfer are going to obviously be expected to be forgiven. If there's a way that we can work with tenants to try and work on their arrears and, like you said, the LHOs really recognize the fact that some of this happened because of the assessment and the timeliness of it and they made adjustments. So we have to be very careful as to how far we want to go with this. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 290-16(4):  
HIGH COST OF LIVING IN THE NWT

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I've got some questions today for the Premier and it gets back to my Member's statement where, again, I'm asking about the high cost of living in the Northwest Territories and issues that have been brought forward to me from constituents. I'd like to start off with asking the Premier, has the lead Minister responsible for the Strategic Initiative Committee on Reducing the Cost of Living or the Premier himself had any discussions with the federal government as it relates to taxation of northern residents? Thank you.

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

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the area of the cost of living, as the Minister responsible for this area, strategic initiative, has highlighted, there are a number of workloads or processes we've put in place to deal with some of the cost of living issues that we recognize as a government. Transportation is a big one. Electricity generation and the sale of that is another large one. So we're looking at a number of initiatives.

Specifically in the area of taxation, any initiative that a Minister leads on the strategic initiatives, they would go back to the department responsible and have them then do the legwork, so to speak, on bringing the initiative to fruition. So the area of taxation would fall under the Minister of Finance. In that area, we haven't had discussions around changes in our tax processes as of yet. Thank you.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Mr. Speaker, it's been two and a half years since this government was elected and I find it hard to believe that they haven't had any discussion with the federal government on the area of taxation, specifically on the application of the GST north of 60, on a possible tax credit for interest paid on mortgages and for removal of GST on essential goods and services. I'd like to ask the Premier why is it that these discussions haven't taken place, when people continue to suffer in all of our communities with the high cost of living? Thank you.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Mr. Speaker, in the area of our Strategic Initiatives committees, we've been focusing on areas where we know we can get results sooner, and that is where the programs we're directly involved with, the way we've designed them, the way we implement them and those issues. We've also worked with the federal government on a stimulus package to help offset some of those costs so we can get some of those projects in place that would help stabilize or lower the cost of living in our communities. We've also put in place the \$60 million in alternative energies, again, to put in place, to stabilize our electricity rates around the Northwest Territories. So there are

a number of factors we're involved with in the area of cost of living, to try to mitigate that specific area.

The Minister of Finance himself had an economic roundtable around taxation initiatives, again, on revenue sources in the Northwest Territories and met with businesses and individuals around that issue, and he presented his work in that area. So there have been quite a number of pieces of work that have been done. But specifically on requesting relief from the federal government on some of the larger tax issues, those would not simply be an issue that we can put and effect change on by making a direct request. Those are areas where, for example, it would be of general application where we would make an approach to our colleagues, other Premiers or other Finance Ministers across the country and try to implement on that basis. Thank you.

**MR. RAMSAY:** I guess for folks out there paying the bills, it's hard for them to relate to a lot of what the Premier has said. I mean, for most people, they just relate to what they have to pay every month. In fact, Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier today, people are paying more for everything. I think the onus is on the government to come forward with a comprehensive, meaningful consultation with the public on what exactly you are doing to help address the high cost of living.

You can talk about all of the electricity rate reviews you want and everything else that you're doing, but there are some things that this government is doing, Mr. Speaker, that are detrimental to the cost of living here in the Northwest Territories, and I think the government has to come clean on exactly what they're doing and lay it out for us. We haven't heard anything from the Cost of Living Strategic Initiative Committee, and I think it's high time that they put something on paper and showed us exactly where the results are. Thank you.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Mr. Speaker, as for direct information, we, at the request of Members, set up a process so Members could be involved in those initiative committees, and that started to happen, but they've since changed their approach and said no to that. As I stated, the Strategic Initiatives committees start some of the work of what we will look at and what changes we can make, and then it becomes the Ministers responsible for the department. So, for example, in transportation, where that affects the cost of living in our communities across the Northwest Territories, on the size of planes that can come into communities delivering goods and services, highway reconstruction that leads to a safer, more accessible system, the Mackenzie Valley Highway, for example, we know and there's proof in that kind of work that over the long term will see a stabilized or reduced cost across the Northwest Territories.

As for day-to-day business that we've done, for example, a result of the work the Minister of Finance did there was no tax increases as part of this budget process. So let's recognize that we're trying to do what we can and all the initiatives that we work on flow through back to the main estimates set before the House now. Thank you.

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

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With all due respect to the Premier and the work of Cabinet, I'd be embarrassed to be associated with a Strategic Initiatives committee that's done absolutely nothing, Mr. Speaker, in two and a half years. I'd like to ask the Premier if he would even consider, given the high cost of living here and the fact that people are upset, they're leaving the Territory, I'd like to ask the Premier if he would consider a special committee with Cabinet Ministers and Regular Members to look at the high cost of living. I'm talking about things that are deliverable in the next year and a half, not things that are 10 or 15 years from now, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Mr. Speaker, that sounds like what we pretty well had in place under strategic initiatives and having Members be a part of that process. That avenue is still open to Members, if they want to get engaged at that level. It's still open to them now. If you want real action, not another discussion, not another consultation process, that action can come to this House. In fact, a response directly to the energy rate review regulations piece of work. If we're going to make fundamental change to the Northwest Territories, for the whole Northwest Territories big picture, make a difference as early as next year, if this Assembly wants to take action. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 291-16(4):  
ORGAN DONATION AND TRANSPLANT  
POLICY IN THE NWT

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you. Today in my Member's statement I talked about the issue of organ transplant policy or, I should say, the lack thereof, and the difficulties some people have had following through in the process. That is pre-op care and certainly the medical travel process, as well as the follow-up from the post process, whether it's about getting medication signed off, whether it's getting the proper travel, about getting them back on time including loved ones. So, Mr. Speaker, I don't necessarily blame the Minister in any way specific to this problem, but the Minister is well aware of this particular issue. So I'm asking the Minister of Health and Social Services, would she do a review of the lack of policy in this particular

case and see if we can set something up and perhaps maybe announce a direction by Organ Donor Week that is coming up in April? Thank you.

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

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government supports organ and tissue donations. We are involved with Canadian Blood Services, who is currently in the process of establishing a national registry so that it would help connect donors with people who need organ transplants.

The Member brought the matters that he is talking about today to my attention a few months back. There was a little bit of a hiccup there, but we did resolve that. The fact is, organ transplants are very rare in the Territories. Our residents do receive organ transplants, but a donor being from the NWT is very rare and I think that is one of the reasons why the process didn't go as smoothly as possible.

Mr. Speaker, I don't think there is a need for changes in any of the policies, because our Medical Policy is very generous and anybody who needs a service at a hospital or medical facility is entitled to coverage for their medical travel and associated costs. So that will be the case going forward. Thank you.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Mr. Speaker, as rare as compliments are from this side of the House, I should make sure it is very clear that the Minister was extremely helpful on this particular case straightening out. I think that needs to be acknowledged in this particular case. It can't be forgotten. But the issue I am trying to raise, without trying to make a mountain out of a mole hill, is the fact that we don't have a clear policy. Because when this particular family -- and I am aware of another family just starting in the process of the same type of issue -- is the lack of clarity on this. So we need a clear policy that says if you are either a donor or you require a transplant, it follows this particular process that everyone understands and is clear. That is what I am asking for, if the Minister would engage in that type of initiative. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Mr. Speaker, anyone from the North who is interested in donating an organ, they will have to go through a very complicated medical procedure for any organ donation. That is definitely a medical and hospital care and so they are entitled to all of the coverage and medical travel that they would require. The benefits are there. Programs are there. I will make sure that staff know that that is an eligible service. The policy allows it. We just need to make sure that it is enforced. Thank you.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Mr. Speaker, the Minister is referring to the Medical Travel Policy as the one-fit

solution to every problem, Mr. Speaker. In this particular case, their loved one who had to be their escort was denied. They had trouble getting down for the pre-op surgery in advance of the actual surgery. They had troubles being booted out of the hospital in Edmonton and being told that if they didn't get back on a certain date, even though the hospital in Edmonton had said they had to stay for a follow-up, they were told that they were going to be cut off. Now, again, I don't sort of saddle the Minister with this particular problem, but that is the issue that I am trying to raise. Would the Minister help work and develop an organ transplant policy specific to this issue? Thank you.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Mr. Speaker, the length of stay of a person who needs any medical procedure is determined by the providers and the physicians and health care professionals that oversee that. From time to time we have people who question how that is applied, but that is a normal part of our delivery system. We work to sort that out as they happen. My point is, anyone who is going to be donating an organ that requires, obviously they would require hospital and medical services, they will be covered. They will get the benefit of all services. Whether it be medical travel or any associated services, they will get that. I will make sure that our staff is aware that anyone else who is good enough to donate an organ, that they will get the assistance they need. Thank you.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the spirit and the intent of what the Minister is saying, but, Mr. Speaker, the issue really came down to things like the doctor said that this particular person needed an escort. Medical travel denied it. It took the Minister's intervention to say, wait a minute, this is wrong. Down in Edmonton, the hospital said this person had to stay due to a follow-up because of the tearing of tissue if they moved too much. Medical travel denied that too. That is why I am asking for a clear policy that lays out when even doctors say something is necessary, they follow through that. Would the Minister see that issue as for what I am trying to lay out and see if we can work out a clear policy that helps people through the system? Thank you.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Mr. Speaker, I think the Member is giving me too much credit. I don't usually intervene and order anybody to approve an escort. I believe we have a program in place where it has a clear guideline as to who is eligible for medical travel and a medical escort. There are occasions, not just in organ donation procedures but in other medical procedures. There is sometimes lack of agreement on what is needed. That is just par for the course that we need to... That is part of health care's delivery system that is

managed by human beings. There is a difference of opinion as to what constitutes a need for escort. But my point, Mr. Speaker, is that anybody who is going to donate an organ for transplant, that is a medical procedure and they will get all of the services that are available within our health care system. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 292-16(4):  
NWT HC PROGRAMS

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regards to my Member's statement in regards to the government programs and services, the implementation of the new programs PATH to CARE, HELP to STEP, it was put in place to hopefully improve the system that we had in place, but more importantly, to assist homeowners by taking advantage of these programs. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Housing, has he seen an improvement in this program. Does he know exactly if there are faults in this program? Thank you.

