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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Wednesday, May 18, 2011****Members Present**

Mr. Abernethy, Mr. Beaulieu, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Bromley, Hon. Paul Delorey, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Hawkins, Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Krutko, Hon. Jackson Lafferty, Hon. 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 of Human Resources, Mr. Bob McLeod.

Ministers' Statements**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 24-16(6):
DEVELOPING THE PUBLIC SERVICE**

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, one of the priorities of the 16th Legislative Assembly is improving human resource management within the Government of the Northwest Territories through training, career planning and encouraging employee innovation. By doing this, we move closer to our goal of an effective and efficient government.

The Department of Human Resources is working towards that goal with the Public Service Strategic Plan, 20/20: A Brilliant North. We know that to provide a high level of service to the people of the Northwest Territories, we must develop and maintain a public service representative of the people it serves. The Government of the Northwest Territories is working to ensure that the diversity of northern society is represented throughout the public service, which is a shared responsibility involving all departments in establishing opportunities for people.

In addition to our ongoing efforts to hire interns and graduates, a number of initiatives are underway. The Government of the Northwest Territories Advisory Committee on Employability was formed in 2010 to provide recommendations for increasing the representation of persons with disabilities. A strategy will be developed for the recruitment and retention of persons with disabilities this fall.

As well, in 2010, the Aboriginal Employees Advisory Committee was formed to provide recommendations on increasing the number of Aboriginal employees within the public service. This year regional advisory committees will be established to bring a regional and community

perspective to Aboriginal employee issues. The Department of Human Resources is currently developing an Aboriginal Employment Strategy which will guide the Government of the Northwest Territories Aboriginal recruitment and retention initiatives. Mr. Speaker, there is still work to be done and we remain committed to the fundamental principles and implementation of the Affirmative Action Policy.

Developing our employees and preparing for the future of the public service is another central focus of our strategic planning. To develop a sustainable core of managers in the Government of the Northwest Territories, a Leadership Development Program has been initiated which will provide employees with the specific skills they need to succeed. This program is targeting a 50 percent Aboriginal participation rate.

The Associate Director/Superintendent Program was piloted this year with great success. This program provides increased opportunity for indigenous Aboriginal persons to occupy senior management positions on a developmental basis. The Department of Human Resources is preparing to roll out the next phase of this program.

While we continue to build opportunities to improve capacity of the public service, I would like to recognize that the people of the Northwest Territories are already served by skilled and dedicated public servants. To acknowledge the good work of the Government of the Northwest Territories staff, and to give the public an opportunity to meet the people working on their behalf, the Department of Human Resources has launched a new website: Meet our People. This page features career profiles of public servants in a variety of jobs in different regions and who are at different stages in their careers.

The Public Service Strategic Plan provides an ambitious 10-year framework for the development of the public service in the Northwest Territories and is guiding our human resource management. I have highlighted a few of the major initiatives that this government has developed to meet our vision of a well-staffed, representative public service. Later today I will be tabling the 20/20: A Brilliant North Action Plan and Results Report for 2011-2012.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 25-16(6):
PREMIER'S AWARDS

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Every day our employees deliver critical programs and services to the residents of the Northwest Territories. The Premier's Awards recognize this outstanding service and celebrate the extraordinary achievements of those employees who demonstrate excellence and innovation in meeting the objectives of work as a government.

Earlier today I was pleased to present the 2011 Premier's Awards to 36 such dedicated public servants and 20 external collaborative partners.

Three team awards were presented in the 2011 season recognizing:

- the creation of the Good Building Practice for Northern Facilities 2009 guidebook;
- the in-house development of a system that collects and disseminates weather products critical in calculating wild land fire danger; and
- the use of Aboriginal standards of practice and traditional values for prevention and early intervention on social issues.

The Premier's Collaboration Awards recognize the work of teams made of GNWT and non-GNWT employees who work together to enhance government programs or services. Collaboration Awards for 2011 were presented for:

- the use of environmentally sustainable technology that blends traditional and western science knowledge;
- work on our government's multi-year intervention at the National Energy Board hearings on the proposed Mackenzie Gas Project; and
- development of the Northern Voices, Northern Waters - NWT Water Stewardship Strategy.

An individual Premier's Award for Excellence was presented to Mr. Benoit Boutin for his work on the implementation of communications and services in the French language.

This year a new individual award was introduced in honour of the late Dave Ramsden, a long-time GNWT employee, former deputy minister and secretary to Cabinet. This award recognizes an individual with a demonstrated history of commitment to excellence and public service over the course of their career.

The 2011 Dave Ramsden Career Excellence Award was presented to Mr. Sukhdev Cheema. During Mr. Cheema's nearly 30-year career with the government, he has guided building design

decisions on major infrastructure projects throughout the North, promoted and demonstrated sound energy management practices, and played an instrumental role in bringing northern building science and technology issues to the international level.

Each Premier's Award recipient today received a plaque featuring porcupine quillwork on birch bark from artisans from the Fort Liard area. The Dave Ramsden Award features original artwork by Jennifer Walden.

Encouraging innovation among our public servants is one of the priorities this Assembly identified to help pursue its goal of effective and efficient government. The leadership, cross-agency collaboration and innovative ideas demonstrated by the recipients of this year's Premier's Awards and their working partners is a model for us all and has resulted in enhanced productivity and improved services.

I invite the Assembly to join me in congratulating award recipients and extending our appreciation to all members of the public service for their professionalism, resourcefulness and hard work.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 26-16(6):
NWT SENIORS' SOCIETY
ACTION PLAN ON ELDER ABUSE

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Later today I will table the new NWT Seniors' Society Action Plan: Making Connections – Building Networks to Prevent Abuse of Older Adults.

Seniors and elders are the fastest growing segment of the Northwest Territories population. Unfortunately, the vulnerability of many elders leaves them open to exploitation, often by relatives or others in their community. The Northwest Territories Seniors' Society reports within its new action plan entitled Making Connections – Building Networks to Prevent Abuse of Older Adults that 71 percent of older adults say the abuse of older adults is a problem in their community. While all forms of abuse exist, the most common forms are financial, neglect, emotional and verbal.

Protecting the health and welfare of all NWT residents is a priority of the Government of the Northwest Territories. I would like to thank the NWT Seniors for this action plan. The Department of Health and Social Services will consider these recommendations in our new five-year strategic plan.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Health and Social Services has included elder abuse prevention as

part of the overall strategy to prevent family violence.

The department considers senior abuse an important issue. We have provided \$187,452 to the NWT Seniors' Society, and \$90,000 of this funding was used by the NWT Seniors' Society for community outreach work to support their Building Networks to Prevent Elder Abuse Symposium.

The NWT Seniors' Society Action Plan includes many valid recommendations to address abuse. It is the role of governments, NGOs, community leaders and northern society as a whole not to turn a blind eye to elder abuse. We all have a responsibility to prevent the abuse of our elders. We all must stand together and say this is not acceptable in our communities.

The Department of Health and Social Services continues to pursue initiatives to provide enhanced services for NWT seniors, such as long-term care planning, injury prevention for seniors, developing new continuing care strategies, and elder abuse awareness and prevention.

The department's Foundation for Change Action Plan recognizes the importance of working with our stakeholders and partners on policies and programs for seniors and elders. We will continue to work collaboratively with the NWT Seniors' Society towards eliminating elder abuse and ensuring our seniors enjoy the benefits of healthy aging and a better quality of life. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Minister responsible for Public Works and Services, Mr. Michael McLeod.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 27-16(6):
INUVIK SCHOOLS PROJECT

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, the Department of Public Works and Services is proceeding with the delivery of the combined schools project for the replacement of the Samuel Hearne Secondary School and Sir Alexander Mackenzie School in Inuvik. This combined facility is one of our largest building projects in the history of our government and will support this Assembly's goal of healthy, educated Northerners.

Mr. Speaker, it's only been 30 months since the start of construction of the Inuvik Schools Project and it's already over 66 percent complete. As a result, I can inform Members today that the general contractor for this project has advised the department that this state-of-the-art facility could be open to students in the community of Inuvik in the fall of 2012. Mr. Speaker, this is a full school year earlier than originally planned.

The progress we see today is an example of what northern contractors, engineers, architects, tradespeople, business and government departments can achieve through working together.

This modern facility will accommodate up to 1,050 students from kindergarten to grade 12 in 54 teaching spaces. It will replace two schools that have reached the end of their service life. The completion of this new facility will help address a portion of the GNWT's deferred maintenance deficit.

Mr. Speaker, the Inuvik Schools Project is progressing on budget and is providing significant economic opportunities for northern and for local businesses. To date, over 74 percent of the total expenditures for goods and services has been to northern contractors and suppliers, with 51 percent of total spending going to local companies as listed by the government's Business Incentive Policy. Approximately 34 northern businesses have been involved with the project, with 22 of these businesses listed as locally owned.

Northern workers are also benefiting substantially from this project, with 53 percent of the workforce hired being northern and 46 percent hired being local.

Although the project's delivery is accelerated, we're diligently ensuring that it's being constructed to the highest standards of quality and workmanship. This includes making sure that we deliver this government's alternate energy efficiency priorities. Recent independent testing analysis confirmed our efforts, Mr. Speaker, as the Inuvik schools building is projected to be 56 percent more energy efficient than the model National Energy Building Code's reference standard. Building projects to this high standard not only helps manage the energy costs of GNWT facilities but further advances our government's greenhouse gas emission goals.

Mr. Speaker, improving the GNWT's approach to support capital has been one of our achievements under the Refocusing Government Strategic Initiative. The Inuvik Schools Project is an example of how we can better deliver capital infrastructure projects that benefit our workforce and our economy. I look forward to the ongoing progress of this project in the coming year and hope to see its achievements applied to other projects as we continue with our vision of Northerners Working Together. Mahsi. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NEGOTIATED CONTRACTS FOR CAPITAL PROJECTS

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Contracts are a means to develop economic growth in our communities, but more importantly, government infrastructure such as housing, replacement of schools and public facilities. Mr. Speaker, I've asked through a written question in this House how many negotiated contracts were let in my riding, the Mackenzie Delta, for the last five years. Surprisingly, it was \$876,000 in five years.

Mr. Speaker, out of a total capital investment of almost \$12 million, \$9.6 million was expended to contractors from outside my constituency.

Mr. Speaker, economic development is a key component to deal with the socio-economic development of our communities. Without the contracts government lets, capital investment in our communities, those capital investment dollars should be expended in our region and our ridings so that it can generate employment and business opportunities and allow for our workforce to meet its needs by way of apprenticeship programs, skill development and, more important, employment.

Mr. Speaker, in my riding there is some 60 percent unemployment in two of my communities. Mr. Speaker, it is pretty obvious that this government's policies and procedures when it comes down to contracting, negotiated contracts, sole sourced or even public tendering, is not meeting the needs of our smaller communities. It's meeting the needs of people in the larger regional centres, where a large portion of our capital investment is being expended to the tune of almost \$10 million in my riding alone, where only less than 10 percent is being expended in my riding.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time I will be asking the Minister of the Housing Corporation how he can justify this imbalance of capital expenditures in my riding.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON REPLACEMENT OF BLUEFISH DAM

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are significant hydro opportunities here in the Northwest Territories. Given the rapidly increasing fuel rates and the environmental impacts of our reliance on diesel fuel for power and heat throughout the Northwest Territories, we must remain focused on building upon and maintaining our hydro potential.

Earlier this year the Northwest Territories Power Corporation decided to put more time into development of the business case for the Taltson Hydroelectric Expansion Project. I believe it was the right and most responsible decision. If previous assumptions about customer usage are not proven out, the basis for the project needs to be re-examined.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to talk about another NCPD project. In the fall of 2009, the replacement of the Bluefish dam was deemed to be an emergency. The Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board granted an emergency exemption for preliminary screening for the required permits for the replacement of this dam. Construction materials were to be brought to site during the winter of 2009, but unfortunately the project is now slated to be in service in the fall of 2012.

Mr. Speaker, the cost of the replacement dam is a concern. I was very surprised to read in the media in late April that the cost of the project had increased to over \$33 million. Constituents came to me after reading the same article. They are concerned about the impact of the higher cost of the Bluefish replacement on their families. They are worried the increased costs will be passed on to them. Many of them are having a hard time making ends meet now.

As a Member of this Legislature, I was only aware that the cost of the project was going to be less than \$20 million. I think it's important that the public of Yellowknife be aware of the increased costs for the project, and potential implications for their household and businesses. Gas prices have already increased for our residents, going from \$1.16 a litre before Christmas to over \$1.30 now. According to our Bureau of Statistics, consumer prices for water, fuel and electricity in Yellowknife have risen by over 10 percent between March 2010 and March 2011.

I think we're in danger of pricing many people out of our capital and out of our territory. They won't have the means to cope with an ever-increasing cost of living. This could have serious implications for the GNWT programs and services available to our residents.

I will have questions at the appropriate time for the Minister responsible for the NTPC regarding the impact of the Bluefish dam replacement on power rates in Yellowknife and the Northwest Territories as a whole.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON LONG-TERM CARE FOR ELDERS

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Today I want to draw attention to Aboriginal elders

who are in long-term care. We have an excellent facility in Fort Simpson and I have praised it before in this House. Our elders are very well cared for. That care comes at a price to them. Every elder, including elders with treaty rights, pay \$712 per month for accommodations and meals. That payment eats up the lion's share of his or her old age security money. To make matters worse, this government is increasing that fee to \$729 a month on June 1st. It is truly shameful.

On one hand we love and respect our elders and on the other we chip away at their meagre incomes and leave them with little to enjoy in their last years on this earth. Seniors in public housing pay little or nothing for rent. Why is it that those elders who need the most help have to pay for their accommodation while those who are able to look after themselves do not?

Why is it that Aboriginal elders with treaty rights to medical care have to pay for their long-term care? Why isn't our government collecting these fees from the federal government? The agreement with the federal government is that they provide medicine chests to Aboriginal people. It is probably much easier to chisel \$729 a month from our elders instead, but that doesn't make it right.

For the sake of convenience, we ask our elders to pay when we could be helping them live more comfortable lives. This government should let our elders keep their old age security pensions and do whatever it takes to make it happen. They must speak with Ottawa and get this issue resolved.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SPENDING ON CAPITAL PROJECTS IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier and the Finance Minister do not like to miss any opportunity to talk about the \$450 million spent on capital projects here in the Northwest Territories over the past few years. Yes, this spending is unprecedented capital dollars that are being spent in our communities when our economy needed it the most.

I'd like to again thank the federal government in Ottawa for all the millions of dollars that have flowed North through the various infrastructure stimulus programs that they have offered our program.

As a government we have always seemed to have an issue with carry-overs where capital dollars are approved in one year then never get spent because the project does not get finished. We took a step in addressing this carry-over issue by approving the capital budget in the fall of the year as opposed to with the operations and maintenance budget which

we deal with in February and March. This move was supposed to help alleviate the carry-overs on an annual basis. Yes, we've had an inordinate amount of money to spend, but why are we again this year carrying over close to \$130 million in capital, \$72 million alone in the Department of Transportation?

What I hear from mid-sized construction companies in my riding and in the Northwest Territories, and the Northwest Territories Construction Association, is that they really wonder where all the money was spent. Big projects like the Inuvik School Project and highways and bridge projects ate up the majority of that money. Missing in the equation are projects that medium-sized construction companies could have bid on. Large projects are cutting out small to medium-sized construction companies who employ hundreds of people in our territory. These companies have not gotten much benefit from this unprecedented capital spending by this government. Perhaps what we need is a breakdown of where and for what all this money has gone to.

The smaller companies are getting scared. They have payrolls to meet, overhead and operational costs to bear, and all they see our government looking to is to shrink our capital plan back to more historic levels of around \$75 million a year.

The Minister of Public Works and Services earlier today stated that we're improving the government's approach to capital and we are delivering capital infrastructure projects that benefit our workforce and our economy. Why is it, then, that there is so much concern out there amongst the small to mid-sized construction companies who indicate they are not getting the work...

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Ramsay, you're time for your Member's statement is expired.

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

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. RAMSAY: Why is it, then, that there is so much concern out there amongst the small to mid-sized construction companies who indicate they are not getting the work or benefit of this spending?

We need to ensure as a government that we are spending as much of our capital dollars fairly and that there is a balance between large, medium and smaller capital projects around our territory to benefit our economy the most and the companies that depend upon it.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
GNWT AFFIRMATIVE ACTION POLICY

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to try to discuss a sometimes misunderstood program that we call Affirmative Action. This policy is our government's attempt to achieve a representative workforce. The GNWT is a huge employer in the Northwest Territories and officials may tell me that the GNWT is not the employer of choice in the North, but I can assure you that GNWT jobs are highly sought after and valued by most people that I know.

The population of the NWT is split approximately 50/50 between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. Since the GNWT is a large employer providing services to all residents of the NWT, the goal of achieving a representative workforce is a worthwhile and needed endeavour. How it plays out in reality in the offices and institutions of our government across the North is a little more complex than it sounds.

How do we get people to move to the regional centres in our capital where there is such a high concentration of public service jobs if they live in their own communities and don't want to move there? We don't very often talk about decentralization around here, I notice.

There are also some activities in the government that have traditionally attracted more people from a distinct group that comprise our population. For example, there are undeniably more Aboriginal people drawn to and employed in areas such as renewable resources, wildlife officers and corrections than there are Aboriginal people, for example, working in the towers here in Yellowknife in policy and finance analyst jobs.

Will there ever be a greater balance of people in these areas of administration and finance if we don't make a concerted effort as a government to create capacity in these areas? Are there certain positions that one group would have more affinity with given a stronger connection to the land, such as the areas that I've mentioned: wildlife management, human sciences, counselling, social work?

Some people are not cut out for nine to five jobs and I often hear that from people. They're not interested in sitting in an office from nine to five. How do we set targets, and when those targets are reached in an individual department or activity, do we say mission accomplished and stop applying priority status to those positions?

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: It's hard to believe in this day and age, in this territory, that there are still

systemic barriers to Aboriginal people finding employment with the GNWT in positions for which they are qualified, yet we continue to hear evidence of such instances. If this is true, this is something that needs to be documented and addressed. On the other hand, if we've reached departmental or regional representation goals, what do we do for the people who want to find employment in those activities but cannot and feel that this is because they are not a priority hire candidate?

In the absence of any kind of appeal process for people looking for employment in the GNWT who are not already employees, what mechanism is there to register these kind of concerns from Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal people?

I'd like to thank the Minister of Human Resources for his statement today, which kind of ties in with the kinds of things I'm addressing. That's not my entire statement but I'll stop there and perhaps save some for the preamble in my questions.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
NWT GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION
STRATEGY RENEWAL

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recently I attended the two-day conference on Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation sponsored by the NWT Association of Communities, Pembina Institute, and Ecology North. I salute that expression of the sense of urgency civil society places upon climate change action and the support NWTAC received from government departments.

I also attended a local consultation on a new Greenhouse Gas Reduction Strategy. Attended by a small but dedicated crowd, the meeting spent considerable precious time dwelling on highly outdated goals and objectives of the old plan. Subsequent discussions, though, were more in line with the public's experience on impressive early impacts of climate change and their expectation of a progressive and meaningful response.

We must show we mean business and take real action to provide the leadership needed to meet our responsibilities. In fact, the Premier and the Minister of ENR have stated that in the absence of progressive work at the national level, the ball is clearly in our court.

We need clear NWT-wide reduction targets consistent with the best science, not just controls on GNWT emissions. We must have a list of clear actions and an implementation plan based upon the estimated achievements possible from each action for meeting targets. Specifically, we need NWT-wide building and appliance standards, and timely adoption of transportation measures, including

vehicle emission and mileage standards. We must aggressively install community district heating systems and increase focus on local renewable energy sources like hydro and biomass. We must promote community businesses that meet not just energy, but food, shelter, and cultural needs from local resources. We need a carbon tax that takes a revenue-neutral approach with special consideration for low-income families and rural and remote communities. Specific provisions are required for a few large industries with mandatory requirements to meet carbon targets through energy efficiency, renewable energy, and access to carbon trading markets.

Advancing this initiative requires partnerships with all sectors and with Aboriginal governments. The best science shows that to avert environmental disaster, we need a 25 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 and a 90 percent reduction by 2050. Our public understands this and expects an intelligent response. Let's not fail them.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON LAND TAX AND LAND LEASE ARREARS IN TU NEDHE

MR. BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. In Fort Resolution and Lutsel'k'e there is a huge issue with land tax and land lease arrears. The problem is that taxes and leases are levied on people while the common understanding from the people is that all charges for land and taxes on their properties will be sorted out after the land, resources and government negotiations with Akaitcho are completed. Right now Akaitcho is engaged with the federal government and territorial government in negotiations.

However, invoices are being sent out to people in both communities and now some of the invoices are in the \$20,000 to \$30,000 range, most of which is interest. It appears as though the Department of Finance is not considering the understanding of the Tu Nedhe residents and their negotiations with the governments.

At this time many of my constituents are beginning to panic under such large bills and the fear that if they wait until the negotiations are complete, they will either lose their properties through tax sales or accumulate bills that are well beyond their ability to pay. Some constituents are now at that stage.

I've spoken many times in this House about low employment rates, poor housing and the high cost of living in Tu Nedhe. All of those are factors that contribute to the problem that I present today.

With limited incomes, Tu Nedhe constituents are asked to deal with their own housing repairs,

because up until now land tax arrears made them ineligible for any sort of funding from the NWT Housing Corporation to fix their house. Also, the people in Tu Nedhe live in communities where there is a very high cost of living. Food is expensive, and gasoline needed to harvest traditional foods is also very expensive.

I don't have to draw a full picture here. I think the government can see when there are limited income opportunities and high cost of living, there is nothing left over to pay property taxes. The people in Tu Nedhe are left with an option: you pay your land taxes or feed your kids. I know what most people will do.

Later today I will have questions for the Minister of Finance.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PUBLIC HOUSING RENTAL ARREARS

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Rental arrears in public housing is a chronic problem for the Government of the Northwest Territories. When we reviewed the main estimates earlier this year, average rent collection was only 76 percent at a debt balance of \$13 million outstanding. Collection needs to be at 90 percent in order to maintain the LHO, and that's from the Minister as well as the department, Mr. Speaker. Clearly, we need action on these rental collections and certainly the arrears. However, if you think that's bad, Mr. Speaker, well, mortgage collection rates are at 40 percent, so accountability clearly isn't a concern for anyone over there.

We constantly hear the same response from the Housing Corporation on this issue: the Corporation continues its efforts to increase rent collection or mortgage collection; the Corporation works closely with the clients and LHOs; we promise that the situation is improving. But, Mr. Speaker, rent collection is still well below 90 percent in many LHOs; we're still not hearing about a real action plan to increase rent collection. And speaking of action plans, the Auditor General recommended that the Housing Corporation jointly develop an action plan with each LHO that has difficulty collecting 90 percent of its rent. That was in 2008. Again, accountability seems to be missing here, Mr. Speaker.

The Housing Corporation has tried to make payment simple for clients. Yes, many housing tenants are good tenants and they do pay their rent on time. But 76 percent is not enough to sustain the Housing Program, Mr. Speaker. Why does that seem to bother people in the sense that they can't

get past that? Why does the department of housing not want to address it?

We need a plan to target the real cause of these non-payment issues, Mr. Speaker, the inconvenient truths under the shadow or dark cloud of public housing.

Mr. Speaker, in my view, there has been very little done to address these problems of arrears in the rent and mortgages over this term other than rhetoric and a little re-jigging of the numbers, so I'm doubtful at this point if we will ever see much accomplished or anything real truly realized.

Mr. Speaker, if the department truly is listening and wants to advance this issue to some useful practical solution, then what about equalizing payments over a whole year? Mr. Speaker, we could term the payments over a full year reflective of what true annual income is, and then we could work with people who get part-time jobs so they don't get the shocks of high rent and then the re-jigging. It would save a lot of time for the LHO and it would save a lot of stress from those clients in subsidized housing.

Mr. Speaker, later today I will have questions for the Minister responsible for Housing and hopefully we will find a better solution for this particular problem. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON FEDERAL RESOURCES FOR NWT HIGHWAY BETWEEN TUKTOYAKTUK AND INUVIK

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Approximately one month ago our federal counterparts in Parliament, for the first time since the federal election on May 2, 2011, the first order of business of the new government will be to pass the budget. Mr. Speaker, hopefully, our \$150 million for the all-season road from Tuk to Inuvik will be included.

This Assembly and this government should do whatever it can to make this happen. Northerners working together. I believe we have one chance at this to make sure the budget includes the Tuk-Inuvik highway.

Mr. Speaker, this government has to deliver projects, not just to let it sit on the books with the future promises. Mr. Speaker, this government has promised the northern region will get their fair share of capital infrastructure and spending, but recent spending shows the opposite. Projects like the Deh Cho Bridge are draining a lot of the resources and the funding time, while projects seem to be on the back burner.

Mr. Speaker, several months ago the federal government tabled a budget that included \$150

million for the road from Tuk to Inuvik, finally linking Canada coast to coast to coast. As mentioned last week, this is a result of many, many years of lobbying and work from the community governments, my office and other organizations. Unfortunately, this commitment was then questioned when the country went to the federal election. If this project does not happen, the economic conditions in the northern region will be severely hampered in years to come. This will definitely be a huge shot in the arm.

Many regions, including Nunakput, are enjoying a robust economy from the diamond exploration and the huge infrastructure spending. Mr. Speaker, this project would not only generate huge employment for the region but would also provide infrastructure to industry. This project would also seriously reduce the high cost of living in the small communities in Nunakput. We are in a very delicate situation and a limited window of opportunity. This government must not allow this commitment to fall through the cracks, especially near the end of this government. Mr. Speaker, I believe that this year will be a year where the northern region will get their fair share.

Mr. Speaker, thank you. I will have questions for the Minister of Transportation at the appropriate time.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL WELFARE PROGRAMS IN ADDRESSING HEALTH CONCERNS AND COSTS

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to use my Member's statement to comment on an article from the Globe and Mail regarding health care that recently caught my eye. In Canada it's generally assumed that universal health care -- and that means timely access to affordable health services -- improves the health of socially disadvantaged groups. Research performed at the Institute for Clinical Evaluation Services tested that assumption, but as published in the journal Health Affairs, the results of the study contradicts the assumption.

The research team found that people with low income and/or low levels of education suffered from higher than normal incidences of cardiovascular disease. It's no surprise and a well-known situation. The researchers tried to determine if universal access to health services would alter that finding. The research showed that the poor use more health services than the wealthy, but that does not mean they get better health outcomes. To quote the Globe author: The poor visit physicians and hospitals more often, not because it's free, but because they are sicker. All of us, whether rich or poor, use health care services when we have to,

when we are sick. Few of us use health care services in a preventive way.

The message in the research finding is this: universal health care does not get us healthy and keep us healthy. Medicare is not the silver bullet to ensure a healthy population. What we need are tools to get us healthy in the first place, to attack the causes of poor health.

In Canada we spend about 40 percent of our budgets on health care, about 25 percent on education and only 15 percent on social welfare programs. By comparison, European countries spend twice as much as we do on social welfare programs, and the result of that spending is that Europeans spend less on health and have better health outcomes.

We need to put greater effort into tackling poverty, low education levels, poor and inequitable housing. Improvements in these areas will create healthier environments and, by default, healthier citizens. As we embark on the development of an Anti-Poverty Strategy or framework, Mr. Speaker, we would be well advised to consider these findings. Throwing more money at health is not the answer. Universal health care is not the answer. Until we improve living conditions for the socially disadvantaged in our territory, we cannot hope for universally healthy residents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HOUSING ISSUES IN THE SAHTU

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We will have a homeless problem in the Sahtu very soon if we don't deal with the ever-increasing eviction notices in our communities. We must, as a basic human right, house our people. It's the only right thing to do, Mr. Speaker, to keep our children and people from being thrown out and then wait for a year to see if they are welcome back into a house, a government house.