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

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Obviously, there are challenges to some of the programs that we deliver. We are working to take steps to address some of the challenges, with the gap being one of the biggest ones, and hearing from Members across the floor is one that they have all identified. We have seen breaking it down in four programs has helped overall. We are spending a large amount of money on the HELP program, which is trying to get people into homeownership through a supportive lease-type program. We have about 228 of those units out there. There have been some improvements to the delivery of the programs but, as the Member pointed out, there are obviously some challenges and we are looking to try and address those. Thank you.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Mr. Speaker, I think the programs that we have, if they were implemented properly, we would be able to assist more people, especially with the Reduction of the Cost of Living. I think if we can find ways to assist people to do retrofits to their homes, improve their heating system, improve their electrical system, bringing their homes up to code, making them safe, that is the type of stuff I think this government should be supporting. I would like to ask the Minister, is there an appeals process for individuals who may not like the result of having their application refused, considered through a different method, instead of having to come to the

MLA or go to the Minister. Is that something that is contemplated in this program?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, a formal appeals process doesn't exist at the moment. They would be able to appeal to the program advisor or to the district director. In my office, we have had cases of people bringing their issues and their concerns forward. We have tried to address some of these. We usually follow up with questions to the district office. As far as an official appeal process, there is not one in place right now. Thank you.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Mr. Speaker, one of the biggest complaints you hear from people, on the application process, is the fairness of the program. They see people getting the program year after year, but they continue to apply year after year and get refused. It all comes down to how the program is being administered and the fairness of the program. In regard to that I'd like to ask the Minister exactly what the process is to ensure there is transparency and fairness in this program so the people who do apply are seeing results rather than applying year after year and seeing other people taking advantage of the program and not being able to be approved because they get frustrated from filling out applications. I'd like to ask the Minister, with regard to transparency and fairness, what the department is doing to look at those types of situations.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** We're always reviewing how our programs operate and getting feedback from clients out there, and Members, as part of that process. Of course, we'd like to have an application process that's as transparent as possible, because there are a lot of people out there stating exactly what the Member has said. They have concerns in that they apply and apply. And we hear about it, and obviously Members across the floor hear about it. We just want to assure people out there that we do want to be as transparent as possible. If they have issues with their application process, we're always willing to listen. Upon hearing this, if we can use these to improve the delivery of our programs, I think that would be very beneficial to us as Members of the Assembly and to the people out there who are delivering the programs.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With that, I am also hearing from the Minister that he realized that there has to be a mechanism in place to assess programs and services annually or every so often, to see what's working and what's not working. I'd just like to ask the Minister if there is going to be some sort of assessment process or assessment of the programs to see how it's working, and if something is not working, what we can do to change it to improve the programs so that we can improve on what we have. Will he consider

looking at assessing the program and try to find ways to improve this program?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** We usually try to do an assessment of the programs fairly regularly and see what's working and what can be improved. I can commit to the Member that I will have discussions with the officials and see when the next review of the program is, and I'll advise Members of that and seek input.

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

QUESTION 293-16(4):  
ANTI-POVERTY STRATEGY

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to follow up on my Member's statement earlier, on a poverty eradication plan. I appreciate the Premier's remarks earlier, in efforts to take the next steps there. Recognizing that there is overlap, once again, between ECE and the Department of Health and Social Services, I'd like to ask the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment some questions, really, on the opportunities we've got and what we're doing to coordinate the approach to fighting poverty.

The first question I'm wondering about is what is assessed during a client's interview for income assistance applicants. Does the process not only look at the financial eligibility of the applicants but does it also look at the context of need? For example, their educational history and opportunities for upgrading, personal and psychological support services, if there are mental health issues and other health issues and needs.

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

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Yes, the assessment the client service officers do provide to clientele is a variety. Not just on the financial aspects, but also on the individual's needs. Whether it be providing them with more productive choices, if there's such training opportunity for them, and so forth. It's all based on the core needs of those individuals that are accessing assistance.

**MR. BROMLEY:** We are indeed, in our child and family services work, hearing a lot about some of those issues. My next question is really related to those that are coming out of jail. In many cases, people fighting poverty end up in our jails. There seems to be an opportunity to take advantage of this by making sure there are good educational programs while people are in jail. Certainly, as they are coming back into society, transition things like referrals and upgrading, referrals to housing upon release, referrals to behavioural support such as

anger management, parenting skills and health education. Are these services provided at this time?

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** We do have counsellors at the corrections area as well. Also just working with those individual clients, the inmates, upon their release, rehabilitation development stages. We do have a team that refers them to the outside link. Once they leave the facility, we just don't ignore them; we have contact with the community they're from to see how they're doing and if they've moved on with their lives. Not only that, we try to set up as much arrangement as we can with the client services department as well.

**MR. BROMLEY:** What is the process for placing someone back in the community after addictions treatment is completed? Is there counselling that takes into account employment services, housing and other basic needs?

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** This particular area consists of interdepartmental avenues with Health and Social Services and Housing and our Department of Education, Culture and Employment, through the income client service officers. So we continue to work together in that respect. There is a process in place where when inmates leave the facility, planning takes place to certain contacts in the communities. So we do what we can to provide those services from our departmental perspective.

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

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I hear from people I'm chatting with is often our system does not ensure that the context, and there's an infinite variety of circumstances in people's lives, that all important context does not go with them through the system and that often income support is not cognizant of that. It's a relatively cold and objective system if it doesn't incorporate the very human aspects of it. How does this Minister and others in this government ensure that all important context goes along with people as they access all types of different government services?

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** We consider as much context as we possibly can, once the individuals provide that information. Sometimes we have to request the information when they are not provided immediately, but we do what we can to get the information out of them. People do change, so we need to work with those individuals and, through the development stages, provide training for them to have productive choices in life as well.

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

QUESTION 294-16(4):

UPGRADING OF NAHENDEH HIGHWAYS

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to ask a follow-up on my

Member's statement and ask the Minister of Transportation some questions with regard to carry-overs in my riding. Last year we had a huge opportunity to provide some chipsealing towards Fort Simpson, reconstruct Highway No. 7 from the B.C. border to Fort Liard, and complete the Nahanni Butte access road. Unfortunately, we were unable to do it. I'd like to ask the Minister what the plans are to complete these projects this coming fiscal year.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member has listed a number of projects in his riding that have been deferred or carried over. Our intention is to get them all done for this year, on top of the projects that are listed; providing that the budget is approved, of course. We've had a lot of work going on in the area of Nahendeh, I think to the tune of almost \$30 million worth of projects. We had a few projects that weren't able to move forward as a result of weather and other issues, but we fully intend to have those done this coming year.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** I guess the most important question for the constituents is: will we be involved in another lengthy tendering process and awarding the contract where it will take us into late summer or fall to complete these projects, or can we get out of the gate early and complete these projects in the springtime?

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** There were only a couple of projects and some of them had a fairly large budget that we weren't able to bring forward. Those have, for the most part, awarded, and we expect those will come out fairly quickly in the spring. Conditions, of course, with the weather and ground conditions will be a factor, but we expect those to move forward. There are still some that need to be tendered, but we'll have those out fairly quick also.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** With the couple of contracts that the Minister did speak about, do we have to wait until the new fiscal year, April 1<sup>st</sup>, to get those tendered out, or is the work and process underway to get those contracts into the system and into the public's hands?

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Some of those were already tendered out and have been awarded, and we're not able to move forward as a result of weather conditions and some other issues that have not allowed these projects to progress. I would expect that we'd be looking at coming out really quickly, as this money is being carried over.

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

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I guess one of the largest incomplete projects was the Highway No. 7 from the B.C. border to Fort Liard. What efforts and plans and how many kilometres will be completed this coming construction season?

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** The Member is asking me to talk about some very specific details. I don't have it in my memory bank to tell him how many kilometres are going to be done. I could tell him there was \$5.4 million dollars planned for Highway No. 7 that needs to be concluded. We're also planning to do a number of kilometres along Highway No. 1 to get chipsealed. That's the information I can share, is the dollar amount. I don't have the actual kilometres and locations.

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

QUESTION 295-16(4):  
HIGH COST OF POWER IN THE NWT

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to my colleague from Nahendeh for leaving me a few minutes on the clock here. My questions today for the Premier relate to the Member's statement that I made. We say that we are interested in lowering the cost of living for people in the Northwest Territories. Some 22 years ago the Government of the Northwest Territories repatriated the power company from the Northern Canada Power Commission and established the Northwest Territories Power Corporation. As creating that Crown corporation, we necessarily, as a government, owned it, we were the shareholder. Then we instituted the Public Utilities Board to regulate that power company and some other utilities in the Northwest Territories. As the shareholder, we require the NTPC to act like a business and to earn a profit so they can pay us, as a shareholder, a dividend, which we could then take and redistribute that money to levelize the power rates in the Northwest Territories. As you can see, the whole thing gets really convoluted.

The Premier told my colleague Mr. Ramsay that we could have a fairly immediate positive impact on the cost of living in the Northwest Territories if we would implement some of the recommendations in the electricity rate review. Could the Premier tell me if there are any recommendations there that would somehow streamline this fairly convoluted process we have for generating, regulating and delivering power to the people of the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

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

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe the rate review work that was

done does highlight a number of areas that we could look at when it comes to the way we do business and how we're structured across the board, and that would include the Power Corporation. For example, rate of return versus cost of doing business, in a sense, is one of those areas that could be looked at. The other work that we were doing is tied to this. We're still wanting to sit down with committee to go over how we would look at the NTPC review itself. But more specifically, I believe there is opportunity in the energy rate review work that's being done and how we would respond could give us areas to look at in looking at potential areas of change, if the House was willing. Thank you.

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

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Mr. Speaker, I am very interested in what becomes of all these reviews because, Mr. Speaker, in the community of Hay River resides the Power Corporation headquarters, which we value very greatly; the headquarters for Northland Utilities, which has been there for over 70 years; and, of course, the headquarters and offices of the Public Utilities Board, also located in Hay River. So this is something that is very important to me, but I'm sure very important to other communities and other people in the Northwest Territories as well.

Mr. Speaker, again, I ask the Premier, is there a precedent or a template out there somewhere of a jurisdiction like ours where we can bring the generation and distribution and sale of power closer to us as a government, in some way eliminating some of these very costly processes that we necessarily have to go through. Thank you.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** There are templates across the country that are similar when you look at our size. The one closest to us, of course, is Nunavut. As the Member pointed out in her Member's statement, when division occurred, we took a stance. At the time, the government-of-the-day took a stance where it was focused on the business entity, as arm's length as possible. The Nunavut government has taken a different approach and we'd have to look at that model to see if it's worked in that location. I know they've been pressed with their issues around the cost of energy as well. But through this energy rate review process and working with Members of the Assembly, we would be, again, as part of this process, engaging in some of the big picture look at how we deliver, and is the process we're under the best way to do it. So those things are up for discussion with Members. Thank you.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Mr. Speaker, this may be a slightly technical question, but I'll ask the Premier

in a general way, has some analysis been undertaken that would indicate the cost-savings if the Power Corporation were not operated as an arm's length Crown corporation but as an entity providing power not on a for-profit basis but just as an essential service on a cost basis. Thank you.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Mr. Speaker, my understanding, again, through the rate review that's been ongoing, the cost of service versus a rate of return is one of the areas that has been discussed and some recommendations made around when you look at the different zones that are being contemplated in that report. So that is an area of looking at cost of services versus rate of return. Thank you.

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

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just, I suppose, for the comfort of those people out there who know this electricity rate review is going on, I would like to ask the Premier if any of the recommendations considered are going to result in any increased power rates for any community in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Sorry, Mr. Speaker. I apologize for that. In the shuffling of my papers I didn't catch the last part of the Member's question. So if I could have that repeated. Thank you.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** We are considering the rate review report. I'm sure people out there are wondering about what will be the outcome of that deliberation. I'd just like to, for the record today, have the Premier tell us if any of those recommendations would indicate increased power rates in any community in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Mr. Speaker, the initial report that came out that was presented did show there was a balancing of, for example, corporate costs, the headquarter costs across the board. So there would be some redistribution there. There was some impact on hydro communities as well. That was what was presented.

Since our initial discussions with Members of the Assembly, we've looked at other ways of mitigating those costs and bringing forward a process that would lessen the impact on any community of any increases and try to come up with lowering the cost overall and stabilizing those costs. So I would say that in our response as the GNWT, we believe we've come up with a package that would, in fact, stabilize those costs or reduce costs overall. There are some issues we have yet to deal with on community service by NUL and the Power Corp specifically. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Roland. Item 8, written questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

## Written Questions

WRITTEN QUESTION 19-16(4):

DETAILS ON NWT HC PROGRAM APPLICATIONS

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

Regarding the NWT HC programs PATH, HELP, CARE AND STEP:

1. How many applications have been received in the Mackenzie Delta between 2005 and 2009?
2. How many have been approved in the Mackenzie Delta between 2005 and 2009?
3. How many have been refused in the Mackenzie Delta between 2005 and 2006?

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

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to go back to item 7 of the orders of the day.

---Unanimous consent granted.

## Oral Questions (Reversion)

QUESTION 296-16(4):

CARIBOU CONSERVATION MEASURES

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Minister of Justice some questions in regard to a tabled document he had on February 8, in terms of he's going to ask the Supreme Court of Canada some questions. I'm not too clear in terms of what this Minister is asking, because in the tabled document he indicated the Bathurst caribou herd and later on in the document he talked about the barren-ground caribou in the Northwest Territories. I want to ask for clarification from the Minister.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister responsible for Justice, Mr. Lafferty.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what we're dealing with here is barren land caribou. The question that we're posing to the Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories is: did the GNWT have the authority to issue the banning on the caribou. Mahsi.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you for the clarification, Minister. So it's the barren land caribou. The barren land caribou covers a wide range of jurisdictions. I want to ask, in terms how it affects the Gwich'in, the Inuvialuit, the Sahtu and the Tlicho in the Mackenzie Delta in terms of the authority, because we certainly have land claim agreements that speak to the authority. I want to ask the Minister in terms of how this is going to be impacted on the various



other land claim groups and also the groups that would have treaty rights, groups that are not in the land claim discussion right now, in terms of Treaty 8 and Treaty 11.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mr. Speaker, this is a generic question to the Supreme Court. We're asking if the GNWT has the authority. We want to clarify that, because there are a lot of questions from the organizations throughout the Northwest Territories, if the GNWT has the authority to ban caribou hunting. So that's the question that we're throwing out there. Mahsi.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Speaker, that's a very disturbing answer from the Minister in terms of banning caribou. This is right down the Northwest Territories. We certainly have agreements that speak to the authority and the management of caribou. Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Minister, through his wisdom, in terms of we passed a motion to consult. How come he didn't come to us to talk about we want to have this discussion and pose the questions to the Supreme Court of Canada? I never had him once come to us and ask us. You are putting a question that is going to be fighting our people. How come he didn't come to this side here and talk about this and consult, rather than going to the courts? This is a really disturbing question to the courts there.

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

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This area the question that the Minister of Justice has put forward on our behalf is one that addresses the issue of authority in the Northwest Territories. When you have your own Members of the Legislative Assembly questioning your authority under the NWT Act, we clearly need to address the issue. We believe we have the authority. This is a confirmation. There are too many times in the history of our Government of the Northwest Territories when it comes to issues around what and how we affect aboriginal peoples in the programs we deliver. From time to time it has come up and it has been said that we don't have the authority, that we are a government with limited authority. Well, let's clear the question once and for all, so that even Members of this Assembly elected under the authority established under the NWT Act will clearly know where they can stand as Members of this government. Thank you.

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

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You go back into communities. This question always comes up to us as Members in terms of the authority of the federal government, the authority of the territorial government, even the authority of the federal government in the region. I guess I want to ask how come, instead of going to the Members across

here, this government decides to go to the courts and look to seek authority? Certainly they could have come to us, consulted with the Members and talked about this issue here. Now it is fighting our people. I am not here to fight my people. I am here to support my people. I ask that to whichever Ministers, when I ask in terms of coming to consult with us. How come they have not come down and sat with us and talked about this important issue?

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Mr. Speaker, the legislation is clear. Under advisement of the Cabinet, the Minister can pose a question to the Supreme Court. This is not challenging aboriginal leadership in the Northwest Territories. This is going to provide final clarification on who has authority. That is not taken lightly, because when you have your own Members of the Legislative Assembly raising issue of whose authority, that definitely needs to be cleared up. So we have provided that avenue. The courts have their own process now which will seek input from all of the people that they feel is necessary across the Northwest Territories. There will be ample opportunity for them to do their work and answer the question that we have posed. Clearly, Mr. Speaker, there is risk of doing this, in a sense, from the Government of the Northwest Territories itself, because if the question comes back and it clarifies that, indeed, the GNWT was not on the same ground that we believe we were, then we will have to change our policies forward from here. So I think, Mr. Speaker, this is not a challenge to leadership. This is setting for the record in clarifying who actually has that authority so that this is not a question that has to come up in debate and further debate in the future. Thank you.

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

#### QUESTION 297-16(4):

##### APPEALS PROCESS FOR NWT HC PROGRAMS

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to follow up with the Minister of Housing on the line of questioning that Mr. Krutko had with regard to an appeal system. That is something that I have been working with the Minister and previous Ministers in establishing an appeal system for the clients out there. The people that are telling them no aren't the people we should be appealing to, Mr. Speaker. That is why we are looking towards setting up an independent appeal system. In fact, it was approved last fiscal year. They had the appeal system. Where exactly is this appeal system, Mr. Speaker?

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

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In my answers to the Member for

Mackenzie Delta before, I did say that there was no official appeal process right now, which is true. We are in the process of developing an appeals process for both those that have been turned down for the Housing Choices Program and those that are in public housing. We are developing an appeals process and we are just in the process of finalizing that. We will probably share that with the Members, and it will go out there and we will have a communication plan to make sure that all the clients, tenants and the regions have an opportunity to know that this is coming into play and they have an appeal process. Thank you.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Mr. Speaker, that is what the constituents are looking for. They are looking for a fair independent review process for their issues of arrears, long-term arrears, et cetera, and refusals of the Housing Corporation for accessing programs. I would like to ask the Minister again. I thought the setup of this independent appeal system was imminent, and last spring and during the summer I am hearing again that it is imminent. Mr. Speaker, the importance of the appeal system is to have it established as soon as possible. Will the Minister do that? Thank you.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I understand how important it is for those out there to realize they do have an independent appeal process and then that is the beauty of this. It would be an independent appeal process. I can follow up, but we are hoping to have this roll out right away. We are obviously through this particular application stage for Housing Choices Program and then we will be hearing some of the concerns that residents have had. We will have this in place. We are looking to have this in place by the next application cycle. Thank you.

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

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know that when clients get a refusal letter from income support, at the bottom it says contact this person for an appeal if you are not comfortable with the decision. Our Housing Corporation letters say nothing of the sort. It doesn't even say if you have a mechanism of appeal. That is what the people want. I believe this appeal system should be in place as soon as possible. Once again, is the Minister saying we are looking at April 1st? Thank you.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I will follow up with the corporation. I know from the notes that I have, that the actual layout of the process is pretty well complete and it is just a matter of timeline. I will follow up with the corporation. I will communicate that to the Member. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 298-16(4):  
CHIPSEALING AND DUST CONTROL  
IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Minister responsible for dust control. I'm not too sure where he'll take it, but I think that this issue has been around this House for some time. A number of years ago, we had a pilot project that they put forward to look at main street chipseal. We had different programs in regards to dust control. This issue is real in our small communities. It is a health issue. I think that we do have to find a way to facilitate those communities that are dealing with dust control. I would like to ask the Minister, who is responsible for this department, what is the government doing to work with communities?

I know we have infrastructure funding. We have money that is allocated to communities. Again, there was a core program that was developed in regards to main street chipseal. I would like to know, is the government finding ways to implement that program so that we can be able to accomplish that in communities that are looking at dust control?

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

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The chipseal program that was out a few years ago was part of the capital process when the transfer or the implementation of the New Deal, the money that went to the communities and then they determined their priorities and if dust control was one of the priorities, they identified and put the money towards it. We have seen lately in some of the plans that we are getting back from communities, a lot of them are starting to identify dust control as a priority and they are starting to put the funds towards it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. KRUTKO:** The problem that I see with that suggestion is community gas tax dollars don't cover a \$600,000 or \$700,000 capital project. We have to work with those communities to share costs, work with the Department of Transportation, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, to find a workable project, a pilot project or whatever, to assist those communities to deliver dust control in their communities. That's the issue. What are we doing as a government, and Association of Communities, and the communities, to find the solution to dust controls in communities? Thank you.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** The communities are continuing to do what they can to do control dust in

their communities. The problem is we've transferred all the capital dollars to the communities, so they have the ability to make their own decisions. As a department, we have no infrastructure dollars left.