Now, the Minister states that the Housing Corporation is not intent on evicting. However, it is the last resort to collect money from people for staying in housing in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, how did we allow Housing to let arrears get so high? Why did we not go to the tenants and talk? I mean, talk and then follow up on a weekly basis to encourage and to support our people to assume the responsibility of debt payment.

We need to walk with our people on this very serious housing problem. It may even mean holding their hands and doing whatever it takes to let people know that these houses are theirs today.

Mr. Speaker, some of our units are old, some have mould issues, some have broken windows and doors. Other units are well kept and people are very proud to have a house, and we need to acknowledge the ones who pay on time or make every effort to keep up with the rest of their payments. We also have a mix of housing versions by our people such as housing is a treaty right or how did the promise of paying \$2 a month for a house get to almost \$1,800 for a client. Where did the government change its promise? We're waiting to hear when that decision was made.

Mr. Speaker, we have so many houses boarded up, we have so many people on eviction notices, we have children who will not have a home. Mr. Speaker, we live in a rich territory, yet people will be living, and are living, in warehouses. Now we also have the highest core needs in the North, according to the 2009 NWT Housing Survey.

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

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, we need to fix our own house. Let's start with the foundation and location, move them to the communities, build it up from there. It works.

Mr. Speaker, housing is a government responsibility. We're all in this together. We need solutions like a tenants relationship officer, solutions like working off the arrears, solutions like garnisheeing a percentage of their wages, or volunteering in the community with coaching or working with the elders. It may not fit the government policy, but, hey, it's the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, we need the attention of this government today; not tomorrow, next week or in the new government. We can wipe off the arrears and at the same time acknowledge those who've paid rent faithfully since 1972, but we need the government to listen. Will you listen to us?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Member from Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON DECISION NOT TO RUN IN NEXT TERRITORIAL GENERAL ELECTION

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to get a message back to the people of Inuvik Boot Lake, my constituency, to inform them that I will not be putting my name forward in the next general election.

After much thought about the future and the work that I've done with the people of Inuvik, I feel it is time to let some younger, more energetic folks take a look at representing the fine community of Inuvik

and the constituency of Inuvik Boot Lake. So I want to inform them that I will not be putting my name in, and wish the best for the future Assemblies of the Northwest Territories.

I'm sure I will at some point, some place, still be poking and prodding the Government of the Northwest Territories to make the right decisions and look towards our future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure today to recognize in the gallery a distinguished elder from Fort Smith, Bea Campbell, and president of the NWT Seniors' Society; Esther Braden, a charter member of the NWT Seniors' Society; Yvonne Quick, program coordinator, NWT Seniors' Society; Merlyn Williams, director for YK Seniors' Society who sits on the NWT Seniors' Society board; Barb Hood, executive director, NWT Seniors' Society; Lorraine Phaneuf, executive director and co-chair of the Coalition Against Family Violence; Annemieke Mulders, Status of Women Council of the NWT; Bob Stevens, Lutra Associates in support of the NWT Seniors' Society. Thank you and welcome to the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize a constituent of the Great Slave riding, Mr. Merlyn Williams. Thank you.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize a couple of residents of Weledeh: Barb Hood and Bob Stevens.

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

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to recognize Yvonne Quick, a long-time promoter of tourism and outfitter in the Northwest Territories, and Bob Stevens, hardworking defenseman with Old Blasters Old-timers Hockey League.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Although recognized very nicely by Minister Miltenberger, I,

too, wish to recognize Lorraine Phaneuf, executive director of the NWT Status of Women Council. As well, I'd like to recognize a very distinguished elder in our community and a resident of Yellowknife Centre, Mrs. Esther Braden. Thank you.

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

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to recognize a Frame Lake constituent, Ms. Yvonne Quick.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Welcome everyone in the gallery today. I hope you're enjoying the proceedings.

Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 102-16(6): LONG-TERM CARE FOR ELDERS

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to follow up on my questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services with regard to our elders that are in long-term care facilities paying a fee and, of course, there's an increase coming up on June 1st. However, I just want to speak more particularly about the Aboriginal elders that are in long-term care.

Our treaties dictate that our health is taken care of by the federal government. So I'd like to know if the Health and Social Services Minister has looked at this. Has his officials looked at this aspect of it? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The rates for long-term care in the Northwest Territories are by far some of the most reasonable in the country and they are not a service that is covered under treaties. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much. I'm confused. Health is in the treaties. So I would just like to ask the Minister once again, has he had dealings with Ottawa that lead him to say that statement, or what's his approach or strategy towards Aboriginal elders in long-term care facilities? Mahsi.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you. This arrangement has been in place for decades now and the costs are heavily subsidized by the Government of the Northwest Territories to keep the rates where they're at. There hasn't been an increase in many, many years. But as it pertains to the question from the honourable Member, this service is not one that's covered under a treaty or

any kind of medical coverage through the treaty or non-insured health benefits.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much. I don't know; I would actually have a real good look at it. So I'd like to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services, is he willing to at least look at that through a legal opinion and present that perhaps back at the House, because I believe that this certainly is in our treaties and we all know it is. With that there, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to know if the Minister is willing to do something like that. Mahsi.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you. I would be happy to provide the Member with a note that would lay out the position of the government when it comes to this particular service and we can have further discussion at that point if he wishes. Thank you.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Just as a final question I'd like to know how much revenue is the government making from all of our seniors in the long-term care facilities, if the Minister can provide that to me, as well. Mahsi.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you. I don't have the number of the money that's generated from the modest charge for long-term care facilities, but I will as well in the note to the Member add the cost that we do spend and the revenues, and the Member will see that these programs are heavily subsidized, with good reason. I mean, we made a choice, we want to give the elders in the Northwest Territories the best care possible at the most reasonable cost and I believe we are doing that, but I will share that information with the Member, as well. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 103-16(6):
STATUS OF REMOVAL OF ASSETS
AT TREMINCO MINE SITE

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are addressed to the Minister for Municipal and Community Affairs. In October of last year I asked some questions of the Minister with regard to the removal of assets at the Treminco mine site and the clean-up of that mine site. He advised me in December that they were developing an RFP for the removal of assets and that we would have the results of that RFP by mid-April 2011. I would like to ask the Minister first off what the status is of the work in terms of removal of assets at the mine site.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Robert McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The assets were auctioned off, however, the winning bidder did not pick them up. They were given final notice and still did not pick them up. We're exploring other options as to how we can get a lot of the major infrastructure off the property.

MS. BISARO: I'm really confused now, because the Minister told me that information in October of last year. At that time, and later on, I was advised that there was an RFP that was being developed in February 2011. We'd have the results of an engineering study and what could possibly be done by mid-April 2011. I guess I need to ask the Minister if the RFP for engineering work was ever let.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We did have an appraisal on the site there, and the cost of removing all the infrastructure there was significantly higher than what we would have got for it had we sold it off as surplus. That's the stage we're at right now.

MS. BISARO: I now have to ask the Minister, we've decided that it's too expensive to remove anything, so what's the next step. Are we going to leave those assets there until they totally rot into the ground 300 years from now? What's the plan of the department to clean up this mine site?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We still have to find out what we're going to do. It's not our intent to leave a lot of this infrastructure on the site. Obviously, we had made efforts to try and have folks bid on it. It was auctioned off. The winning bidders, as I said, didn't pick it up. We have to find a way that we can remove this site and not have to wait for 300 years.

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

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Minister. I'm really glad we're on the same page in terms of not waiting for 300 years. The removal of assets is one thing, but the clean-up of the mine site itself is a bigger issue. I know it's multijurisdictional, but I'm wondering if the Minister can advise whether there is any long-term plan in terms of mine clean-up. That would be clean-up of the whole site, remediation and so on.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We are looking at a couple of options as to the actual site clean-up itself. We have two avenues we're looking at right now. We are just in the process of trying to see which one would work best. It is our intent to find every way possible to have this site cleaned up. Once we're clear with that I can communicate to the Member privately and give her an update as to the status and where we're at with getting the site cleaned up.

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

QUESTION 104-16(6):
GNWT AFFIRMATIVE ACTION POLICY

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I didn't plan to have my Member's statement coincide with the Minister of Human Resources' statement today, but the Minister's statement did cover quite a few of the areas that we've been discussing and have concerns about.

When we talk about a representative GNWT workforce, I'd like to ask the Minister what this government's definition of that would be. Are we only talking about numbers?

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

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can only say that great minds think alike. At this point the goal of the Government of the Northwest Territories is to have a representative workforce, which in this case we're talking about Affirmative Action in which Aboriginal people represent about 50 percent of the Northwest Territories population. We're also taking the same approach for persons with disabilities.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: I have to ask the Minister how do we then bring more definition to that 50 percent. Is it 50 percent at any level of service in the public service? Is it a 50/50 split in management and directors and all these things? Don't we need to do more as a government to create truly representative government by ensuring we have equal representation at all levels of government in all levels and positions? What are we doing to achieve that?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: At this point, recognizing that as a government we've been flat-lined for at least 10 years where 31 percent of our 5,000-plus workforce is Aboriginal, we're trying to get that moving upward. At some point when we come fairly close to 50 percent I think we could expand it into other areas. For example, we know that of our senior management component, 16 percent is Aboriginal. We have an even steeper hill to climb there. We can character the extreme. We have 33 communities in the Northwest Territories. Every community has varying percentages of Aboriginal people. It's not our objective to have a representative workforce at the community level; we're going to have it at the territorial level.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: I'm glad the Minister clarified that, because that is a very important point. How do we then, as a government, reconcile the fact that most government jobs are centralized in the capital and the regional centres where the majority of the people are not Aboriginal? The majority of the Aboriginal people, on a percentage basis, are outside; perhaps don't want to move to a

regional centre or to Yellowknife. I mean, are our goals realistic, given those factors?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: I believe that our goals are realistic. I think that with our education system and the fact that we're having more Aboriginal people attending post-secondary education institutions, we're seeing graduation rates increasing. We look at our summer student rates, for example, where we're finally getting where 50 percent of our summer students are Aboriginal. We're working on that area. I think it's going to take some time. Some of the initiatives that were undertaken with our Aboriginal Affirmative Action Advisory Committee I think are putting us in the right direction. With the next government I think we'll be looking at more accountability with the senior management of the various departments so that we'll continue to work to increase our representation in the public service.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is such a complex issue. We as a government say that we want sustainable, prosperous communities, yet we don't talk about decentralization. We don't talk about taking those public service jobs and moving them out of the capital. We don't look at departments and activities that can take place in the smaller communities. We don't look at that. That would change the numbers of our representative workforce quite dramatically if people didn't have to move to Fort Smith or Yellowknife to get a government job. I'd like to ask the Minister if he sees us looking at that issue of decentralization as one of the means of achieving that more representative workforce, by taking the jobs to the communities as opposed to expecting the people to come to the larger centres.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Going back over a number of governments, there have been a number of attempts at decentralization and there have been successful initiatives to decentralize. I can think of the health care cards to Inuvik; I can think of the forestry division to Hay River, amongst others. I think that the last time a government took a serious look at decentralization it only got to a certain point, because you wind up with winners and losers. You have communities that lose jobs and other communities benefitting.

I think the best chance there is for decentralization is with devolution. We have to make sure that the jobs go where it is most feasible to operate. To decentralize comes with costs. We have to make sure that we have the people where they can do the most effective and efficient job.

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

QUESTION 105-16(6):
ALL-WEATHER HIGHWAY BETWEEN
TUKTOYAKTUK AND INUVIK

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today in my Member's statement I spoke about the all-weather road from Tuk to Inuvik and how badly it's needed to get employment into the riding of Inuvik, and Tuk, and Aklavik, and Sachs Harbour and Paulatuk. We need this project to go. Does the Minister have a plan on when he'll be meeting with his federal counterpart in Ottawa?

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member is not wasting any time getting on top of the subject. The Minister was just announced, I think four hours ago.

We already, as I've indicated, have been working on a draft for some correspondence to go to the Minister. We are trying to encourage them to look to the North as a place for investment. There has been a lot of tension and there has been some good promises made during the last term of our government. We are inviting him to come to the Northwest Territories to meet with us. We've also asked for some time to sit down and talk to him about some of our priorities. We're hoping that correspondence will go out ASAP.

MR. JACOBSON: Just to remind the federal government that they did promise this road in that first budget and they should stand by their word. What's the status on the environmental review process on the Tuk-Inuvik highway?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: The project, in terms of where it's at with the environmental review process, we expect that the draft environmental impact statement will be delivered to the review board by the end of the month. We also have information on that statement that provides details on engineering and environmental impacts. It's a fairly large document, I think about a thousand pages, and very comprehensive. The statement also lays out the next steps. That includes initiatives such as public hearings.

MR. JACOBSON: Is the department planning any additional work this coming summer?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: The answer is yes, there is a lot of work that still has to be done. We are planning a comprehensive summer program. The work that needs to be done includes fisheries studies, wildlife surveys, things of that nature. This information will supplement the work that's already been done. We still need to provide that type of information to get our authorities and permits, and the things that we will require to move forward.

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

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once that process is done -- hopefully we could end that by the end of July or August -- then can we start working this winter?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: There's a lot of ifs in that question that we need to resolve. First of all we need to see what is in the new federal budget. Does it include dollars for this section of highway that the Member is referring to. We also would need to see the results from the review board. We'd also require all necessary authorities, authorizations, permits. There's lots of work to do. If there's any work that would be done on the section of highway, it would probably be the final portions that need to be completed on the Tuk gravel access road that we've been working on for several years.

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

QUESTION 106-16(6):
LAND TAX AND LAND LEASE ARREARS
IN TU NEDHE

MR. BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement I spoke of the issues of tax arrears and lease arrears on the land in Tu Nedhe communities. Right now the elders are afraid that they're going to lose their homes and so on. I'm getting calls from elders every month that get bills asking to pay right away.

This is for the Finance Minister. If the Finance Minister -- because the bills are coming from Finance -- could have officers go to visit the elder homeowners in Tu Nedhe to discuss their tax arrears with them. Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would be happy to talk to the Member outside the Chamber to look at this issue in more detail and some possible options or plan of action that would possibly help address this longstanding issue. Thank you.