It's a fairly new process. Communities are starting to buy into it. A lot of communities are identifying dust control as a priority and they are starting to put some of their funds towards it. We continue to work with the communities, with their infrastructure plans and identifying some of their priorities and even helping them to identify their funding sources and going through that process with them. A lot of them are doing very well at it and continue to do so. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Again, I believe we are talking about a different level of communities. I know that the majority of the main paving projects that are taking place in the infrastructure funding and the capital dollars are in large, municipal centres. I'm talking about small communities such as Tsiigehtchic or Aklavik or Wrigley. Communities like that have a problem. I know I've heard my colleague from Nahendeh say this is an issue in his riding. It's an issue in Fort McPherson. We're trying to deal with it. Is there a way that they can develop a program similar to the main street chipseal program to work in conjunction with small communities that don't have the infrastructure capacity, don't have the equipment, to take on this type of a project? Again, I'd like to ask, will this government consider looking at that alternative to deal with dust control in our communities?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** A lot of the larger communities that do have paving have identified or used some of their Building Canada money and some other funding, infrastructure stimulus funding, some have used that and they have identified paving as one of their priorities and put their money towards that. Some of the smaller communities had different priorities when this money rolled out, but are starting to see now that they are starting to identify chipseal as one of their priorities, dust control as one of their priorities and they are taking steps to address that. However, we will continue to work with the communities in identifying solutions and identifying how they can go about that. At the end of the day, the actual funding and the request will come from communities. Thank you.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the reason I raise this question is the community of Wrigley had \$250,000 down for dust control for their community. They were refused because they weren't able to match the \$250,000. They don't have the capacity to match \$250,000. So how are we expecting the other communities to make this a priority if they can't afford to implement it? Again, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister,

can they look at this issue regardless of whether it's a special project or pilot project or fly on the wall to find a way to solve this issue. Can the Minister commit to look at this issue with his colleagues and Members from small communities to try to find a workable solution to this problem?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** We'll always continue to work with NWTAC, which represents all communities across the Territories, and LGANT, the local government administrators. We'll continue with them. The way the process is laid out now -- and I've responded in some of my answers to some of the other Members' questions that we try to spread everything around -- we want to give communities the opportunity to make these decisions themselves. If there is money available and it's cost-shared, then they would be responsible for matching those dollars. If we start doing one-offs again, then we'll get into a situation where everybody can say you did it for that community, you have to do it for us, and then we're back to having a corporate capital plan that takes a lot of the authority-making decisions out of the communities. But we will continue to work with communities.

I have to say again, I have seen a great improvement and a great willingness on the communities that have taken on this new money and all the authority that's coming with it. They are really starting to come up with some excellent projects and something as a community they don't have to wait forever for. It's like my answer right now is kind of taking forever, so I'll leave it at that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 299-16(4):

POWER GENERATION ACROSS THE NWT

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to pick up from where Member Groenewegen had taken issue today with some of the Power Corporation's rate review. One of the issues of interest of mine is, is the NWT Power Corporation going to be considered -- in its restructuring of rates, that is -- potentially a new department for the Northwest Territories government. I have spoken on that issue a couple of times and said I think, in the long run, that will give us better accountability, perhaps it will even create efficiencies. My question is directly to the Premier, who is the Minister responsible for the Power Corporation. Is the NWT Power Corporation in a situation where we're contemplating rolling it into the territorial government as a full department rather than an independent business corporation as it's being run today?

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

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Power Corporation itself is established under our legislation, the Government of the Northwest Territories. So through any initiative, any change of that nature would have to be the work of this level of government. The NTPC board, NTPC structure is all put into place. They have not had discussions in this area. They will be getting the work of the review that was done specifically on the Power Corp and be working through that scenario. They go on with the business established under our legislation. Thank you.

**MR. HAWKINS:** I appreciate the answer from the Premier, but the point is you don't ask the board if they want to dissolve themselves. That would be a political decision by the review team looking at rate review, and one of the analyses out of this process could be when they do rate review, we could probably provide more efficiencies and accountability in the rate review process if one of the recommendations was to roll it into a territorial department per se. Is that one of the issues being contemplated at the political level by someone in charge of the legislation such as the Premier and the Cabinet? Thank you.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** We set up a process to undergo a look at rate regulations, distribution of power in the Northwest Territories. We underwent a review process on the Power Corporation itself and we are nowhere close to looking at making that decision. That was brought up earlier, about is there any part of the review that would look at structure and so on. The rate of return is part of the system. The report also suggested the cost to service should be looked at through a number of the zones. So there are initiatives in that report that would allow us to look at overall function of the Power Corporation.

But let's be careful here. There's a lot of our folks delivering energy today, keeping the lights on today in the Northwest Territories and providing a service. Let's not just put questions out there that suddenly the rumour is we are going to go and do something. There are no recommendations at that level that talk about that, but that's an initiative that could always be taken by the Legislative Assembly. In fact, it's not the board that would make that decision; it's this Legislative Assembly that have the acts that establish the Power Corp, the PUB and so on and so forth. So it is this floor, this table that would make any recommendations in that area. Thank you.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Mr. Speaker, I'm reminded of the old adage that the definition of insanity is you keep doing something over and over and expect different results. Mr. Speaker, the issue here really is one of consideration. I didn't say was that the final

outcome of the report, is that the driving force of the report. I'd just like to know if it's a real consideration, Mr. Speaker. So, in essence, the how would we achieve efficiencies if these types of measures weren't considered. If it was rolled into the territorial government, we all know that it wouldn't require a general rate application process or a PUB process; it would require accountability directly to this House, unlike it has now.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm asking, is it a fundamental consideration. Because otherwise all we're doing is pushing costs around as opposed to achieving efficiencies. Thank you.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Mr. Speaker, the simple fact is the issue of power generation across the Northwest Territories has been a major issue for as long as I can remember as a Member of the Legislative Assembly, and I started back in the 13<sup>th</sup> Assembly. There have been a number of initiatives that were undertaken, presented to governments of the past, to take an initiative to try to change some of the way we did our work and delivery of energy across the North, but there was not the will to make that change. This Assembly is now going to be presented with an opportunity. Do we have the will to make the necessary change? Some of that will be a shifting of the numbers, yes, but it is structural in the sense of how we deliver power and how we share the cost. Is it truly a territorial entity across the North? I believe it is and we should treat it as such. Those other discussions about can we see other efficiencies, well, I'm prepared to go to committee with the review that's been done and discuss what options are there that we may look at as an Assembly. Thank you.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we can't change the rates unless we do something different. Okay. Now, whether that means we change the rates to increase or change the rates to decrease, the reality is we have to do something different to change the rates. So, Mr. Speaker, if this analysis of this power rate review does not fully contemplate the option of moving the Power Corp into its position in line with the rest of the departments of the territorial government -- in other words, make it a full territorial department -- would the Minister commit that this is a consideration and costing that we could take on as an Assembly to figure out is this the right direction for the Corporation? Because I believe it is. Thank you.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Mr. Speaker, we'd have to undertake a very in-depth process to look at are there potential efficiencies there. I believe the report that we can have discussion on with Members will highlight the comparisons of the Power Corporation with other jurisdictions of similar size and design in

the sense of diesel and hydro, some of the mix for going forward. Again, nothing stops this Assembly from taking on initiatives, whether they're addressed in those reports or not. But simply, the fact is, let's look at some of those things.

The Member just stated that there are some fixed things and unless we change the way we do business, those things remain. Well, the things that will remain, whether it is within a government department or the corporation as it stands, is the rate base we have and that is the customer base, the cost of delivery of service, that is our fuel, that is our hydro and natural gas and other areas. So those are the things that we have, as well as our employee structure that's out there that is under a union. The Government of the Northwest Territories is under a union. So all of those things would have to be taken into consideration, but, ultimately, that is a decision that can be made by this Assembly. Thank you.

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

#### QUESTION 300-16(4):

##### STRUCTURE OF NWT POWER CORPORATION

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Premier is responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation. The Northwest Territories Power Corporation, Mr. Premier has just said, could be brought under the umbrella as a department of the Government of the Northwest Territories thus removing the need to have it as a regulated utility through the PUB, the whole cost of service way of trying to figure out rates that generate profits for this government. Is it possible that such a transition could take place without absolutely no downside to the establishment as it stands now, as a separate entity, with a board of directors, with its own union? Is there any accountable downside of something like that for the people who are at the front lines? Thank you.

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

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Mr. Speaker, without looking at it in depth as to, for example, the union agreement that's in place with the Power Corporation and how that would work with ours, that's an issue that would have to be looked at. Do the structures at headquarters match the structures of a department? That would have to be looked at. But we've not done that type of work. The review of the energy rates regulations piece did not specifically address the corporate structure in that sense. It talked about a number of structures within the Power Corporation, the delivery. The issue of the PUB, again, that's under its own legislation. We would have to look at the interaction, if there should

be a PUB or not and what role that would be or would the Government of the Northwest Territories play that role as well. There would be substantive change then being looked at and we would have to make sure that if we were going to go down that path, we are prepared to follow it through and make sure we did it right.

Right now, and just for the record and for our employees out there, that hasn't been discussed at any table at this point, but ultimately, as I said, that is the authority of this Legislative Assembly, to look at those and direct that work being undertaken in that area. Thank you.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Mr. Speaker, when you look at Crown corporations that are owned by government, there is always some good reasons why that activity is carried on at arm's length from the government. In the example of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, it had to do with that corporation's ability to receive money from federal programming and so on. There were good reasons that you could articulate why it needed to be arm's length from the government. Is there any such reasons why NTPC needs to be a Crown corporation at arm's length from the control and supervision of this government? Thank you.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Mr. Speaker, I go back to the earlier Member's statement that Mrs. Groenewegen had made earlier about when the Power Corp first came in, it used to be the Northern Canada Power Corporation. Then we took it over, our specific area within the Northwest Territories. At that time, the legislation was adopted and put in place and, in a sense, kept it at its level of a corporate structure. Since then there's been little change, in fact, over the 22 years around that corporate structure. That is probably one of the things that would have to be looked at if we were to do any work in that area. Thank you.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** I'm very familiar with that time. I was on the original board of directors of the Northwest Territories Power Corporation before NCPC had even moved from Edmonton to Hay River. So I'm very familiar with the thinking at the time, and it was considered a great gain for the GNWT to acquire this asset. But, you know, times have kind of changed a bit now. Now we are looking at costs that are really quite a burden to the people, and we are quite consumed, as legislators, about the cost of living. I think it is time to re-examine the model that we have in place. Because if there is anything about that model that adds more costs, which then need to be passed on to the consumers, I think we owe it to the consumers to at least consider that. Would the Premier agree to that undertaking and that exercise? Thank you.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Mr. Speaker, the whole process, as the Member pointed out earlier, between ourselves as a stakeholder or as the

shareholder, the Power Corporation itself, our hydro entity, there are a number of partnerships out there now around our hydro with First Nations, as well, and aboriginal governments. There are a number of factors that would have to be considered. Again, that is the PUB side of things that is on another piece of legislation. When we talk about general rate applications that go out around delivering power across the Northwest Territories, there is promise made that that is fairly intensive, and across the exercise we go through if there are any changes to be made, we would have to look at a number of things in this area. As we go through the steps of reviewing the energy report that came back and our response that we are preparing to make, that Members would be included in that process. As we go through the Power Corporation review specific with Members, that is another avenue and opportunity we can look at that. If this Assembly and the Members here are willing to take a look at and put some resources towards that, that is something that I would sit down with Members to hear just how much energy we should put towards that and what level of work and detail is required. Thank you.