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, it's good I'd have a discussion with the Minister. For me, I can give him a lot of information, a lot of detail, but one of the big issues seems to be that there's an accumulation of taxes, due to what I spoke of. There's a common feeling in Tu Nedhe that they shouldn't be paying taxes until the land resources and government negotiations are complete. Will the Minister direct his staff to write off the interest on the taxes and then deal with the principal at a later date? But at this point, write the interest off? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, this is a longstanding issue tied into Fort Resolution being in the Akaicho Territory and unsettled claims and Treaty 8 and the whole issue of payment of taxes. There have been a number of attempts to try to resolve this issue. There have been former chiefs that have asked for forgiveness or wiping the slate clean on a go-forward basis. Anything of that nature would require a Cabinet decision.

As I indicated, the Member has had no opportunity to discuss this particular issue in any detail, so I would once again just restate my commitment to sit down with him to talk about the issue and see what possible paths there may be forward on this. Thank you.

MR. BEAULIEU: Will the Minister work with the Minister of MACA to then, at this point, delay any further levying of taxes to the homeowners of Tu Nedhe? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I will commit to have a discussion with the Minister of MACA on this particular issue.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you. Will the Minister agree to stop sending out invoices and bills to the homeowners in Tu Nedhe until they've had a face-to-face meeting with that homeowner? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I will commit to meet with the Member. In fact, I'll even buy him dinner, and we can do it over dinner to talk about this issue, Mr. Speaker. Of course, other Members that are looking to have sustenance at the expense of a poor, underpaid Minister, of course I'd be happy to have them come along. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 107-16(6):

SMART COMMUNITIES SOCIETY OF THE NWT

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Reluctantly, I'd like to go for supper, but my question is for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment. I'd like to note that Yellowknife Members recently met with representatives of the Smart Communities Society of the Northwest Territories and learned about the issues that they are facing and some of the risks involved with those issues. Could the Minister inform the House on what action this government has taken to strengthen the relationship between the GNWT and the Smart Communities Society of the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

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

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We met with the NWT Smart Communities Society and all the Yellowknife MLAs, including myself, and we recognize the good work that the Smart Society has been doing. We committed to working with the Smart Communities Society to deal with some of the programs that they have been working very hard on over the past three years.

I'd like to point out that over the past three years Smart Society spent about \$11 million on their programs, and this year, in order to access \$385,000 from the federal government, they were looking to expand their programs across the Northwest Territories.

I am pleased to report that the Government of the Northwest Territories will be working with them and will be investing \$101,000 in Smart Society to continue to expand their programs across the Northwest Territories and to look at focusing on some of the last mile kind of initiatives. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks for the comments from the Minister. It sounds like that's going to at least take care of the alligators that are latched onto their ankles right now and I appreciate that action. It seems from this that the government is, indeed, going to take full advantage of the programs and services available through the Smart Communities Society. But for the full benefit of all the people in all the communities in the Northwest Territories, considerable work remains to be done, and I'm assuming from this action that the government agrees with this, so I'm wondering what action is proposed, what next steps is the Minister thinking of, including whether his department will continue to take the lead or whether other departments may become involved to ensure the sustainability of these services. Mahsi.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: In the short term we will be doing up a contribution agreement with the Smart Society, and the reason for that is, as everybody knows, there is an election coming up and we can't commit a future government on future funding, so we will also endeavour to include that in the transition document.

I think it's very important to note that in the future we'll be looking at expanding to other initiatives, and long term, hopefully, it could become part of one of the TFC finance projects in the future. But that's in the long term and we'll have to wait and see what happens in the next government. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

QUESTION 108-16(6):
INCREASED COSTS TO
REPLACE BLUEFISH DAM

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation, Premier Roland. Earlier today in my Member's statement I highlighted the increased cost to replace the Bluefish dam. Can the Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corp please confirm this afternoon what the budget for this project is and how that budget has changed over the last several months? Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The confirmed budget with contingency is targeted now at \$37.4 million.

MR. ABERNETHY: I thank the Minister for that. I'm curious how this increase will affect the power rates in Yellowknife, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister tell me what the forecasted impact of this project is on power rates in Yellowknife? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: When this project was first proposed there was an estimate given to the PUB as this project had to be filed through them as well. The targeted impact was in the neighbourhood of up to between 1.5 to 2 cents per kilowatt hour. So that was budgeted prior to any changes in the budget. With this change we're looking at 2.5 cents per kilowatt hour impact in this region. That does affect the rest of the communities because our Power Support Program, as we've changed it, is based on the Yellowknife rate. Thank you.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you. I wonder, is there any specific cost mitigation measures that the Power Corp is using to try to lower the cost of this project. Are there numbers? We were talking about final numbers. Is the \$33 million with the \$4 million contingency, are they the final numbers or is there any possibility that the final cost of this project in the impact of power rates across the Northwest Territories and Yellowknife will be lower and how does the Power Corporation work towards trying to control these costs and keep them down, Mr. Speaker?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you. The approach that the Power Corp has taken on this project on a number of areas was to minimize the costs. For example, after going out for our fee, the corporation chose a contractor to negotiate the price down, because the one portion, the construction portion was higher than anticipated, and they worked that number back down through an agreement in construction. There is also a portion of the contact that if there's a savings on moving ahead on this project at lower than expected prices, that will reduce the overall impact, as well. So the

corporation has taken a number of steps to try to minimize the project.

One of the areas we find as the reason for the increase was at the initial stages, it was deemed an emergency. The first program that was put together wasn't as detailed as was needed, and through the environmental process there was a number of factors that adjusted the plan that was initially designed. So the design had changed, and requirements had changed and that impacted the numbers upward. We're hoping, now that we have the numbers established and set, that there may be even some savings achieved as we go forward with construction. Thank you.

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

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This Assembly worked awfully hard to try to find ways to reduce the power rates in communities, and as a result, the rates stayed the same in Yellowknife, but overall we did a good job of trying to reduce the rates in the whole Territories. This rate obviously is a concern; this rate increase is obviously a concern. I'd like to ask the Minister, if power increases as a result of the Bluefish construction, if we can't avoid increasing our territorial power rates as a result of this, are there any programs or is there anything that we can do as a Legislature and the Minister can do as the Minister responsible to residents to help with the impacts of this potential increase to our rates after we worked so hard to bring them down.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you. The estimation of, for example, 2.5 cents per kilowatt hour will impact residents of about \$17 a month. We know it is an increase. We've tried to minimize the overall construction costs. One of the things we've done with the contract is risk sharing, and that may be able to lower the actual amount that we've budgeted and reduce the contingency, for example. So right now the process as it would work out is the construction would have to be completed and the overall budget looked at and the impact then passed on. So it would be beyond the life of the 16th Assembly. Well, it will have to be after the final completion of the project that rates would be adjusted. So I can't speak for the 17th Assembly on what they might do to try to mitigate something of this nature. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 109-16(6):
NEGOTIATED CONTRACTS FOR
CAPITAL PROJECTS POLICY

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are directed to the Minister of the

Housing Corporation in conjunction to a written question that I requested of the Minister to give me information on the negotiated contracts with Housing. Mr. Speaker, it's important to realize that capital projects are the means of developing a lot of our community economies, especially building capacity and also bringing down the high cost of living. More importantly, it's bringing down our social costs for the high unemployment numbers we have in our communities, and also developing the local economies and developing our local workforce to give them the opportunities so that they can build their skills in the areas of apprenticeships, and more importantly, give them the opportunity, in most cases, for their first job.

Mr. Speaker, I'd just to ask the Minister, in light of the information that I received, in five years with three negotiated contracts with an expense of \$800,000 or \$876,000, but in the same period the contracts for the same three communities were \$9.67 million, Mr. Speaker, it shows you that the distribution of wealth in capital projects in the Northwest Territories is not really being expended in our communities but outside our communities. So I'd like to ask the Minister exactly what is his department doing to remedy this situation so that we can see the return of our capital investments in our communities and they stay in our communities.

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. The Housing Corporation recognizes the importance of having as many local people doing the contracts as possible. That's why we ventured into some negotiated contracts with local contractors to help them build up the capacity so they can compete in an open market. We see that in the case of some of the ones that we've negotiated contracts with in the past. They are competing in the open market.

The Member says that there was \$800,000 in negotiated contracts. Some of the numbers I have put that number a little higher. I mean, the one particular contractor, almost \$1 million since 2004-05 in negotiated contracts. They also won some publicly tendered contracts which were quite high. In another community where there was about \$1.6 million in negotiated contracts from 2007-08, and they've also won publicly tendered contracts. So that indicates to us that helping to build the capacity to compete in an open market is obviously working. Thank you.

MR. KRUTKO: The information that the Minister provided definitely doesn't illustrate the picture he's trying to portray here. There's been five years of negotiated contracts with the Housing Corporation expending over \$12 million in capital investment. Only \$800,000 was expended in five years in my

riding. Out of that, \$9.67 million went to companies outside of my riding. That's the point I'm trying to get at. We have negotiated contracts, policies and procedures, we have sole-sourced, we have a whole bunch of opportunities we have to use. So I'd like to ask the Minister why is your department not using those tools and implementing those policies that we have as government to build capacity in communities.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you. We are using those tools. We try to support local business as much as we can. There are some folks that enter into joint ventures with contracting companies to bid on the work that's required in their community or possibly negotiate the work that's required in their communities. So I know what the numbers are; I know the numbers that the Member is quoting, and from the numbers I've seen and the assistance that we've provided to the local contractors, we were able to help them build up the capacity so when public tender comes out they are able to bid and be successful. Thank you.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you. Again, this Minister and his department totally disregards the policies and procedures of this government when it comes to negotiating contracts, sole-sourced contracts, contracting guidelines we have in place for government projects, government capital to be expended in communities. There are support letters given by the MLA, there are support letters given by the bands, the municipal governments, but yet this government totally refuses to acknowledge that. Those are efforts by community governments to show that they need these opportunities to build capacity in their communities. So why is this government and this Minister not living up to the wishes of those community leaders by those support letters to have negotiated contracts in their communities and continue to refuse them?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: This government and this Minister do not disregard policy. You can't, obviously, go against policy.

We understand we've gotten letters of support. We've entered into two more negotiated contracts with contractors in the Member's communities, two in one community, even though both have requested a negotiated contract, and according to the policy, if two or more request a negotiated contract, we could have used that as an opportunity to go public, but we recognize that we need to help the local economy. So we entered into a negotiated contract with two companies in the same community and we did put three of the duplexes out to a public tender so everybody has an opportunity. They have an opportunity to bid and they proved to me and to the corporation, at least one of them, that they can be successful in an open market.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, it took political will and lobbying to the Premier to get this Minister to move on this effort so that he could back down from his reluctance to negotiate contracts. It took public influence to get this Cabinet and government to agree to two projects in my riding.

There were letters from Fort McPherson and Tsiigetchic. None were approved to Cabinet. The only reason that went to Cabinet is because the Premier was speaking to the public individuals in the communities by the community leadership so that we can see some benefit from these projects in our communities and not see the wealth go to the other regional centres. I'd like to ask the Minister, since you've become Minister how many negotiated contracts have you taken to Cabinet in the Northwest Territories for housing.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Four.

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

QUESTION 110-16(6):
PUBLIC HOUSING RENTAL ARREARS

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement I talked about the possibility of the homeless people in the Sahtu communities and other communities who face the issue of the eviction notices and termination of public housing units. This is all due to a number of attempts to collect arrears payments to the units. I want to ask the Minister, in his review of the Shelter Policy for the NWT Housing Corporation, if there is going to be a policy where tenants like these that are very high in arrears can have some other options such as working off their arrears or looking at some garnishment for payment to make towards the arrears or volunteering their services in a monetary amount to work off. If there is anything that would keep them from being evicted and keep them in the house and learning also at the same time what it takes to maintain a public housing unit.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, first of all, the obvious one is pay your rent and you won't be evicted. We've come to cases where folks have received termination notices and they need to work with the LHO. The LHO tries to work with them. The whole eviction process is almost a year-long process and it comes to a point where eviction is the last option. We've had a few cases of those. It's not something that we like to do. We want to be able to work with the tenants.

I can point out to the Member again, and I have said in this House, we've seen a great improvement

in the public engaging with their LHOs and trying to enter into repayment plans. Not only entering into them but also honouring the commitment they made, which I think is the most important first step.

MR. YAKELEYA: I have some information, thanks to the Minister, that he passed on to me. That's what I want to look at in terms of one of my communities, where if a number of people do not do anything, they will be asked to leave their public housing units; a total of 10 adults, not counting the children. I want to ask the Minister in this regard, we will have a homeless problem in Deline. Can the Minister in any way, through his leadership and direction, look at putting a little more emphasis and resources to working with these people? There are 10 adults that need to see where they're going to be housed. Right now they're going to be in the warehouses or tents. I know it's an effort between two parties. What else can we do to keep them in their units? Is there anything possible for them?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: As I said earlier, we give them every opportunity to try and rectify the situations that some of them find themselves in. I can point out to the Member that in the community that he mentioned, the overall collection went from a very low number to over 100 percent now; the collection rate. I understand that we've had some of these issues in the past and I think the folks there are getting the message, which is encouraging to the Housing Corporation and encouraging to the LHO, because they're able to use that money now to do some much needed repairs in the communities.

We've had other places where they've tried to come up with some innovative solutions on how people can work off. We're always willing to listen, but it has to be something that benefits both the tenants and the LHOs. We're always willing to listen to any kind of new initiative. We've seen a few of them in the past that have worked. One in one of the Beaufort-Delta communities has worked quite well. There's a lot of work to it. As I said, we're always looking to or are willing to listen to any kind of initiatives out there.

MR. YAKELEYA: It's encouraging to hear the Minister say that he's willing to listen and work on some of the innovative solutions. I want to ask the Minister in regard to the eviction list in one of my communities. Is this something that the Minister can possibly look at implementing with Housing as policy? Right now it's at discretion. If we had a policy that would give more direction to the LHOs to say now we can look at another avenue to have people work on their issues and what it means to be a homeowner or to live in a public housing unit, it will help them in terms of being more independent.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: At the end of the day, it is our goal to see our tenants become more

independent and honour the commitments that they've made. There's also, and I've stated in the House in the past, an appeals process that we're hoping to roll out here fairly soon. I won't as a rule try and dictate to the LHOs what they do. They make their own policies. They're the ones that actually came to us with some of the ideas they've had which they figure work quite well in their communities.

There's an appeals process that we're hoping to roll out here. Tenants will have the opportunity, if they feel that the board didn't follow policy and procedure, then the appeal process is another avenue. We're obviously trying to work with the tenants to give them another avenue to appeal decisions that they feel are unfair.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I certainly hope that the LHO board clearly hears what the Minister has said. The board is the boss, and their comment that we have to take instructions from the district office is wiped out.

I want to ask the Minister, when he looks within solutions, can the Minister look at the concept of a community rental, community tenant/community liaison person for the housing that could help the tenants and the Housing Corporation so they can work together daily, monthly, weekly, biweekly, so they can help them with the arrears? Certainly that's what we want to do and we need to work with them. I would ask the Minister if he would consider that possibility.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Most LHOs have tenant relations officers that work with the tenants and bring them up to date on their rental arrears and how they can best address them. They're called tenant relations officers and they work closely with the tenants.

As far as the district office, I mean, the district offices usually work very closely with LHOs and they give them some guidance and direction. They're just another sounding board for the LHOs.

We want to ensure that from headquarters right down to the LHOs all policies and procedures are followed very closely, because it won't work very good if we start doing one-offs and going against policies and procedures as being laid out in the Assemblies before us.

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

QUESTION 111-16(6):
PUBLIC HOUSING ARREARS

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In a similar vein as my colleague Mr. Yakeleya, I have

concerns about the Housing Corporation on how they do view this particular problem and deal with arrears, whether they're rentals or, certainly, mortgage arrears.

In my Member's statement today I talked about 76 percent is the collection rate at housing LHOs across the board, that is, to be honest and fair of course, and they need 90 percent in order to break even. Of course, housing arrears under the context of mortgages are at 40 percent. If you add those two stacks of arrears up, that's about \$26 million in arrears.

The Minister just talked about all these avenues to address these types of problems. What is the Minister of the Housing Corporation presenting as an avenue to pay for these types of arrears, and to ensure that people are complying with their arrears and catching up and getting rid of them? What is this Minister actually doing to close a particular file?

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We did recognize, as this whole Assembly did, that this was quite an issue. We've come up with a plan to assist our tenants, whether it be public housing or mortgage homeowners, we've come up with a plan to help them deal with their arrears. There's a repayment plan that they can enter into with their local housing authority where they pay so much a month on top of the rent that they've been assessed.

Our collection rate as of March 31, 2011, was at 79 percent, which is an improvement. A lot of the local LHOs, I think we have a high of 161 percent. That indicates to me that we have folks that are starting to come in and put more money on their rent and arrears. We have five or six of our LHOs that the collection rate is actually over 100 percent. We're seeing a lot of improvement. It's still a work in progress. It's always encouraging to see tenants starting to step up to the plate and accepting the responsibility that they signed on for.

MR. HAWKINS: I think the Minister answered the question, I'd say, quite thoroughly. I want to give him credit for that particular answer. I think that's only fair.

I would disagree with him on the context of blanketing tenant collection on rents at 161 percent, because I think what that does is present the House with a false number. What I mean by that is, I'm not saying that the Minister is misleading the House, what I'm saying is...

---Interjection

MR. HAWKINS: No, no, that's not what I'm saying. I'm saying it should be clearly stating that rent is coming in at whatever capacity, and separate it

from the arrears. Because what it does is give you a blanket number, so we don't know who's paying the rent on time and we don't know who's paying the arrears on time. That's ultimately the goal on this particular issue. I want to make sure, the 161 percent sounds good but we don't really know what 161 percent means in the bigger context.

I want to give credit for the Minister's previous answer, and what I'd like to ask him in this particular case, then, is: is the Minister willing to table the action plan that they developed in order to address this particular problem? As well, will he be able to table the results of these types of collections and individual payment schedules provided by each LHO to show us what's actually being done?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I think, I believe, I have shared with committee our plan on dealing with the arrears situation.

As far as the 161 percent, we obviously know that all the tenants that were assessed paid their rent on time, and then the other 61 percent probably put the money onto their arrears. I mean, we have a pretty good idea in every LHO across the territory who's paying what. I'm able to see that sometimes, so we know all the tenants that have entered into repayment plans and we know which ones have honoured their repayment plans. We know which ones paid rent the last time, six months ago. We have all that information and we continue to use that information to try to work closely with the tenants to make them realize they made a commitment to enter into a repayment plan and it would be to their benefit to honour it.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I slightly disagree, because we don't actually know that 100 percent of people paid their rent. Now he's said that 161 percent are paying, we're getting 161 percent back. Whether that includes the rent and arrears, we don't know that breakdown, and that's the type of information that I think would be helpful for all Members specifically targeted to each LHO.

Mr. Speaker, the other issues I raised in my Member's statement was distributing fairly the annual income for a particular tenant and their family to take out some of the spikes and certainly the drops in both their income and, of course, the way we assess their actual rent. So then a tenant assessment would be more stabilized and, therefore, maybe avoid some of these where they are not paying rent properly in one month and then all of a sudden they're trying to catch up. Then we always hear the argument of they want to quit their job because they don't want to pay a high rent that month. If we equalize it over 12 months, that would make a lot more sense. How does the Minister feel about that type of proposal? It would be a lot less

work for the tenant as well as the LHO office assessing people. Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I would have to have discussions with the LHOs to truly see if it's less work for them. They would prefer that their tenants come in on a month-to-month basis, because you have tenants that may be working for three months and then for the other two or three months they may not work, they may get a job for a month. That's the reason they come and ask them for month-to-month assessments, so they can assess their rent based on their income for the past month. I think that's a situation that has worked well.

As far as equalizing it over 12 months, do we collect at the end of 12 months? The beginning of 12 months? I'd like to hear the Member's suggestion on that. We feel that the avenue that we're using now is one that works quite well. I would have to have a discussion with the LHOs to see if the Member's proposal has any merit and if it's one that they feel would work for them, because at the end of the day, they're our people on the ground delivering the program. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm sort of hearing a comment for consideration here from the Minister and I want to take advantage of that opportunity by saying would the Minister be willing to assess this particular proposal, because I think it would provide a lot less work to clients, provide a stable environment for them in the sense of payment schedules, as well as be less work for the LHOs to manage once a year to re-evaluate the whole line. No different than when you're taxed. I mean, you're not taxed one month by CRA, high one month and then not the next. I mean, it's a formula base. Let's take the context of a formula base that you treat income as a big bracket over a year when you do it. Mr. Speaker, would the Minister be willing to assess this concept and do some analysis as to maybe the housing LHOs would like to do this from a different type of strategy point of view?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, this is a completely different environment we work in and we have to adapt to the environment we're in and do whatever would work well for tenants. We're doing the Shelter Policy review right now. The rent scale review is a part of that and I briefed committee the other day on when we expect to come forward with some preliminary information on the rent scale review as well the housing choices evaluation. But we're always willing to listen. We've had Members in the committee meetings give us some good feedback on what they would like to see us improving and what they would like to see us doing,

so we're always open to suggestions from Members. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 112-16(6):
SPENDING ON CAPITAL PROJECTS
IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Public Works and Services and it gets back to my Member's statement earlier where I spoke of the government spending an inordinate amount of capital dollars over the past three and a half years. It totals close to \$450 million. I think it came at a good time for our economy, but people are left asking questions.

We've had, in the past, issues with carry-overs. We, in fact, changed our capital planning process to approve the capital plan in the fall of the year as opposed to the budget session in February/March. We've taken efforts to try to alleviate the carry-overs, and I'm left wondering why it is this year that the government, even though we are spending capital dollars, is carrying over \$130 million, with \$72 million of that capital plan contained in the Department of Transportation. I'd like to ask the Minister of Public Works to explain this amount of carry-overs. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister responsible for Public Works and Services, Mr. Michael McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There was a barrage of questions in that preamble there. I'll try to answer the best I can.

Mr. Speaker, the Member is correct; we've really taken the position that we needed to invest as a government with some funding that we were able to discuss and negotiate with the federal government to put into the economy of the NWT. We felt that the economy was in a slump across the country and we were not going to be exempt from it, and I think we've done very well. We were able to invest roughly \$700 million in capital over the last two years in the area of infrastructure, and that includes several very large projects and it includes many, many projects that would be classified as small or medium, and the delivery has been going quite well.

We've been challenged historically with carry-overs. It's an issue that we've been really focused on to deal with the level of carry-overs. I think by restructuring our capital approval process has helped us to alleviate that. We are also in a position where we now provide better oversight and don't allow capital projects just to be parachuted as we move forward.

Things are going well on that front. We are seeing a downward spiral on our capital carry-overs and I

expect that to improve. I have to say, though, that we were challenged; a challenge that we're very happy to see is the large amount of capital projects that we have undertaken to do over the last few years. There have been some issues around getting approval from communities. There have been some issues around design that communities want that don't necessarily fit the budget, and we've been in positions where a number of times bids or estimates have come in a lot higher than we anticipated. This is all attributed to the number for the capital and, of course, the large amount of projects is also a factor. Thank you.

MR. RAMSAY: The Minister's right; on a percentage basis the carry-overs have come down from 33 percent, I think, to this year's 26 percent, but it's the dollar amount that's alarming at \$130 million and \$72 million, like I said, contained in the Department of Transportation. I'd like to ask the Minister of Public Works and Services what effort is made in the capital planning process to ensure a balance between small, medium and large-scale capital projects. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, we do have a huge deficit in terms of capital. It's well over \$2 billion if we were going to start to factor in all the needs across the Territories. We do have teams of staff that look at all the projects that come forward from the different departments and we do try to balance out our budget to try to allocate it on a basis where we can deal with the need that is most critical. We have worked out a formula where we have broken down the projects in terms of critical need, medium need, and the least need that would require attention. We try to invest our dollars along those lines.

We have tried to be fair when it comes to investment. For example, we invested, over the last couple of years, over \$150 million in schools renovations and additions; \$226 million into the area of airports, highways and roads; \$82 million to various upgrades, including energy efficiency in our facilities; \$57 million in hospitals, health centres; \$56 million in the communities for community infrastructure; \$57 million in the area of housing. There is a very good balance, and we have a team that monitors and provides oversight and we've also included filters within that process that has fresh eyes looking at the projects that are moving up the ladder until they've reached the point where the Minister of Finance and his team would make the final sign-off on it and bring it to the FMB for approval. Thank you.

MR. RAMSAY: I thank the Minister for that. I guess the next question I'd have is: last year the Northwest Territories Construction Association indicates that they never were consulted on the projects that were coming forward in the capital plan. So I'd like to ask the Minister what

communication actually takes place between the government, Public Works and Services and an association like the Construction Association of the Northwest Territories in trying to determine what projects are coming up. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you. I would have to question that comment and review what information we provide to the Construction Association. We do have a very good relationship, as we do with the other organizations and Aboriginal governments. In many cases, once the budget is approved, we do provide that information to the relevant organizations and governments. Now this information is also public, once it's approved. So in many cases there is ability to access the information off the Internet and it's posted. So I would have to follow up to see if that is indeed the situation. Thank you.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned in my Member's statement, the concern out there is there is not enough work for the small to medium-sized construction companies in the Northwest Territories today, and I think it would be incumbent upon the government to discuss this situation with the Northwest Territories Construction Association. I'd like to ask the Minister what value Public Works and Services puts on the opinion of the Northwest Territories Construction Association. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you. We do place great value on our ability to have discussions with the NWT Construction Association. We deal with other associations across the Territories, also. We also value the input from the MLAs.

Mr. Speaker, we're always in a position to improve our capital process, improve our capital delivery, and our target is to deliver all projects on budget, on schedule. However, there are always factors that come into play that don't allow us to have that happen, but we want to continue to refine that process and see if our percentages can continue to improve and we expect it will. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Time for question period has expired. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to opening address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 93(4) to have Committee Report 5-16(6), Report of the Standing Committee on Government Operations on the Review of the 2009-2010 Annual Report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, moved

into committee of the whole for consideration later today. Mahsi cho.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. SPEAKER: Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. The honourable Minister responsible for Human Resources, Mr. Bob McLeod.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 30-16(6):
20/20: A BRILLIANT NORTH ACTION PLAN
(2011-2012) AND RESULTS REPORT (2010-2011)

TABLED DOCUMENT 31-16(6):
REPORT ON THE STAFF RETENTION POLICY
YEAR ENDING MARCH 31, 2011

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following two documents entitled 20/20: A Brilliant North Action Plan (2011-2012) and Results Report (2010-2011); and Report on the Staff Retention Policy Year Ending March 31, 2011. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 32-16(6):
NWT FILM AND MEDIA ARTS INDUSTRY:
GROWING THE SECTOR

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled Northwest Territories Film and Media Arts Industry: Growing the Sector. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 33-16(6):
TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE
2010-2011 ANNUAL REPORT

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document entitled Traditional Knowledge Annual Report, 2010-2011. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mr. Michael Miltenberger.

TABLED DOCUMENT 34-16(6):
MAKING CONNECTIONS –
BUILDING NETWORKS TO PREVENT
ABUSE OF ELDERS

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled

Making Connections - Building Networks to Prevent Abuse of Older Adults, A Framework for Action.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to return to item number 7 on the Order Paper.

---Unanimous consent granted

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

Oral Questions (Reversion)

QUESTION 113-16(6): ENCOURAGING SUMMER STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday I had an interesting discussion with the Minister of Human Resources on summer student hiring and I'd like to continue with that.

Members are very concerned about the hiring of northern students returning to work in the NWT for the summer. Based on the return of questions yesterday, the Minister responsible for Human Resources indicated that the GNWT was committed to hiring 263 students; yet, to date there appears to be only about 146 students hired.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Human Resources is the gatekeeper for facilitating the hiring of students -- the Minister, as well as the Progressive Experience Program -- and maintain the student employment database. My question for the Minister is: what is the department doing to encourage departments to access programs like the PEP and increase the number of students they hire? Mahsi cho.