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

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have often felt kind of conflicted on this whole issue of NTPC, because I am very interested about, and concerned about, the well-being and the valuable contribution of the folks at head office, being as most of them are either my constituents or Mr. Speaker's constituents. At the same time, I am listening to the people who represent communities where people are literally burdened under the weight of the cost of this service. We have heard from the NTPC Review Panel. There isn't a whole lot we can do to change the way things are operated at headquarters that would translate into any significant savings for those people. That is why I am sort of stepping back from that and looking more at the big picture and the structure. I believe it would be an exercise at least worth looking at changing the mandate, having the Power Corporation controlled, I suppose, like any department by a deputy minister. I would assume and hope that... I can't imagine that the GNWT UNW wages would be any lower than those that are earned at the Power Corporation. I don't think it would be a significant difference. I don't see there being any downside of at least looking at this. I am saying all of this because I don't want there to be fear again into the folks who work at the Power Corporation, but I know they too are interested in getting as affordable power to the communities as possible.

I would like to ask the Premier what process would he suggest for undertaking looking at this particular very specific option. Thank you.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Mr. Speaker, I think there are a couple of avenues. One, first of all, I would agree with the Member about our staff complement out there delivering the power that residents use today and in the future. They are very dedicated and keep on trying to provide the best service in a challenging environment. In fact, I think the record shows on outages and so on that we actually rank very well compared to some of the jurisdictions.

The issue of where this might be able to go, again I think there are a couple of avenues, as we talked with Members around our response to the energy rate regulation piece, around some of the cost structures and the delivery side as well as the NTPC review itself as we sit down and look at our response as we go forward on that would provide a couple of avenues. Then we can go forward on that basis. Thank you.

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

#### QUESTION 301-16(4):

##### STRUCTURE OF NWT POWER CORPORATION

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Keeping on the same theme, I guess, it is so important that we leave no stone unturned when it comes to looking at power rates in the Northwest Territories and the future of those rates. I wanted to maybe shift gears a little bit and ask the Premier some questions as it relates to discussions with ATCO. I am of the understanding that while the Premier and the Finance Minister were in Copenhagen, some discussions took place with Nancy Southern of ATCO. They were lengthy discussions. I am sure they weren't just talking about the weather, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask the Premier what was the nature of the discussions that he and Mr. Miltenberger had with Nancy Southern. Thank you.

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

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The discussions with the representative of ATCO were ones around what we might be able to do when it comes to projects, specific initiatives in trying to move further along our interest as a government in expanding and delivering on increased hydro across the Northwest Territories. Minister Miltenberger did give an opportunity as to that discussion that happened at that time. We also did discuss the event of Copenhagen and climate change as well. Thank you.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Premier if the Government of the Northwest Territories, the NWT Power Corporation or anybody associated with Cabinet is currently working on any partnerships with ATCO NUL or ATCO Electric. Thank you.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Mr. Speaker, of course everyone is familiar with the ATCO proposal that we received that we have had some very high level permanent discussions to see if, in fact, it was a starting position or not. That is the one that is sitting there right now. There hasn't been a whole lot of work done on that piece. The last set of discussions Mr. Miltenberger was involved with was around the interest that a potential partner might have in expanding our hydro system here in the Northwest Territories. There have not been active discussions on the actual partnership. There have been discussions about what it would take to get into a serious discussion. Thank you.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Mr. Speaker, I guess one of the fears I have is the government will get so far into negotiations and discussing partnership opportunities or arrangements with any company. I just want some assurances that before any decision is made on a partnership or venturing too far down that road, Cabinet and the Premier will come back to the Legislative Assembly and we can at least have a good debate and discussion on the merits of any such partnerships.

Mr. Speaker, I would be the first to say, again, no stone should be left unturned. We need to be looking at everything. We need to put everything on the table, Mr. Speaker. We also need to get to work on the unsolicited proposal, that we received from ATCO, fully vetted and out there. I think it is all potentially part of a solution here in the Northwest Territories for the high power rates that we are paying. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Mr. Speaker, if we go back to that day of a fall session well over a year ago when I believe it was a theme day on the cost of energy in the Northwest Territories, there were statements and questions about the cost, delivery, structure and privatization. Talks came out or reported that that could be an initiative. From those talks, we started to look at a number of initiatives. Those are all before Members. We brought back to the table around that and that is the energy rate regulation review piece. We went to committee. We are working with committee on that response; the Power Corporation review itself around the committee and we will sit down with committee with that report. I brought forward the ATCO proposal that we received and informed Members and the Territories of that. That is sitting there and I would say very early preliminary discussions.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, we are prepared, once we start moving along, like the energy rates regulation piece, like the Power Corporation piece, and once we start to engage potentially with the ATCO piece on the partnership of delivery in the Northwest Territories, we would also inform Members of that work. Thank you.

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

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I just wanted to maybe get some assurances from the Premier that any potential partnership that the Government of the Northwest Territories is looking at entering into will come back to the House and be done through legislation, Mr. Speaker. I just want to get some assurances on that. Thank you.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Mr. Speaker, any changes that we would make would have to include the legislative initiative and changes that we would have to bring forward. That process is well established. We would have to follow through that and go forward. In fact, Mr. Speaker, when the ATCO proposal came out, I was asked by aboriginal leadership, why not aboriginal corporations get involved in this, that day one they showed interest in becoming a partner or parts of the Power Corporation. At that time I said we are not interested in taking parts of the Power Corporation, but we are interested in having discussions around partnership. In fact, I will be following up a letter to regional leaders. Again, it came up in November. I will follow up with them to see if they are serious about bringing in a proposal. We are ready to accept one. Thank you.

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

#### QUESTION 302-16(4):

#### INCREASING INCOME SUPPORT THRESHOLDS

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Mr. Speaker, I applaud the Minister in terms of the announcement of increasing the minimum wage in the Northwest Territories. However, the next day, Mr. Speaker, I had a question from a single mother of three. She has young daughters. She was reading the press release and had some concerns. They wanted to ask the question in terms of the wage increasing, the cost of living increasing. Are the income thresholds going to increase with the GNWT programs that he administers?

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

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we increased the minimum wage just this past week and it is scheduled for April of this year; another one next year. Those are the areas that we are continuing to focus on right now. With respect to the other thresholds the Member is alluding to, we have increased the threshold in the seniors home fuel subsidy just recently. The policy is always changing, so those are things we need to consider. Mahsi.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** I go back to the specific questions on increasing thresholds on GNWT programs, specifically to low cost housing. It's staying the same and I'm not sure if this Minister can answer for another Minister. However, programs like that, Legal Aid, child support payments, those types of programs certainly help single parents out there. Is there some general type of communication plan that this Minister will put out in terms of thresholds of programs in the GNWT?

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Yes, we do have a program available to community members, even on the website as well, even at the community level through regional representatives. With those, Mr. Speaker, they are available even to the Members. When there are changes in the programming or policies, then we do update the Members. So, with that, Mr. Speaker, the changes to the thresholds we talked about in the past, and as we go forward, we realize the high cost of living in the Northwest Territories, so we have to keep those in mind as well. We just increased the minimum wage. I think it was a good step in the right direction and we continue to improve our programs. Mahsi.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** With regard to the question I am going to ask the Minister, this person does not qualify for low cost housing because their income is \$5,000 too much. They probably won't get a low cost housing unit. So this person has to go from pay cheque to pay cheque, paying \$1,700 a month for rent, fuel is about \$300 -- probably a little more in the small, isolated communities -- power is about \$200, water is about \$100, phone is about \$40 and food and all that. How can we help a person like this, a mother of three daughters, with the example of low cost housing units?

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Individuals like that with a family, we provide subsidies for income security programming. There are a variety of programs that we can certainly offer to those individuals. So, Mr. Speaker, we do what we can through the income security area. As I stated, there are always amendments to our current policies that we have on hand, but so far it's been up to date to meet the standards of community needs. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to continue working with the Minister on this issue and probably many other issues or situations like this in the Northwest Territories. In terms of a situation like this, can he work with his counterpart Minister Robert C. McLeod and look at low cost housing units and their thresholds to help a person like this make a living in the North?

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** I will continue to work with my colleague, the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, because we are transferring the program and we want to have a

smooth transition along the way. So the subsidy programs are part of the process as well. We'll do what we can to make that effective. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to opening address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Robert McLeod.

### Tabling of Documents

#### TABLED DOCUMENT 70-16(4): 2009 NWT COMMUNITY SURVEY – HOUSING COMPONENT

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document titled 2009 NWT Community Survey – Housing Component. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: 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. Today we have under consideration Bills 2, 4, 7, Tabled Document 62-16(4) and Minister's Statement 47-16(4). What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The committee would like to continue with Tabled Document 62-16(4), NWT Main Estimates, and specifically Education, Culture and Employment. If that is concluded, to also get into the NWT Housing Corporation.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** We'll take a short break.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** I'd like to call Committee of the Whole to order and ask if the



Minister... Is committee agreed to continue with the details of Education, Culture and Employment? I would like to ask the Minister if he would like to bring in witnesses. Mr. Minister.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Yes, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Sergeant-at-Arms, if you could escort the witnesses into the House and we shall proceed with details, starting on page 10-17.

I'd like to ask the Minister to introduce the witnesses, please.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Chair. I have to my left, Mr. Dan Daniels, deputy minister; and, Paul Devitt, director of strategic business services. Mahsi.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. First on my list is Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I wanted to ask a couple of questions with regard to the numbers that are on page 10-17. There is what I think is a very large increase in education operations and development on that page. It goes from \$1.5 million to \$3.5 million. Could I get an explanation of what this \$2 million is buying us? Thank you.

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

**MR. DEVITT:** Mr. Chair, about \$580,000 is for the Alberta Achievement Tests and support. Another \$1.3 million is for the Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative. Thank you.

**MS. BISARO:** Another question on the next line talks about schools and I note that schools funding is going down about \$2 million. It's been said that that is due to enrolments. Could I get an indication of how much our enrolments have reduced? Thank you.

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

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Chair. There is a decrease in enrolment, as we all know, in the Northwest Territories. So there's a decrease of 2.7 percent in enrolment for September 2008-2009. Mahsi.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, I'm aware that the enrolments have gone down. Do we know how much, please?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. I think it was 2.9 percent, but Minister Lafferty.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Give us a second, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Not a problem. Mr. Lafferty. Sorry; Mr. Daniels.

**MR. DANIELS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The enrolments from 2008-09 to 2009-10, the enrolments in the school system K to 12 were 8,627.5 students in '08-09 and that went down to about 8,406 in '09-10. Thank you.

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

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you. Eight thousand two hundred and seventy-five, was that the first number?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Could you confirm, Mr. Daniels?