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

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In December of last year the department met with the deputy ministers of all the departments and advised them of the process for hiring summer students, the need to register on the public registry and the need to have a continued support to hire summer students. We follow that up with regular updates at deputy minister meetings and also letters to the departments. We also raise them at ministerial meetings. So in every opportunity, we encourage departments to increase the level of hiring of summer students. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you. Last year the Department of Human Resources hired 16

students. To date how many have they hired this year?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you. To date we've hired nine summer students and I'd also like to advise the Members that the Progressive Experience Program is also fully subscribed. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much. When did the Department of Human Resources start planning for hiring of summer students for this spring and summer?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Every year we plan on a continuous basis, but for this fiscal year we started in December 2010. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Your final supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, although we'd obviously like to see an increase in the number of summer student hires, will the Minister of Human Resources commit to hiring at least 16 students with the Department of Human Resources this summer? Mahsi.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you. The government's objective is to meet last year's target of 263 summer students and it's our commitment for the department to achieve the 16 summer students that we hired, the same as last year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 114-16(6): SUMMER STUDENT EMPLOYMENT FOR ENR

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have questions for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources on summer students. I'm concerned about the transparency and efficiency of the summer student hiring process and I'm wondering if ENR puts out a file of the positions that they have identified, presumably, as I understand it, in December on the positions that are available for students so that they can underscore the credentials that they have towards those specific summer student positions.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We follow the hiring process as laid out. Students are encouraged to register early, put their names in along with their credentials, as well as students from the different regions probably have their own personal points of contact. In terms of the process, we look at hiring about 29 students that we have this year already. That's the process that we follow.

MR. BROMLEY: Just looking outside, we're right along on our spring. I'd say it's almost summer. Last year I believe ENR hired about 40 students. I know students have been out of school for some time. They're waiting desperately to hear. Will the Minister commit to hiring at least 40 students, as he did last year, again this year and get word to them quickly?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: We're committed to hiring as many students as possible with the resources that are available to allow us to do so.

MR. BROMLEY: I do notice that the budget is up for ENR this year compared to last, so I'm hoping the Minister will confirm that means we'll be hiring at least 40, and probably more students. I am concerned about the concept of challenge and accountability, because I have information from constituents indicating that in some cases equally qualified people have lost out to people with lower priority status. I'm wondering in ENR if there's apparently no public listing of what jobs were on offer, how can applicants know whether their priority status was honoured when job offers were made in the department.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: If the Member has a specific concern or issue, I'd be happy to have that detail to see and ensure that due process was followed, of the Member would care to share outside this House that specific detail.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps that's something we can discuss over supper sometime.

My last question is: will the Minister commit to an early identification of summer student positions within ENR and make sure that's publicly posted so that students can address specifically with those positions in mind and underscore the credentials that they have for them? Thank you. I like dessert, too.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: There is still a chair available for the dinner tomorrow night with Mr. Beaulieu, so the Member for Weledeh is welcome to attend. Yes, I will make that commitment.

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

QUESTION 115-16(6):
SUMMER STUDENT EMPLOYMENT
FOR THE HOUSING CORPORATION

MR. BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. I have questions for the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation along the same lines as summer students. Last year the NWT Housing

Corporation hired seven students. To date how many students does the NWT Housing Corporation have on staff for the summer?

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Currently we have three. That's not including what students the LHOs themselves might take on, which will probably bring the number a lot higher.

MR. BEAULIEU: To the LHOs, did the Housing Corporation provide additional funding to LHOs for them to hire students at most if not all of the LHOs across the territory?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: The LHOs identify how many students they would need and they've become very good at trying to access any pots of money that are out there to assist them with paying the wages for students. They're able to make that determination and determine how many students they would need for the summer and they would find the financing.

MR. BEAULIEU: The nature of the Housing Corporation is that they spend a lot of their funding on capital. Would the Housing Corporation look at hiring summer students as they're doing capital projects throughout the summer?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: The actual construction of the units or the capital projects that we're putting up during the summer are usually contracted out. It would be up to the contractors to determine if they needed summer students. They would make that decision and there's a lot of factors they would have to look at; obviously, the amount of training they have, safety, and all that. It would be up to the contractors to make that decision.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the capital projects that are not specifically under contract but other capital projects like maybe repairs or maintenance programs for homeowners and so on where there may be materials going to the communities and some sort of contribution, would the Minister look at something like that, making contributions to the communities using capital dollars so that the communities could have some summer students working on projects?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Again, if we are doing small capital projects that go out to the communities, even the smallest contracts are usually tendered out or sole sourced. It again would be up to the person doing the work as to whether they have or would need any summer students.

I do know that some of the LHOs will use summer students in some of the projects that they're doing.

That would be a determination that the LHO would make and, again, they would be able to finance that internally.

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

QUESTION 116-16(6):
SUMMER STUDENT EMPLOYMENT
IN THE COMMUNITIES

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of MACA. Given the community of youth and the nature of the department, it might be good to see what the Minister is willing to hire students in the communities. The department, going back through the Summer Student Employment Program from last year to this year, there's only six students being hired. Is there any increase to the number of students being hired in the communities in the Territories?

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We currently have six summer students within the department. In some of the smaller communities, the recreation department in the community would use some of the money from MACA to bring on one or two summer students. If we were to take into consideration all the different agencies and delivering agents for some of the departments -- MACA or housing -- then we'd find that our summer student numbers would go up. The communities themselves would be able to try and access monies to bring on a summer student.

MR. JACOBSON: When the departments start planning on hiring summer students for the summer work season, how much money is the department giving to each community?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We make a contribution to each community. I think last year we made the contribution of \$825,000 to the recreation in each community. We have it broken down by the communities. If they're wanting to they're able to use that money to... I mean, again, it would be the decision of the community. We can't tell them how specifically to spend it. Through the committee of Rural and Remote Communities I believe we had identified some money that we wanted to funnel into the communities to help the communities with creating some employment that would obviously include summer students.

MR. JACOBSON: Although we'd obviously like to see increases in hires, would the Minister commit to hiring at least six summer students and try to double it to 12 this summer at Municipal and Community Affairs?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: The departments within MACA have come back and said, well, they've funded for six students and this is what we've identified now. I think there's an opportunity here for maybe all of us as MLAs to bring on a summer student. That would be an additional 19 summer students that we could potentially hire for two or three months. That's something that we should consider.

In this day and age we have a lot of students that are out there looking for summer employment. I think it's incumbent on us as Members, as departments, as all the delivering agents in the communities, the communities themselves, to see how many of these summer students we can put to work so as to be able to gather up some money for going back to school next year.

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

QUESTION 117-16(6):
SUMMER STUDENT EMPLOYMENT
FOR THE EXECUTIVE AND DAAIR

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to direct my questions on this topic today to the Premier, the Minister responsible for the Executive and for the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations. The Department of Executive and DAAIR hired two summer students last year. To date how many students have been hired for this year?

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have one that is hired and two positions that are in the process of being filled within Executive. Within Aboriginal Affairs I have two working in the department and another P1 in the process, as well.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: It will be good to see some summer students working especially in DAAIR that are P1 candidates, because I've often found it curious that when DAAIR comes before us as committee and so on, that amongst their management there has been on occasion no Aboriginal representation in a department that actually oversees Aboriginal affairs and relations.

I'd like to ask the Premier when the planning for hiring summer students started, what does the department do? Do they look around at jobs that have been set aside? How is the planning? Take us behind the scenes and how the planning is done for summer students. Because, I mean, we are looking for value for money and I'm sure there must be a backlog of things that build up that people don't get to. Tell us, how do you begin to identify work that could be done by a summer student?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: The process that we use, number one is if there...and through the Department of Human Resources working through a number of categories and programs we have in place. For example, as individuals go through to college or university and they have specific training that could then be used by the department in some of the work we have scheduled for the summer season.

I'll use last year for an example. We knew we were going to be tasking our people within Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations on the Northern Leaders' Forum work on vision exercise, so we hired a couple of individuals there to help us with that work. So it's that kind of planning when we know we have additional work to be done that we would begin that planning process, align with the pool of students that have been registered with the work that would be required if it fits with their school and experience in that area and progressive training in a number of areas.

I must say as well, though, at times we are targeted in a sense, pointing out that at the senior management table we seem to have a lack of Aboriginal people there, I can go through a list of Aboriginal people who have come up through the system and that have been scooped, I might say, by other departments as they've moved on to permanent jobs within the government in other departments. Thank you.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, it's very reassuring to hear that it isn't just looking for tasks that have languished on the back burner throughout the rest of the year and then looking at perhaps getting summer students to different jobs that perhaps are not departmental specific, but that we could take specific training that our post-secondary students are involved in and then apply that to initiatives being undertaken by that department to contribute to that. That's very reassuring to hear.

Mr. Speaker, do you think it would be at all reasonably possible that we might get a total of five students between the Department of Executive and DAAIR for this coming summer? Would that be a goal that would be achievable? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: I believe we will be there this summer, with a total of five between the two departments.

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

QUESTION 118-16(6):
SUMMER STUDENT EMPLOYMENT
IN TOURISM

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister of ITI, Mr. McLeod. It's in regard to the position that he holds

in regard to the area of Industry, Tourism and Investment. I think that a lot of times we lose sight that we do have subsidiaries out there, regardless if it's through the Business Credit Corporation. In my riding we have the Fort McPherson Canvas Shop, which, again, gives younger people the opportunity to get training, but more importantly, get their first jobs.

Also, the other area in which the Minister is responsible is the area of tourism, in which a lot of Members in this House have had that opportunity of getting summer employment in that area. Again, I'd like to ask the Minister, as a department, have you looked at all the subsidiaries and all the different programs and services that you deliver to try to enhance the summer employment programs so that we can get the summer students in the different areas, regardless if it's through the Business Credit Corporation, their subsidiaries, or through the parks and tourism infrastructure we have throughout the Northwest Territories so we give them that opportunity and also in the front-line workers?

I'd like to ask the Minister, have you broadened your scope of areas that summer students can work in so that we can hire more summer students in your department? Thank you.

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

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member may recall, when legislation was passed establishing the BDIC, that I'm very limited to the kind of direction I can give to the board. I can write them a letter recommending they hire more summer students, and I'm prepared to do so, but you have to also recognize the fact that the BDIC subsidiaries, we have to get FMB approval to subsidize jobs, because we figure that a job that's not fully paid for is better than no job at all. In most of the subsidiaries we have to subsidize jobs up to a maximum of \$25,000 per job, so we're limited on that basis, as well. Thank you.

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, as we noted last year, this department had one of the higher summer hires by way of 32 positions, but I notice it's down this year. I'd like to ask the Minister, to date, how many positions have been hired and are we going to try to exceed the 32 positions from last year.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: I'm pleased to report that without the first month not being completed yet -- there's still three more months of summer employment available -- to date we've hired 26 summer students. We're about five or six away from meeting our target for this year. Thank you.

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, I think the message we're trying to send here to the Ministers and the different departments is that we want you to not

only meet but we want you to beat those numbers from last year and get more summer students into the public workforce. I'd like to ask the Minister when did you start planning to hire summer students, and more importantly, what are we doing by way of promoting those opportunities so the students are aware that those opportunities are out there.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: We started back in December and we identified the jobs on an ongoing basis, plus we also have projects that we gear to skills that different students have. For example, if we have a project, then we can start looking for students that have those skill sets that allow us to undertake projects that will allow us to go forward.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we heard earlier from the Minister, he doesn't really like to be seen as directing departments or even tour operators for that, but I'd just like to suggest to the Minister that he write those letters and try to entice those people that are handling government contracts or providing government services, that they do consider summer employment as one of their options to stimulate our economy, but more importantly, give our young people an opportunity to go to work. Thank you.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: I just want to indicate to the Member that I like to direct corporations but the legislation prevents me from doing so, so I'm just allowed to write them letters. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 119-16(6):
SUMMER STUDENT EMPLOYMENT
FOR TRANSPORTATION

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Minister of Transportation with respect to the summer hire of students.

I want to ask the Minister, to date, how many students have been hired in the communities, the regions or headquarters that he could provide to the House today.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We place great emphasis on hiring students. We think it's an important part of our practice to have students involved in our projects and in our departments. With the departments that I represent, both Public Works and Services and Transportation, so far we've hired 34 students. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, last year the Department of Transportation hired 31 students. Certainly, then, we want to see that number matched or even to increase. I want to ask for clarification, because the Minister is also responsible for DPW. When he said 34, was that the combination of both departments? I just want to ask about the Transportation numbers. Can the Minister clarify those numbers for me?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: With the departments I represent, our goal is to hire 48 students, and we're just about there. We're short roughly a dozen students. The reason for that is we have a number of students who have identified that they want to work with us but they still haven't, in some cases, finalized their registration with HR or are requiring certain documentation. We fully expect to reach our goal of 48 for both departments. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: What a Minister, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask the Minister are there other employment opportunities for the students such as specializing in the areas such as engineering and bridge construction, any of the summer students that are working in that area that the Minister has opportunities for these summer students to work.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: There are opportunities in all our projects that we undertake to deliver, including with the contractors. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister inform the House how many of these summer students have come on board with the Department of Transportation or PWS such as engineering or bridge construction or any other fields that the department is working in?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: I'd need clarity to that question on whether he's referring to this year or since the start of this government, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 120-16(6):
SUMMER STUDENT EMPLOYMENT
FOR NURSING STUDENTS

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Now, the Department of Health and Social Services has made a significant commitment in the past to employ northern nursing and other allied health professional students every summer. To this end, they have implemented a Related Experience Program to help the authorities hire these students. Last year the authorities across the Northwest Territories employed 45 students who fell into this category: two in the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority; 13 in Yellowknife Health and

Social Services Authority; 12 at Stanton; six in the Beau-Del Authority; six in Fort Smith Health and Social Services Authority; five in the Deh Cho; and one in the Sahtu. This year the numbers don't seem to be what they were last year, Mr. Speaker. We have heard from nursing students that they haven't been having any luck, or at least limited luck obtaining related experience employment.