**MR. DANIELS:** Yes, Mr. Chair. The first number was 8,627.5. That is the number.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you very much for that, and my apologies, my brain seems to be slowing right down here or maybe it's slower than it was before. I wanted to ask one more question with regard to inclusive schooling funding just to see if I can try and understand the situation here.

Yesterday, I believe, I was advised that the amount for inclusive schooling is changing to reflect changes in enrolment, if Hansard is correct. So if I'm to understand the answer from Mr. Devitt we are now tying inclusive schooling funding to enrolments. So maybe I could get a clarification as to whether or not that interpretation is correct first. Thank you.

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

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Chair. That's correct. It's always been attached to the enrolment funding. Mahsi.

**MS. BISARO:** Okay, thank you. That was clear. So I understand that the numbers of students have gone down; that's fine, that's cool. But my information from education authorities is that although the total number of students is going down, the number of special needs or students who require inclusive schooling are going up and, as well, they're not only seeing an increase in inclusive schooling students, but the ones that they are seeing are the ones who require a very large amount of assistance. They're very heavily...children who need a great deal of assistance whereas someone who has got a slight disability can relatively easily be dealt with in a classroom without incurring a large amount of extra expense. But when there's a student who may, for instance, be a quadriplegic with a feeding tube that requires full-time assistance, that's what I'm referencing in terms of students that require a great deal of assistance. So if authorities are seeing more students who must be inclusive schooled and they are more severely inhibited, why is it then that we are not funding the authorities to a higher level rather than a lower level? Thank you.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mr. Chair, this inclusive schooling is general. It's not student specific. It does cover a variety of areas, such as a speech pathologist or other special needs. Yes, this is part of the enrolment, the formula funding that we have initiated a few years back, and I did address this with my department on the decrease of that 0.5 percent, how it's going to have an impact. So we currently are continuing to work with the school boards, the education councils, on specific to the inclusive schooling, because they'll feel a minimal impact there, but how we can deal with the ongoing operations that we have currently on hand. But if I may have my deputy just maybe elaborate a bit more on the inclusive schooling area aspect as well. Mahsi.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Minister Lafferty. Deputy Minister Daniels.

**MR. DANIELS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The money that we give for inclusive schooling, as the Minister indicated, it's not tied to individual students, but it's a part of an overall formula where we give the money to schools so that they can come up with plans and initiatives to address the various needs of students in their school where there are students with special needs or students who are gifted. It's really meant to try to come up with programming that is responsive to as wide a range of needs of students within their school populations as possible. Thank you.

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

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thanks to both these gentlemen for the answer. I appreciate that this is the way that it is, but I think it's probably creating stresses and strains on education authorities if they're getting less funding, even though it may not be a huge amount of money, but they're getting less funding, but at the same time they're getting more and more students who require individual education assistance and one-on-one situations with particular students. So I'd like to ask the Minister whether or not this problem has been identified for him by the chairs of the education authorities at their meetings. Thank you.

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

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Chair. This particular area, of course there's always been a request for additional funds to deal with the special needs in the schools, but we do provide funding to education councils. This is an area that we've been looking at how we can improve in those areas. So, Mr. Chair, yes, it has been brought up in past chairs' meetings along with other concerns for other opportunities that they've given us, and this I'm sure will be another topic of discussion when we meet with the chairs again in April. So it's one of those ongoing discussions that we have in order to

improve our particular programs that we have with the school boards. Mahsi.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks to the Minister for the answer. I think you probably are going to hear from authorities in relation to this. If they've identified it as a problem, they're going to continue to go after you for adequate funding to deal with these particular special needs students. I'd like to know if there's any consideration within the department... Has the Minister considered changing the approach for funding for inclusive schooling instead of doing it as a lump sum based on total enrolment? Is there any possibility that funding may be changed so that it is applied to a particular student and the needs of that student?

The other difficulty that boards encounter is that a student may be in my school this year, so the funding gets earmarked for a particular special needs student in one year, but then the student may move in the next year and the funding stays with the old board. So is there any thought within the department to change their policy so that the money follows the child, basically? When the child moves, the money goes to the board where the child is, where they've moved to. So two things: is there a possible change in the approach of the department with regard to funding special needs kids and is it possible that the money can follow the child? Thank you.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mr. Chairman, those are the types of discussions that we continuously are having within our department and also with the board chairs. Just a review of the K to 12 cost factor and the overall program review on how we distribute funds based on the enrolment. So, Mr. Chairman, we will continue to have our dialogue with the parties that we sponsor and if there needs to be changes, then those needs will be initiated. We will certainly get back to the standing committee if there is going to be some changes to the program, but currently, as it stands, we are following the enrolment funding formula, but this is up for discussion. Mahsi.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Minister Lafferty. Next on my list I have Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you Mr. Chairman. My question is on the next page, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Committee, we are on page 10-17, activity summary, Education, Culture and Employment, education and culture, operations expenditure summary, \$181.532 million. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, committee. Page 10-18, activity summary. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just on 10-18 at the top of the page, grants, community broadcasting grants, \$52,000. I think that I understand the importance of community radio stations. I think you have to realize, especially for communities and the people that live on the land, that is one of the main means of communication and I think that it is a vital system that we use for getting our messages out. I think the communities that I represent -- Aklavik, Tsiigehtchic, Fort McPherson -- all have local radio stations and I think the importance of those radio stations and I think that CBQM and the work that was done on that station from the National Film Board in realizing what a key piece of community infrastructure the radio station is by way of messages and, more importantly, the different government organizations who take the time and go on the radio station and have an hour in the morning or an hour in the afternoon where they give the community an update on what they do and, more importantly, what is happening in their different organizations, giving people information updates dealing with alcohol, drugs or dealing with policing in the community, dealing with nursing services and also dealing just with getting people messages. I think that we can't lose sight of that, so I would just like to ask the Minister exactly how many communities are accessing that \$52,000.

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

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Chairman. Currently we have eight different projects on the go, I believe it is eight different communities as well. We can provide that information. Mahsi.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Just using the number eight, I think that \$52,000 for eight communities, I believe somebody was looking at a newspaper the other day which was put out in regards to something about, from the Department of Education, in regards to nutrition, food and whatnot, and I think that advertisement in the newspaper is somewhere in the range of -- and you can clarify for me on that -- \$2500 for a full-page ad in a newspaper which is circulating throughout the Territories. So I think you can figure out that for eight communities for \$52,000, we don't really give them much by way of assistance. I think it is important that we as government find the systems that work in communities, the best means of communications, but, more importantly, how those systems are being used to get government messages out.

Again I go back to CBQM in Fort McPherson. Every timeslot is filled by different organizations in the community. It is either the alcohol centre, the RCMP, the DEA or the different elders councils, so I am to look at how the systems are there for communication and for how that plays, especially

for people that are on the land and for people that are on the road and whatnot, that you are still able to get that communication out there. So again for me the issue is, what is the possibility of increasing those amounts so that we can support those radio stations in regards to eight communities or basically eight organizations? But again, you figure it out, eight into fifty-two, you are only looking at somewhere around \$5,000 apiece. I think for me it is a question of for \$6,000 is there any way we can increase that to, say, \$10,000 per group?

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** This is an area that we can look at where the communities that we sponsor currently, the eight communities, how is the program being run or is it a successful program. Because we do a contribution agreement through those communities on an annual basis, so if we talk about an increase, then, of course, we have to find the funds to offset that cost, but we can look at that request. Mahsi.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Minister. To help him out I will move a motion, that way it is on record.

COMMITTEE MOTION 23-16(4):  
IDENTIFY ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR  
COMMUNITY BROADCASTING GRANTS  
THAT PROVIDE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE  
FOR COMMUNITY-BASED  
RADIO AND TELEVISION STATIONS,  
CARRIED

Mr. Chairman, I move that the committee strongly recommends the Department of Education, Culture and Employment take immediate action to identify initial funds for the community broadcast grants that provide financial assistance to community-based radio and television stations. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you Mr. Krutko. The motion is being distributed. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

Committee, we are on page 10-18, activity summary, Education, Culture and Employment, education and culture, grants and contributions, grants \$52,000, and contributions. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Page 10-19, activity summary, Education, Culture and Employment, education and culture, grants and contributions, continued. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Page 10-20, activity summary, Education, Culture and Employment,

education and culture, grants and contributions, continued, \$159.919 million. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you Mr. Chairman. One of the things I would like some clarification from the government on is how often to assess these programs to see the uptake that is out there, because especially for the North there is a lot of great performers, you know? One of the main attractions we have in the North is the cultural events, the different types of festivals, the arts festivals and things like that. I think for ourselves as the North, that is the key component that makes us unique and I think, if anything, have we ever looked at evaluating or assessing that to see... Because, I mean, you talk to a lot of non-government organizations, you talk to a lot of performers, you talk to a lot of people that are struggling just to keep themselves involved and most of them are having to go elsewhere. I would like to just ask the Minister... I noted that most of the dollar amounts are similar year after year, so is there a way that we can do an evaluation or do an assessment or look at some sort of evaluation system where there is a high demand by way of applications or by way of intake what people want, but yet we don't have enough money to get to all the people that need it. Realizing that there is a demand out there for these types of programs, have we ever looked at that way of having a system in place to increase the funding where we realize there is a demand and, more importantly, where we have a major uptake versus where there are programs that continue to lapse money? Thank you.

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

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, this particular area, of course, we use the guidelines of the Arts Strategy that was developed a few years back and working close with the NWT Arts Council as well. They usually bring forward, let's say, a request or a proposal and it does fluctuate as well. As you see here, there's been some increase to the arts funding due to the request that has been made. So, Mr. Chair, those are the areas that we continue to make changes as needed in the communities. So what the Member is asking for is an area that I think we continue to make progress. Mahsi.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Minister Lafferty. Committee, I'd like to take a brief second and recognize a member of the Order of Canada, Arlene Hache, and also a resident of Weledeh.

Thank you. Committee, we're on page 10-20, activity summary, Education, Culture and Employment, education and culture, grants and contributions, continued, total contributions, \$159.867 million. Total grants and contributions, \$159.919 million. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** On page 10-21, information item, Education, Culture and Employment, education and culture. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** We're on page 10-22, advanced education. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I did have a couple of questions here. As I alluded to in my general comments, recognizing the cost of living and the need for community-based expertise to address things like cost of living but also some of our environmental priorities, the need for local economic development, the need for technological and administrative expertise in our communities, I'm wondering if the department has finally responded to the Standing Committee on Social Program's persistent recommendation that Aurora College programs be developed for sustainable community administrators and renewable energy technologists. Can the Minister tell me where we're at on that? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Education.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I do believe my department has met with the Aurora College on what the Member is referring to. Of course, we need to discuss further on what other programs are out there. I know the Member is passionate about the non-renewable resource area and the program that he has suggested in the past. Those are the discussions that we continue to have with the college. The college will likely come back to our department and identify different programming, enhancing their programs, compared to what other jurisdictions are offering. So, yes, those are the ongoing discussions we are having with the college. Mahsi.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I appreciate that that discussion has started, but I have some of the same frustrations as others, that I really think this department should be giving direction and I don't think it's suitable to be waiting for these things. We've been calling for these for years now. Time is passing by, as everybody knows. On that basis, I would like to propose a motion, Mr. Chair, if I may go ahead.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Bromley. You have a motion. Go ahead.