Mr. Speaker, my question for the Minister is: does the Related Experience Program still exist and will the Minister commit to working with the authorities in the Northwest Territories to ensure that at least 45 -- preferably more -- students who qualify for the Relevant Experience Program are hired again this summer? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will commit to meet with the deputy before the end of session tomorrow to get a better understanding of the numbers on a comparative basis and be able to speak more fully to that to the Member. Thank you.

MR. RAMSAY: I thank the Minister for that and look forward to receiving that information from him.

The second question I'd have is: inside the Department of Health and Social Services, last summer it looks like they hired 10 summer students and this year, again, the numbers don't seem to be what they were last year. It's already almost the third week in May. I'd like to ask the Minister how many summer students have been hired within the Department of Health and Social Services. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you. My list tells me there was seven that have been hired for this year, keeping in mind that every authority and the department, every department of government has been asked to manage their dollars in the most efficient way possible and it reflects some of those pressures, but seven is on the list I have here. Thank you.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you. I'd like to ask the Minister, the Department of Health and Social Services hired 10 summer students last summer. I'd like to ask the Minister, is the department committed to again hiring 10 summer students this summer. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you. We're committed, as is ENR, to hiring all the students we can with the resources we have available. I can't commit specifically to the number 10, but I can commit to that fact. Thank you.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and again I thank the Minister for that. I'd like to ask the Minister when the Department of Health and Social Services began planning for the requirement for summer students where they fit inside the department, when did that planning start?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you. There's a common planning process. The Minister of HR laid it out. It's tied to our business planning process, the funds that are going to be available, the means to look at this particular piece of work that's done in addition to all the other program demands and getting the information out so that students are encouraged to in fact file and put their names on the system. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 121-16(6):
SUMMER STUDENT EMPLOYMENT
PROCESS FOR JUSTICE

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are addressed to the Minister of Justice, and it's no surprise there's a bit of a theme going on here. My questions are also related to summer students. It's well known that summer students can start to submit their resumes anytime, basically anytime after Christmas and into January. So I would assume that there are an awful lot of students who are well prepared and who do have their resumes in in January, February and March, but at this point in the year we've only hired about maybe not quite two-thirds of what we hired in total last year. It seems to be a very, very slow machine. I'd like to ask the Minister of Justice when the first student that is currently employed for summer of 2011 was hired by the department. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Minister responsible for Justice, Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Within the Justice department we've been working closely with the Department of Human Resources since December to identify those students. We try to keep track of the students that have potential to be lawyers, or in that capacity. So of the students that we have, there are approximately eight students and some of them have started. I don't have the specific dates of when they started, but we want to get those students on board, all of them, as soon as possible, if they're not on board already. Mahsi.

MS. BISARO: Thank you. I'd like to ask the Minister, he mentions that there are eight students that are hired at the moment. He also mentioned that the department tries to get students on board as soon as possible. I really appreciate that attitude on the part of the department and I believe there

was a previous Minister who indicated that they have most of their students hired already.

Students, when they're coming out of university, have four months to try and make some money to get them through the next university year and the sooner we can hire them, absolutely the more money they're going to make and the better off they're going to be. I'd like to ask the Minister, if there are eight students hired at the moment, last year the department hired 11 -- and to use what, according to my colleague Mr. Menicoche is my favourite phrase -- I'd like to ask the Minister if he can meet or beat that number of 11.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi. Our goal has always been to either meet or go beyond that maximum target that we have, with the resources that we have currently. Mahsi.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister. So with the resources that you currently have in the Department of Justice, I'd like to ask the Minister, will he be able to hire the 11 students that they hired last year. Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi. Currently, we have eight students that will be working within the Department of Justice. So that's the resources that we have. If there are additional resources, by all means, we need to work within the framework or the budget that we're going to have for summer students. Mahsi.

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

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess I have to take that as a no. So I'm really disappointed in Justice if they can't meet or beat their last year's goal. I'd like to know from the Minister if he could give us an idea of the number of students, out of these eight students, how many of them will be working in Yellowknife and how many will be working in communities outside of Yellowknife. Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi. The information that I do have is eight students will be working within the Department of Justice. I don't have the breakdown of where they're going to be working, but I can provide that information to the Members. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

QUESTION 122-16(6):
SUMMER STUDENT EMPLOYMENT
FOR ECE

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are related to Human Resources and summer students and they're for the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and

Employment. My records show me that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment hired 20 summer students last year. Could the Minister please tell me to date how many summer students has the Department of Education, Culture and Employment hired so far this year? Thank you.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. The information that we do have, we have 13 summer students within Education, Culture and Employment. Also, there will be additional student employment within the board operations at the regional level. Mahsi.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you. I'm glad the Minister brought up the boards. I'm wondering what proactive steps, if any, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment is taking overall to encourage all the health boards out there to hire as many students as possible. That way we would be getting some students into the community, which I think would be great.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi. This particular area is always of interest for us, because we have to fill that capacity at the community level and at the regional level. We do enforce and also have a thorough discussion with the education boards to have their targets, specific numbers of students that should be hired on an annual basis, as we do within our GNWT department. So we'll continue to stress that on an annual basis when it comes to December-January period. Mahsi.

MR. ABERNETHY: For the record, in my previous question I meant education boards, not health boards. This department is one of the largest departments that we have and it's responsible for education, culture, and employment. I'm wondering in the employment capacity of this department if this department is taking any proactive action to work with businesses throughout the Territories to find ways to encourage them to employ summer students themselves.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: That's one of our objectives, is to work with other potential business partners, as well. We deal with whether it be the Mine Training Society or other NGOs and the business arm. We promote more of a building capacity with the students being hired. Even within our department having a job shadowing and other areas. Definitely those are areas that we need to continue to stress with the potential business partners and we'll continue to do that.

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

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that Education, Culture and Employment is one of our largest departments and it has a

mandate for education and employment -- I've already indicated that the department hired 20 students last year -- and given that it has quite possibly one of the largest budgets in this government, I'm hoping that the Minister will meet or beat their previous targets. The Minister has already heard this terminology, but I'd like to say if any department out there can beat their target from last year of 20, it should be Education, Culture and Employment, given the sheer size of the department and the fact it has one of the largest budgets. I would like the Minister today to commit to at least meeting the 20, but preferably beating it and increasing the number of summer students that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment hires during this summer.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: I think we can either meet or exceed the number that we have, especially when we count the money that we allocate to the education board operations in the regional level. Most of our money, the \$300 million, goes to the board operations. If we count those students at that level, I'm sure that we can exceed the numbers that are before us from last year on the ECE area. Those are the areas we need to stress and continue to work with on an annual basis.

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

QUESTION 123-16(6):
SUMMER STUDENT EMPLOYMENT
FOR FINANCE

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll be directing my questions to the Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger. I, too, am concerned by the summer student hire, or I should say lack of hiring thus far. My first question to the Minister of Finance is: the Department of Finance hired nine summer students last year; to date, how many students have they hired this year both in the territorial capital as well as the regions?

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My list tells me we've hired nine, all in Yellowknife.

MR. HAWKINS: I'd like to thank the Minister. Is the Department of Finance planning to hire more summer students by the end of summer and are they looking to expand into the regions?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: There's a modest presence in the regions and I would anticipate that since it's now May, almost June, that we've probably maxed out, but I would have to

check with the department to see if we anticipate exceeding last year's number of nine.

MR. HAWKINS: Would the Minister be willing to commit today that his mandate would be to encourage his Department of Finance, both in the capital as well as in the regions, to hire more summer students if they could make those opportunities available for them?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I will just reiterate the encouragement and admonition that we put out to all departments, as a matter of fact, to hire all the students possible within the resources that we have available.

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

QUESTION 124-16(6):
SUMMER STUDENT EMPLOYMENT
FOR PWS

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have questions for the Minister of Public Works and Services. I know earlier he anticipated the questions and tried to generalize everything, but specifically to his department, Public Works and Services hired 17 summer students last year. To date, how many have they hired?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Minister responsible for Public Works and Services, Mr. Michael McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think I answered that question. More specific, we have hired 13 students this year. Our target, again, is to try to max the hire from last year. Of course, we have a budget that we have to follow and it's going to be a challenge, but I've instructed our staff to try to achieve the 17 that we hired last year.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: That was a nice clear answer by the Minister and the commitment level from his department, then, throughout the whole hour has been very good discussion and commitment from all the Ministers. Just one last follow-up question. Within Public Works and Services, was there a particular number for the Nahendeh region?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: The answer is no. Our practice is to try to hire students based on their program of study. If there are students who are planning to be architects, engineers, information technology students, those are the ones we focus on. Sometimes the level of applicants in those areas is not the highest; then we move into the trades and try to hire people in those areas. If there's still a void in our numbers, then we'll hire labour positions.

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

QUESTION 125-16(6):
SUMMER STUDENT EMPLOYMENT
STRATEGY

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have questions for the Minister of Human Resources, the Honourable Bob McLeod. Clearly, the Members on this side of the House are very interested in helping our students obtain meaningful employment during their short summer. This work helps them afford to go to school and be successful in their studies. Clearly, we would like to see some progress in the areas this summer. Clearly, you can hear from all the Members, the message is quite loud and crystal clear, that this government must do better, and we're prepared to help support that type of initiative. We collectively want more opportunities for students in all communities and these opportunities provide great work experience for the students. However, it isn't a one-time challenge over each year. As a result, we would like to see this government commit to more proactive approaches in the coming years. Will the Minister of Human Resources commit to developing a summer student employment strategy for future years to maximize northern student employment opportunities across public, private and NGO sectors, and ensure that the benefits of bilingual students are appropriately recognized and reflected in hiring practices subject to our Affirmative Action Policy?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. A couple of questions there, actually. The honourable Minister responsible for Human Resources, Mr. Bob McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We always do transitional arrangements for the incoming government, and absolutely, if I get the concurrence of all of the Members that this summer student strategy is important to make it a part of the transition information, then I will do so. We will be discussing this at future meetings. We're quite prepared to do that.

MR. HAWKINS: Clearly, this is an important issue. A summer student employment strategy is a very passionate issue, provided by the comments and questions by the Members of this House to the government. If the Minister of Human Resources is willing to accept a letter on behalf of all Members to encourage him to act upon this immediately, would he be willing to act upon it if the Members of this side of the House committed that strongly in writing to cause action right away?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Once I receive such a letter, we'll proceed with the utmost speed.

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

QUESTION 126-16(6):
INCREASING SUMMER STUDENT
EMPLOYMENT IN THE REGIONS

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to follow up on the shocking numbers that I see here. As of May 18, 2011, 3 o'clock, there's only four people in the Summer Student Program hired in the Sahtu region by this government compared to the South Slave where there's 36, 42 in total; North Slave region 103. Four students that are given the opportunity in the Sahtu to be hired. I listen to the Ministers of Public Works and Services and Transportation and it doesn't quite cut it with me. I want to ask the Premier if he would work with his officials and see if there's any way that these numbers can be increased. Aurora College in Beaufort-Delta hired one student in Sahtu, but in the other communities they haven't hired any. Can these numbers be improved to maybe five or six, rather than a dismal four?

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thought I heard Public Works and Services or Transportation in his statement. It went on for a while, so I lost track.

Seriously, though, the issue of student hires has been one that this government has pushed and worked with the Department of Human Resources and all departments to improve on our numbers. The fiscal situation that we find ourselves in, the departments are doing their best to improve on that, but as we've heard from a number of Ministers, with our fiscal restraints departments have had to voluntarily squeeze in some areas. We're still trying to match or do a bit better in some areas than we did previously. There are areas where, yes, it's weighted heavy. When some departments have only a headquarters function, other departments help balance that off, because we're into all communities and regions and will continue to try to improve on that.

MR. YAKELEYA: I mentioned the Ministers of PWS and DOT because he talked a little bit on this issue here. For example, the Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority is going to hire four, but in any other regions, none of their health boards are hiring any summer students. This is an agency of something like the Sahtu Health Board. I want to ask if this opportunity can be given the same as the Fort Smith Health and Social Services Authority, which has hired six people.

The fairness and equality is not there. Can the Minister ensure that our regions will also have the same opportunity as the boards in Yellowknife and Fort Smith so that we can also hire summer students? Come on, let's increase these numbers more than four.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: The issue with the health boards is that in trying to get the numbers, some have not been able to provide the additional numbers, so there may be some additional summer students out there that we're not aware of. The other area is we've given them budgets to operate within and we've given them the authority to make those decisions, as well. We'll try to get all the information so that we have fully updated numbers as we progress. I know the Department of Human Resources works with all departments to try to pool all those together and we'll continue to do that.

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

QUESTION 127-16(6):
NUMBER OF P1 AND P2
SUMMER STUDENTS HIRED

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Cabinet and Premier have been extremely helpful today in providing information. Obviously, they were prepared for these questions.

I have a question. This is something I get asked about a lot in my constituency when it comes to summer student hires. Could they give us a breakdown, please, between P1 candidates and P2 and other candidates for summer students hired by this government for this upcoming summer season?

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

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have that information and I'll provide it to the Members.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, thank you. I understand that the Minister does have that information. Will he make it available now? Later? Thank you.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: As of May 18, 2011, 3:00 p.m., we have 166 summer students hired: 91 are indigenous Aboriginal; 75 are indigenous non-Aboriginal; zero other summer students. We have 16 job offers out for signature: four to indigenous Aboriginals; 11 to indigenous non-Aboriginal; and one to other summer student, for a total of 16 job offers out there. Thank you.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: I'm sure that although this information was available to the Members, it is good for the public to know that and it is very good news. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. I didn't hear a question there. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills.

Colleagues, before I go on to the next item on the Order Paper, the Chair is going to call a short break.

---SHORT RECESS

SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey): Colleagues, we'll return to orders of the day. Item 17, motions. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 44 to deal with Motion 8-16(6), which I gave notice of yesterday. Mahsi.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. SPEAKER: Proceed with your motion, Mr. Menicoche.