COMMITTEE MOTION 24-16(4):  
DEVELOPMENT AND INTRODUCTION OF AN  
AURORA COLLEGE DIPLOMA PROGRAM FOR  
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ADMINISTRATION  
AND RENEWABLE ENERGY TECHNOLOGY,  
CARRIED

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment move in a timely manner to develop and introduce

an Aurora College diploma program for sustainable community administration and renewable energy technology. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Bromley, your motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Question is being called.

---Carried

Next on the list, Mr. Beaulieu.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On page 10-23, apprenticeship and occupations, I just want to ask the Minister if there's an expansion in the program. There is a couple hundred thousand dollars added to from the revised amount. There's a real need in the small communities for apprenticeships. My feeling is that all tradesmen in small communities should be given an apprentice to create all kinds of economic possibilities in small communities, whether it be Public Works, NWT Housing Corporation through the housing authorities and whatnot. I know in my communities we have tradesmen that don't have apprentices right now, and we have tradesmen that do have apprentices, but I think that there's a great amount of economic spinoff for small communities and so on when there are tradesmen working in the community, especially when it's very difficult in small communities to get any work done on your own housing unit and so on. And the whole philosophy of the Housing Corporation, once you become a homeowner, that you should, if you can afford it and if you have the income, be able to maintain your own unit, or at this point, even if individuals in communities had the money to maintain their units, especially in fly-in communities or communities that are serviced by barge, for the most part, like Lutselk'e. Even in Fort Resolution, you have to go to Hay River to get a journeyman to come in and service your furnace if there's no one available in the community, or carpentry work and things like that. I guess I just wanted to know if there's an expansion in the program that we'll be seeing more apprentices in the small communities.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Education.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the answer is yes, we are expanding our Trades Apprenticeship Program. We've invested several hundred thousand. Let's say \$200,000 for the additional support for our apprenticeships and through our Labour Market we've identified another \$400,000 in that area. Throughout the department we do have approximately a million in that figure that supports the apprenticeship and the trades sector.

The new funding that's been identified is focusing on the women and aboriginal people in the

communities for the Northwest Territories; so strictly focusing in that area. Also, we are, Mr. Chair, reviewing a program as a pilot project where we're potentially having apprenticeship preparation for aboriginal persons programming similar to the ones in Alberta, if we can deliver that model in the Northwest Territories and other models that we can certainly utilize that we can have individuals benefit from it.

Mr. Chairman, yes, the answer will be we are making changes and providing more opportunities for those small, isolated communities. Mahsi.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Mr. Chairman, thanks to Minister Lafferty for that response. I think that is going in the right direction. I hope to see a couple of apprentices in Fort Resolution and Lutselk'e as a result.

In the activity of career and employment development, there is a good increase again in that activity. I am wondering if it is all focussed in on career centres and, in other words, in either the regional centres or Yellowknife or is there going to be opportunities for career and employment development in the small communities. As opposed to just yes, I would like to know what some of the new opportunities are for in that activity area. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mr. Chairman, yes. Throughout the career and employment development, we have added a new initiative, as the Members are aware. Smaller community summer employment supports, that certainly will go a long way in small, isolated communities for providing employment to the youth. We do have regional representatives and also at the community level that deal with career counselling. We provide funding to the schools as well, provide that to the community outreach workers and then career officers and so forth.

Mr. Chairman, we can provide more of the detailed breakdown of the actual amount of the main estimates, \$1.8 million, if the Member wants that. We do have the information that we can provide. It is just that we don't have that here in front of us. Mahsi.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Mr. Chairman, I thank the Minister. As opposed to at this point I actually thought about what the strategy is for the government. This breakdown, my feeling is that in the area of career and employment development that the government, I think, has an obligation to maybe look at the areas of the greatest amount of unemployment and not using unemployment statistics, of course, because those are only if you ever get to the position where you can draw employment insurance. I am wondering if the government would look at employment rates in the small communities. I know that the employment rates are fairly high in the regional centres and where I know that the last statistics that I have for

employment rates are in the 40 percent employment rate. It really is the real telling figure of what is happening in the small communities, especially I am finding that there is just no work in small aboriginal communities. People are always scrambling for income to pay their expenses and so on. I am wondering if the government is using employment rates as some form of strategic position in order to focus their efforts on career development and employment development. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mr. Chairman, we gather as many stats as we possibly can to develop case arguments with the federal government, because they are our partners as well. We just signed off a Labour Market Agreement just recently that deals with the youth, with those individuals that are ineligible for EI and training aspect and those individuals that do fall through the cracks. It is a training program in dollars that we have a joint force with the federal government. It is approximately \$1.4 million on an annual basis for up to 2014. That is just an area that will certainly benefit the communities.

With the facts and the stats that the Member is referring to about the employment in the community, the stats, we have fully utilized that with the federal government. We continue to use that information within our department, as well, to develop a strategic plan on a going forward basis. Mahsi.

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

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Actually, I was looking at the conclusion of this page to go back to page 10-17, but I was looking to complete this page first.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Education, Culture and Employment, operations expenditure summary, advanced education, \$43.816 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Menicoche.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Mr. Chairman, I seek Committee of the Whole's indulgence. Can we turn back to page 10-17, Education, Culture and Employment?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** The Member is asking for consent to go back to page 10-17.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Menicoche.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do have a committee motion I would like to read in. I am going to distribute it.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Menicoche is making a motion. Go ahead.

COMMITTEE MOTION 25-16(4):  
INCLUSION OF NEW SCHOOL AND  
GYMNASIUM IN THE MULTI-YEAR  
CAPITAL PLAN FOR THE COMMUNITY  
OF TROUT LAKE,  
CARRIED

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Mr. Chairman, I move that this committee recommends that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment immediately commence planning to ensure that a new school and gymnasium is included in the multi-year capital plan for the community of Trout Lake. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Question has been called.

---Carried

Page 10-17, Education, Culture and Employment, activity summary, operations expenditure summary, \$181.532 million. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Okay. We can go back to page 10-24, grants and contributions, advanced education, contributions, \$32.271 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Page 10-25, active positions, advanced education, information item. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** We are moving on to page 10-27, income security, operations expenditure summary, activity summary. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again following up on my comments in my opening remarks and others spoke to the same issue. I have questions on the \$400,000 that is going to establishing a coordination committee or a steering committee for nutritious foods across the NWT. This is the latest and, I believe, third morph into this incarnation in response to our repeated requests of Members for a milk subsidy or some sort of a direct program to nutritious food. The milk subsidy was focused very much on children, especially young children, and the department continues to dilute that into something meaningless, relatively meaningless and this time it sounds particularly bureaucratic, more so each time I see words. I'm wondering what the Minister really means with this \$400,000 NWT Nutritious Foods Steering Committee. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Education.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the \$400,000 that's been identified would cover a variety of, I guess, sectors or a committee to identify what's important in the communities. I wouldn't call this meaningless money. There's \$400,000 going to the communities. We want to spend the \$400,000, the majority of it, probably 90 or 95 percent of it, in the schools, in the community, into the organizations' hands so they can deliver a breakfast program or other nutritious program. We can't call it meaningless, Mr. Chair.

I think it's important to identify that we are working with the NWT Foods First Foundation as well as Health and Social Services, the Stats Bureau and ENR and other school boards as well are involved and medical and health care. So those are the organizations that are actively involved with the community, whether it be the breakfast program, the school programming or the community programming. So they're the ones who will carry this on. So we want to give them the \$400,000 because they're the experts at the table. Mr. Chair, that was the \$400,000 that's been allocated for that. Mahsi.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Well good grief, Mr. Chair, we don't need bureaucracy like this. Yeah, I could match the number of people on groups and agencies and so on the Minister listed that are working on this and beside which Health and Social Services, according to the departmental document publicly available, NWT nutrition and nutrition related programs and initiatives, the lead for NWT Nutrition Strategy is Health and Social Services. So, Mr. Chair, we want to see direct programs to support nutritious foods in a new and improved way and actually not even that, we just want to put good foods into the mouths of babes, as my colleague Ms. Bisaro put it.

So on that basis, Mr. Chair, I'm going to make a motion, if I may. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Bromley, you're moving a motion. Go ahead.

COMMITTEE MOTION 26-16(4):  
DELETION OF \$400,000 FOR THE NUTRITIOUS  
FOODS STEERING COMMITTEE AND ITS  
ASSOCIATED ACTIVITIES,  
DEFEATED

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that \$400,000 be deleted from the activity income security under the Department of Education, Culture and Employment Main Estimates 2010-2011, page 10-27, for the Nutritious Foods Steering Committee and its associated activities. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** The motion is in order. Motion is being distributed. To the motion. Mr. Lafferty.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Chair...(inaudible)...it's been of great interest to us. When we start talking about the food basket and other areas of nutritious food delivery into the communities, to the schools, and this \$400,000 was earmarked so we can identify what's needed in the communities. As I stated earlier, Mr. Chair, the \$400,000, the majority of it will be going to the community, it will be going to the organization so they can distribute it to the students that are without food or the breakfast program in the morning, because we did listen to the Assembly Members about no more studies. So we're saying the \$400,000 will go towards that particular food programming, the nutritious food. So, Mr. Chair, I just want to highlight that we can't take the food away or the money away from those individuals that desperately need it and to work with it. I think it's important to highlight that.

You know, we took the study part away. We were going to focus on, okay, what's out there now, but the majority of the money will be going to the communities. So I just want to reiterate that for the general public that the \$400,000, it is going to a good cause and we feel that it should still be part of our budgeting process. Mahsi, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** To the motion. Mr. Jacobson.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. For myself I'm not going to be supporting this. I think the \$400,000 that the Minister is speaking to, Mr. Bromley, in my communities that I represent this breakfast program is a big thing in the communities and I cannot take this money away. We can't allocate it anywhere else. We just could take it away and I'm not going to do that. So I'm not going to support the motion. This program is needed in the communities. Families can't go and buy \$18 for a thing of cereal and \$22 for milk. They go to the schools. If they get into the schools early enough, the kids will get a breakfast program. So, I mean, the best thing about it is, like I said, I'm not going to support this motion. I want this money to stay in the budget. So just think of all the little kids you're going to take that money away from. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** To the motion. Mr. Menicoche.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I initially was thinking that because they reprofiled the money and went in front of committee with the reprofile and just listening to the Minister's arguments that they're looking at assisting and augmenting some of the programs that we have in the regions and the communities, that's something that I certainly would like to see, and I think Mr. Bromley, the mover of the motion, was quite adamant about not setting up another steering committee and making a bureaucratic process. Of course, it's a concern for all MLAs, that the last

thing we need is more government, but at the same time, should the government keep to their reprofiling commitment of helping our communities?

I've got a riding with many small communities that take pride in their nutritious programs with whatever little resources that they do have. So just with that, Mr. Chair, I cannot support this motion for deleting \$400,000 with respect to this line item. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Next on the list I have Mr. Bromley, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Miltenberger and Mr. Beaulieu. Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate that Members on this side of the House have said that they don't want to lose this money and I, at the risk of offending anybody, and this is not my intention, but there's certainly schools in Yellowknife that have the same difficulties that the schools in the communities do and have students who need the breakfast money or whatever.

My concern with this particular pot of money, our understanding was that it was going to be used for a study and I appreciate the department's reaction to the Social Programs committee's advice and comments and that it has now been changed. But from what I understood the Minister to say, this is a steering committee, we're going to establish, as Mr. Bromley said, more bureaucracy and he's also said we're going to put it into other programs. Well, you know things that are already there, I have no information on which to base my decision relative to these funds. If the Minister could provide me with a list of the programs that are out there and how this \$400,000 is going to be divided up between these programs, no problem. But at the moment what I am hearing is we are going to establish a committee -- Lord knows how much money that is going to take out of the \$400,000 -- and they are going to do something with whatever is left, but I don't know what it is that they are going to do.

I feel really strongly that we are being asked to consider... Basically we are being asked to vote on something that we really don't know anything about, and it is a real problem. The other thing that Members need to know is that I believe there is an intention for another motion to come forward to replace this money or this particular... basically to advise the department to reprofile money to put food into the mouths of babes, so there will be an opportunity to have their fears about losing this money. I will leave it at that, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Next, Mr. Beaulieu, to the motion.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To the motion. I don't know, I haven't done any studies on what is needed. I don't know where this money is scheduled to go. I am in the very same boat as Mr. Menicoche and Mr. Jacobson. I know we have had a lot of discussions about this and actually targeting

an actual subsidy for milk and so on; however, as this has evolved today, I don't want the communities to feel that because the word "committee" falls into the plan, I would then remove something from the schools where it is needed. I mean, our communities are poor. We have, like I have said over and over again in the House here, a 40 percent employment rate in the communities I represent and people I think just get food from day to day, in a lot of cases. So if this is something that is a way of feeding the kids at the school, then I don't want to see it removed as well. I can't support this as well.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** To the motion. Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have some initiatives underway. For example, if we bring forward and all agree to a rate restructuring that will lower the cost of living in the smaller communities through lowering power rates, then we will be in a situation of being able to positively affect the whole food basket. I also would suggest that we are better off to leave this money in the budget where it now is, and the Minister has indicated that most of it is going to go to the communities and he has indicated his willingness to work with committee on this. I think it is important that we consider leaving it in the budget and working forward from here. Once money is removed, it is always very difficult to...(inaudible)...that it is going to go back into a different place. So I would encourage Members to support to keep this money in the budget. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** To the motion. Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As much as I personally feel that the money should be deleted, I am going to have to side with some of my colleagues from the smaller communities who feel that the money may find a good use. I have said this before and I think this is just an example of the government wanting to find a committee or do a study or maybe hire a consultant, and I think that is going to eat up a lot of this money. I think the money could be better spent, and I think that the committee has got to be on top of the department when it comes to trying to find ways and means to get nutritious foods into the children.

We have talked many times about a milk subsidy program and other things like that and I think we have really got to start looking at that. This money, hopefully it gets spent the right way. If we were to take it out, it would just disappear into the abyss and the government would find something else to spend \$400,000 on what we probably wouldn't agree with anyway. So I think I am going to err on the side of caution and side with those that want to keep the money in there. But again, I think the



Standing Committee on Social Programs has got to take the department to task and I know I have been to a number of meetings with my colleagues on the Social Programs committee trying to get this milk subsidy up and running. Something like that is meaningful and going to have some real impact on children and is more favourable than what is being proposed, but I am going to have to vote against the motion, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Next, Mrs. Groenewegen.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think this discussion on this motion is turning into something that the motion to delete is not. I think we are talking about two different things here. The government is saying yes, support the \$400,000. Why then can it not clearly be described to us what the \$400,000 is for? Because if it is for a steering committee, I don't support it. You can buy a lot of food for \$400,000 and if we thought it was a milk subsidy or a food breakfast program for children and we keep talking about the communities, this would be, I assume, unless we want to specifically target to small communities, I assume this is all communities. So why is there such a failure on the part of the department and the Minister to explain to us what this is?

I don't like being asked to say trust us, support us, we can't tell you what we are going to spend it on, but, you know, leave it in the budget. That is where I have a problem. If that is the case, we might as well just take this entire budget document and say we trust you, go ahead, spend the money how you see fit. But that is why we go through this process of trying to look at this budget on a line-by-line, department-by-department basis. That is why it is called detail, so that we can understand what the money is budgeted for.

I am right now, sitting here, having listened to the Minister, I mean, this thing seems like it has morphed about three or four times. It started off as... When it first came in the business plans it was one thing; by the time it made it to the budget address, it was something else; and by the time it made it actually here to the floor of the House it has turned into something else again.

This is not mad money, we all support nutritious food for children in our schools. Let's be clear about that. If that is what this is, I am all for leaving it in there, but if this is for a steering committee to look and study and review and, you know, absorb that money on travel and all kinds of things, then, no, I don't support it.

There are lots of organizations out there right now that are dealing with this whole issue of nutritious food in the schools, I shouldn't say lots of organizations, but there are organizations, there are good non-government organizations that are dealing with this. So if I could hear, Mr. Chairman,

the Minister say that this is going to actually translate into food for school children, not a review of the food basket, not the establishment of a steering committee, then I would totally support leaving that money in there. If I even, during the debate on this motion, could hear the Minister say that, I think that would affect how I vote, but right now I just don't know. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** To the motion. Ms. Lee.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have no doubt that the Members on the other side are... They are well intentioned; they want to do what is right for the children and increase support to the children and their nutrition programs. Perhaps it would have been better if we worded this not as a committee but nutritious food project, because this is something that all the Members have been asking for and this is what the intent of this money is, and the Department of Health and Social Services is working in partnership with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment to see this project through.

Details have not been worked out because this is a new program and you don't want to work out all of the details before the money is approved. But I can tell you that's how we foresee this working is the Department of Health and Social Services and ECE working with NGOs like the NWT Food First Foundation. I think it's a group that lots of people are familiar with. They are strong advocates for increasing support to children and their food needs, and other groups involved in school boards to enhance what we already have.

I don't know if the Members know there are 47 schools across the NWT, 49, and most of them have some kind of breakfast program, even in Yellowknife. I was doing a tour of St. Joes and they were excited about enhancing their kitchen facility, because we have the largest population of aboriginal kids and non-aboriginal kids who are not always getting breakfast in the morning, and they get support from other NGO groups to do that.

So I do believe that this is a program that the Members are looking for. It might have been misnamed, but I would really encourage the Members to not delete it, because we know a motion to delete is final; the money is gone and any other ideas to bring it back works in different channels. I think it would be better if we keep this money in there and Minister Lafferty and myself could work with the committee to finalize the plan. I think we could work to enhance what's already there.

I could also tell you that the Department of Health and Social Services has Healthy Foods North, for example. There are active groups on the ground who are reviewing traditional food and aboriginal food for their nutritious value. So this will allow us to tie it all together.

I want to say one more thing. I think, when we are talking about healthy food for children, we need to look beyond milk. I know milk is important, but milk is not necessarily something that everybody is used to drinking or something they have grown up with and there are some people who are allergic to milk. I've never grown up with milk. Milk is not something I grab for first thing. I've had information from community people that said they would rather see that we focus our energy on programs that enhance nutrition for children on a wider basis than just milk, because we know there are other foods like fish that could be a source of calcium. We also know that children need food that enhances vitamin D and other necessary nutrients. So I would just close by saying that I would urge Members to not delete this money, but accept our commitment that we will work with you to work out the details. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Hawkins.

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

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** There is a motion on the floor. If there are no other speakers, I will allow the presenter of the motion to wrap it up. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, this has been a very good discussion. I think the situation, you heard the surprise when the Minister mentioned the milk program and so on, or the breakfast program and so on, the things that were not mentioned in the detail we had received to date. The sticking point for the committee is obviously the steering committee. We do not need government by committee, and I am hoping that that will be nixed somehow, an NWT-wide Nutritious Foods Steering Committee. We envision people flying around and wasting dollars, which should be put directly into the sorts of programs that have been mentioned: Food First and breakfast programs in schools.

I also want to mention that this is certainly a new program, as the Minister of Health and Social Services... In fact, the idea was about a week old when we first saw it, which reflects the sort of thinking, the depth of thinking that's gone into this. It's on the fly, anything other than getting in line more directly and non-bureaucratically with what the committee had in mind seems to be something this government is willing to take here.

The Minister of Health and Social Services again mentioned milk allergies. Oh my gosh, how many times do we have to address that? We've never denied that that is an issue and there are other milk substitutes out there that will deal with that. An important aspect that is missed in the programs I have been hearing about is the early childhood side of the equation. That was always a very important part. In fact, initially we had conceived of this as dealing with the first six years of life, very much a preschool thing, at least in emphasis.

So, Mr. Chair, I am quite willing to have this motion die here or not be passed, but I would ask committee for their support in withholding final approval of this department's budget until such time as the Minister provides much more detail on how these dollars will be spent and convinces us that it's not going to disappear in bureaucracy, it will actually get translated into nutritious food delivered to children. That's all I have. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** The motion is on the floor. We'll deal with the motion.

---Defeated

At this time I would like to acknowledge the clock and I will rise and report progress.

At this time, I would like to ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to escort the witnesses out, please.

### Report of Committee of the Whole

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 62-16(4), NWT Main Estimates, 2010-2011, and would like to report progress, with three motions being adopted. 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 Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

---Carried

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

### Orders of the Day

**PRINCIPAL CLERK OF OPERATIONS (Ms. Bennett):** Orders of the day for Thursday, February 11, 2010, 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
5. Returns to Oral Questions
6. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
7. Acknowledgements
8. Oral Questions
9. Written Questions
10. Returns to Written Questions
11. Replies to Opening Address
12. Petitions
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
  - Motion 11-16(4), Development of an Anti-Poverty Strategy
  - Motion 12-16(4), Setting of Sitting Hours by Speaker
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, Madam Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Thursday, February 11<sup>th</sup>, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