Motions

MOTION 8-16(6):
REVIEW OF ACCESS TO INFORMATION
AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY ACT,
CARRIED

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act was enacted in 1994;

AND WHEREAS in the 17 years since the act was passed, e-mail, laptops, flash drives, smartphones and other technological developments have dramatically altered the way government manages, uses and communicates information;

AND WHEREAS other Canadian jurisdictions have conducted comprehensive reviews of their access to information and privacy legislation in recent years;

AND WHEREAS since the coming into force of the act, the Information and Privacy Commissioner has made a number of recommendations for amendments to the act that have not been addressed;

AND WHEREAS the Information and Privacy Commissioner has recommended a comprehensive review of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act in her 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 annual reports;

AND WHEREAS the Standing Committee on Government Operations also recommended a comprehensive review of the act in its Report on the Review of the 2008-2009 Annual Report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner;

AND WHEREAS the Government of the Northwest Territories February 2011 response to the standing committee's recommendation did not provide an undertaking to complete a comprehensive review of the act;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, that this Legislative Assembly strongly recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories undertake a comprehensive review of the Access to

Information and Protection of Privacy Act, including an examination of access to information and privacy legislation in other Canadian jurisdictions and all past recommendations of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, and bring forward a bill during the first two years of the 17th Assembly;

AND FURTHER, that the Government of the Northwest Territories include mention of the need for a comprehensive review of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act in any transition document or report to the 17th Assembly;

AND FURTHERMORE, that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a comprehensive response to this motion within 90 days.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called.

---Carried

The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 44 to deal with Motion 6-16(6), which I gave notice of yesterday.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. SPEAKER: Proceed with your motion, Mr. Yakeleya.

MOTION 6-16(6):
INCREASE TO STUDENT FINANCIAL
ASSISTANCE LIVING ALLOWANCES,
CARRIED

Mr. YAKELEYA: WHEREAS people with post-secondary education are six times more likely to have employment, and completing post-secondary education dramatically increases the lifetime prospects of having well-paid, stable employment;

AND WHEREAS the Department of Education's Student Financial Assistance Program is designed to support full-time students pursuing a post-secondary education;

AND WHEREAS the living allowance for these students has not increased for 11 years, since the year 2000;

AND WHEREAS the Consumer Price Index in Canada has increased 27 percent since 2000, which indicates that the value of Northwest Territories students' assistance has eroded a great deal in that time;

AND WHEREAS many students are taking part-time jobs to meet their essential needs, such as rent and food, while attending post-secondary institutions;

AND WHEREAS financial hardship can lead to Northwest Territories students failing to complete their post-secondary studies;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, that this Legislative Assembly strongly recommends that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment increase the living allowances set out in Schedule B of the Regulations to the Student Financial Assistance Act by 27 percent;

AND FURTHER, that the structure of the program be altered to ensure that Student Financial Assistance grants be indexed and subject to annual changes that are linked to the Consumer Price Index;

AND FURTHERMORE, that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a comprehensive response to this motion within 90 days.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We all know that a good education is a way to a good job. By ensuring that student financial assistance meets our students' needs, we are investing in our future and the future of the Northwest Territories is in their hands. We badly need these students to come back to our communities and work in our communities. All kinds of companies and organizations need well-educated employees; our local businesses, governments, our schools and our Aboriginal development corporations, our health centres and, yes, this Government of the Northwest Territories.

The Consumer Price Index in Canada is up 27 percent since we last adjusted the Student Financial Assistance Program 11 years ago. So, Mr. Speaker, those dollars students get for food and rent just don't go as far as they used to. I'm all for students working part-time if they can, but I also know some students are always short of money. In some cases, some real hardships if the parents cannot afford to send them any more money or food.

If we raise the student financial assistance to catch up with the prices since the year 2000 -- a student is currently receiving \$700 a month -- that would give them an extra \$189. That could easily be the difference between success and failure, Mr. Speaker, when you're trying to get by on a small budget far away from home, and we need these students to succeed, especially in our small communities. Too few of our students go on to higher education. We need every one of them to succeed. They will show the way for others and education levels will improve all around.

Maybe the Finance Minister will say we just don't have that money to do this. I will expect he will point

out that we are already spending \$9.2 million a year on student financial assistance. The proposal I am making is to add \$2.7 million to that. Let's not be too hasty to say no, we can't do it. These few dollars that we put into the student financial assistance will come back to this government many times over during the lives of these successful students. We also know, on average, better educated people require less health care and social assistance, so every successful post-secondary student also saves our government money in the long run. It should not be necessary to debate the level of the student financial assistance every year in this House.

We set up a program and now I'm asking the government to make sure students don't fall behind when the prices go up. By tying SFA grants to the Consumer Price Index, this is only fair and reasonable. This government is tying more fees to inflation all the time and we should do the same with these students. The government is pretty fast to boost revenue from higher fees, but not so quick to pay a little more to people who need help. Let's not be too chintzy about our students. Let's help them complete their post-secondary studies with flying colours. Let's do it and be very proud of them.

When our students return home with diplomas or degrees in hand, they have a bright future ahead of them. I thank you, colleagues, for allowing me to speak on this motion and to support this motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. I've seconded the motion for the Member for Sahtu on this because I, too, am a believer that we have to put money in for the students, as much money as possible. I think the benefits down the road are tremendous. If we have an educated society, then we have improved health and that's statistically proven that higher education is better health, better housing, better income. The whole thing of even the social problems and everything are eliminated. A lot of social problems are eliminated when you get into a society where you're talking about people that are well educated.

I think we should do everything that we can during the time that the students are going back to school. We have people who need income. Right now in the Northwest Territories we have a lot of students that are going right from high school into universities and colleges. I recognize that. This is positive for them too, because it's not a lot of money and any increase to that would benefit them a tremendous amount.

We also have a lot of mature students that go back to school. So students who have been in jobs that are the best jobs they could get under that circumstance, Grade 12 and so on, and now they

want to go to college or university. They have kids, they have child care, they have the cost of food, the cost of rent, the cost of actually operating something back home and then having to go to school and paying for that cost, as well.

I second the motion and am obviously supporting that, to support the students that are going to be going to post-secondary education.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called.

---Carried

The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 44 to deal with Motion 7-16(6) which I gave notice of yesterday.

---Unanimous consent granted

MOTION 7-16(6):
NWT ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS WEEK,
CARRIED

MS. BISARO: I move the following motion:

WHEREAS our elders hold the wisdom, history and knowledge of our communities and our territory, and should be respected and honoured;

AND WHEREAS elder abuse, including physical, sexual, psychological and financial abuse and neglect is sadly a common and significant threat to seniors in our communities;

AND WHEREAS the International Network on the Prevention of Elder Abuse has proclaimed June 15 as World Elder Abuse Awareness Day;

AND WHEREAS the NWT Seniors' Society has declared June 12th to 18th as NWT Elder Abuse Awareness Week;

AND WHEREAS proclamation of an NWT Elder Abuse Awareness Week would raise public awareness of the various forms of abuse older adults experience throughout the NWT and would encourage seniors to become more informed and educated about the signs of elder abuse and the supports and help available to them, and would support efforts to make the lives of older adults better;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Sahtu, that the Legislative Assembly resolves to formally observe June 12 to 18, 2011, as NWT Elder Abuse Awareness Week.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to my colleagues. Some may consider this a somewhat unusual motion and feel that perhaps it isn't necessary as often the various departments will recognize particular weeks. I think it's really important that we as legislators and that this Assembly makes this motion and passes this motion, because it indicates the importance that we as legislators give to our seniors.

I've often heard Members speak and say that part of our culture is that we respect seniors and honour seniors, and that elders are a very important part of our culture and our society. Unfortunately, we have people within our communities within the NWT who don't respect our seniors and elders and don't honour them. Some of them are subjected to abuse, and I've mentioned many of the forms of abuse within the motion. Thankfully there's a growing recognition of that abuse of elder and abuse of older adults is a problem.

The NWT Seniors' Society is working very hard towards giving greater recognition to this problem, and to addressing the problem, and are finding solutions for it. The report that was tabled earlier today entitled Making Connections has some excellent work that the society has done, and there are some excellent recommendations in there which I hope the government will take advantage of.

I feel that the problem of elder abuse needs to be given a higher profile. We need to increase the public awareness and I think that this motion will get us some ways towards that. I think the motion tells all NWT residents that their legislators, we as MLAs, respect the values that elders bring to our work and to the territory. I think it also indicates the importance of this issue and that we are going to work to eradicate it.

I would encourage all Members to support this motion. I hope that the Executive Council will consider to vote on this. There is no requirement for them to spend any money. I would ask for a recorded vote.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. To the motion. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just a few comments to my support. Anytime we look at something that would support the elders in whatever fashion, I like to lend my support. I would like to thank the Member from Yellowknife here for bringing this forward to recognize the date of June 15th to 18th, I believe it's Elder Abuse Week, and also to bring awareness to the elders.

When you read the report that the Member has made reference to, it's fairly frightening. A lot of the issues that the elders are dealing with, sometimes they think it's the normal way of how things are

done in the community, or they haven't really recognized the level of degrees of abuse that they may be suffering or taking on. They think that's okay or normal for friends and family members to take advantage of them.

Financial, not taking care of them, emotional abuse, or just by using your mouth. A lot of these elders are scared in our communities. A lot of them shouldn't be like that; however, that's the way society is operating. That's how we're living today.

As Members of the Legislative Assembly, if it wasn't for our elders, we would have it difficult in our communities. It's the elders that through the preservation of their strength and courage that they give us advice to keep on going. It's a sad day in the Northwest Territories when we as legislators think that we know it all and we don't want to really give that much support to our elders. This is giving some promise to the awareness for our elders, for the prevention, and to really understand our grandparents and understand our people.

I want to say thank you to the Member and hope that one day we'll have an elders secretariat within the government, that this government here can take some real ownership, like they have with the Women's Secretariat, and the secretariat can be set up within the future government to say you are important to us, you matter, and abuse has to stop at all levels. No more shall elders be taken advantage of. That is not our culture and that is wrong. That is wrong by all our people. Hopefully our elders can have some level of comfort that this week here will be given to them, because they certainly deserve it. My grandmother deserves it. So do each of the grandparents in this room here.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. To the motion. The honourable Minister responsible for Seniors, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Government of the Northwest Territories annually recognizes Seniors' Week and the theme of the year. This year is to do with elder abuse awareness. So we appreciate this motion that will add further emphasis to the concern that we have about seniors and doing the right thing for the elders of the Northwest Territories. We will be assisting them, as we normally do, for this week and since we already have a program in place and we're doing good work, this is a complementary motion and we appreciate the Member bringing it forward and we will be voting in support of the motion. Thank you.

RECORDED VOTE

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

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Schauerte): Ms. Bisaro; Mr. Yakeleya; Mr. Lafferty; Mr. Miltenberger; Mr. Roland; Mr. McLeod, Deh Cho; Mr. McLeod, Inuvik Twin Lakes; Mr. McLeod, Yellowknife South; Mr. Krutko; Mr. Bromley; Mr. Abernethy; Mr. Menicoche; Mr. Ramsay; Mrs. Groenewegen; Mr. Beaulieu; Mr. Hawkins; Mr. Jacobson.

MR. SPEAKER: All those opposed to the motion, please stand. All those abstaining, please stand.

Results of the recorded vote: 17 for, none opposed, none abstaining. The motion is carried unanimously.

---Carried

MR. SPEAKER: Item 18, first reading of bills. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

First Reading of Bills

BILL 20: VITAL STATISTICS ACT

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Monfwi, that Bill 20, Vital Statistics Act, be read for the first time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Bill 20 has had first reading.

---Carried

The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

BILL 21: AN ACT TO AMEND THE EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS ACT

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Weledeh, that Bill 21, An Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act, be read for the first time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Bill 21 has had first reading.

---Carried

Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Committee Report 5-16(6), Report on the Review of the 2009-2010 Annual Report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, with Mr. Krutko in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): I'd like to call Committee of the Whole to order. In Committee of the Whole we have Committee Report 5-16(6). What is the wish of the committee? Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The committee would like to deal with Committee Report 5-16(6). Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Does committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Are there general comments on Committee Report 5-16(6)? Detail? Mr. Menicoche.

COMMITTEE MOTION 19-16(6): REVIEW OF ATIPP FEE SCHEDULE, CARRIED

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories review the fee schedule to the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act to ensure that it is clearly worded and does not place an undue cost on persons requesting access to information. Thank you.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Mr. Menicoche.

COMMITTEE MOTION 20-16(6): DISCLOSURE OF EMPLOYEE BONUSES, CARRIED

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories institute requirements for proactive disclosure of employee bonuses and the salaries of senior employees or bring forward legislation to this effect if legislation is necessary. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Mr. Menicoche.

COMMITTEE MOTION 21-16(6):
COMPREHENSIVE RESPONSE
WITHIN 90 DAYS,
CARRIED

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a comprehensive response to this report within 90 days.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Does the committee agree that this concludes Committee Report 5-16(6)?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): With that, what is the wish of the committee? Mrs. Groenewegen.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): A motion is on the floor to report progress. The motion is not debatable.

---Carried

I will rise and report progress.

Report of Committee of the Whole

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

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Committee Report 5-16(6), Report on the Review of the 2009-2010 Annual Report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, and would like to report progress with three motions being adopted, and that Committee Report 5-16(6) is concluded. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The motion is on the floor. Do we have a seconder? The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

---Carried

Item 22, third reading of bills. The honourable Minister responsible for Human Resources, Mr. Bob McLeod.

Third Reading of Bills

BILL 11:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE
PUBLIC SERVICE ACT

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, that Bill 11, An Act to Amend the Public Service Act, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: A motion is on the floor. Motion is in order.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. Bill 11 has had third reading.

---Carried

Madam Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

PRINCIPAL CLERK OF COMMITTEES (Ms. Knowlan): Orders of the day for Thursday, May 19, 2011, at 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 9-16(6), Extended Adjournment of the House to August 17, 2011
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
 - Bill 20, Vital Statistics Act
 - Bill 21, An Act to Amend the Employee Standards Act
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

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, May 19, 2011, at 1:30 p.m.

--ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 5:21 p.m.

