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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRAYER	6849
MINISTERS' STATEMENTS	6849
42-16(6) – Resolute Bay Tragedy (Roland)	6849
43-16(6) – Passing of Jack Layton (Roland).....	6849
44-16(6) – Shelter Policy Review (R. McLeod).....	6850
45-16(6) – Minister’s Cultural Circle (Lafferty)	6851
46-16(6) – Tourism Highlights (B. McLeod)	6851
MEMBERS' STATEMENTS	6852
Amendments to the Motor Vehicles Act Regarding Handheld Electronic Devices (Bisaro)	6852
Capital Planning for Nahendeh School Facilities (Menicoche).....	6852
GNWT Workplace Health and Safety Performance (Bromley).....	6853
Resolute Bay Tragedy (Groenewegen).....	6853
Support for High School Students in Small Communities (Jacobson)	6854
Resolute Bay Tragedy (Yakeleya)	6854
GNWT Workplace Health and Safety Performance (Abernethy)	6854
Need for Mandatory Regular Performance Audits on Crown Corporations (Hawkins).....	6855
Northland Trailer Park Infrastructure Requirements (Ramsay).....	6856
Government Investment in Youth Programming (Beaulieu).....	6856
Aklavik Dancers and Drummers (Krutko).....	6857
RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY	6857
ORAL QUESTIONS	6858
REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES	6868
TABLING OF DOCUMENTS	6870
NOTICES OF MOTION	6870
11-16(6) – Devolution Negotiations (Menicoche).....	6870
12-16(6) – Mental Health Court Diversion Programs (Bromley).....	6871
NOTICES OF MOTION FOR FIRST READING OF BILLS	6871
Bill 24 – Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2011-2012.....	6871
Bill 25 – Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2011-2012	6871
CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS	6871

REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE	6880
ORDERS OF THE DAY	6881

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Monday, August 22, 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, Mr. Ramsay, Hon. Floyd Roland, Mr. Yakeleya

The House met at 1:36 p.m.

SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey): Colleagues, I would ask that you to remain standing following today's prayer to observe a minute of silence in recognition of the tragic events in Resolute Bay this weekend and of the death this morning of Jack Layton who, until very recently, served as the leader of the Official Opposition in the House of Commons.

Prayer

---Prayer

---Minute of Silence

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, colleagues. Please be seated. Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Premier, Mr. Roland.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 42-16(6):
RESOLUTE BAY TRAGEDY

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of this 16th Assembly, our government, and all residents of the Northwest Territories, I offer condolences today to those individuals and families who are mourning the loss of colleagues, friends, relatives, and loved ones as a result of this weekend's tragic crash of First Air flight 6560 near Resolute Bay.

Despite the vast distances that separate us we, as Northerners, are a tightly knit community and the impact of this tragedy extends well beyond the boundaries of our northern territories to touch us all. Our lives in communities will be forever changed.

Yet in the midst of this horrific event, we also recognize the miracle of those lives that were spared. Acknowledging the contributions and quick response of the military personnel and volunteers who were pressed into action unexpectedly and under very trying circumstances, we thank them today for their call to duty and their service this weekend.

Mr. Speaker, our North can be harsh and unforgiving, but in this unpredictable environment

we are reliant on the northern airline industry and the men and women who use it daily to deliver and provide the essential goods and services on which our communities and our people count on.

Despite the events of this weekend, these individuals will be at work again today, no doubt with heavy hearts and minds.

Today, in particular, our thoughts and prayers are with them, especially those in the First Air family, ever mindful of their loss and with a renewed sense of appreciation and gratitude for their work and commitment that benefits us all.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 43-16(6):
PASSING OF JACK LAYTON

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Even as we try to come to terms with the tragedy that unfolded in our territory over the weekend, we were faced this morning by more sad news: the untimely passing of the Honourable Jack Layton, who until his recent leave of absence led Canada's New Democratic Party and the Official Opposition in our federal Parliament.

Mr. Layton's political accomplishments, particularly during the most recent federal election, are known and documented for all Canadians. He will be remembered in large part for changing the political landscape of our country, and for his trademark spirit of optimism and hope.

His political career from the time he was first elected to municipal office to his time on Parliament Hill was built on the cornerstone of strong ethics and hard work. "Smiling Jack" personified those traits that we as Northerners like to profess as our own. He was a people's leader, a fighter for social justice, seemingly resilient in the face of challenge.

His close ties and friendships in our territory reflected his fondness for our North and its people. He enjoyed our community events, not wearing a suit but in working man's attire: jeans, no tie, and his shirt rolled up at the sleeves.

In the coming days and months Jack Layton will be heralded for his political accomplishments and hard work. More importantly, he will be remembered

through the years as a great Canadian, missed by his many colleagues, friends, and loved ones.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 44-16(6):
SHELTER POLICY REVIEW

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Government of the Northwest Territories has, through the Shelter Policy review, been examining its overall approach to delivering housing programs, services, and supports to NWT residents. The Department of Executive and the NWT Housing Corporation have worked collaboratively in carrying out this review, which will result in a broad strategic framework designed to refocus the GNWT's approach to housing delivery. I rise today to update Members and the general public on the progress of this review.

A critical component of the Shelter Policy Review has been extensive engagement with NWT residents. Input from residents on housing challenges and options for improvements forms an essential part of the analysis being conducted under this review. Between May and August of this year, widespread engagement was conducted through:

- workshops with regional and community representatives;
- meetings with NWT Housing Corporation clients;
- workshops with local housing organization chairs and managers;
- input from NWT residents through an on-line questionnaire and statistical telephone survey; and
- meetings and interviews with Members of the Legislative Assembly, non-government organizations, other stakeholder groups such as the Chamber of Commerce and the NWT Association of Communities, and other GNWT departments.

Excellent input has been received from NWT residents through this engagement. This included some common themes. For instance, in the case of public housing rent, some of the feedback from this engagement is that residents want a fair, uncomplicated, predictable system of rent that promotes self-reliance rather than creating dependency or discouraging some tenants from working. Addressing the differences between market and non-market communities was another common theme. The feedback from this engagement forms an important part of the Shelter Policy Review process, and the constructive

participation of so many residents has been greatly appreciated.

Other major components of the review include the examination of the Public Housing Program rent scale and the evaluation of the Housing Choices homeownership programs. As the research and analysis phase of these and other components of the review near completion, the next stage will be developing options that will provide the GNWT with recommendations on a consistent approach to addressing need at all stages of the housing continuum, including homelessness, transitional and supportive housing, public housing, market rentals, and homeownership. For instance, the options will address:

- approaches to strengthen public housing;
- recommendations regarding homeownership programs, particularly smaller communities, including issues with housing quality;
- recommendations to address the lack of housing options available to non-market communities;
- recommendations to improve housing services and communication with residents on housing;
- approaches to address homelessness, transition housing, seniors' housing supports, and housing supports for persons with disabilities;
- infrastructure solutions based on individual and community needs; and
- approaches to address the declining federal funding that supports the operation and maintenance of public housing units.

The recommendations being brought forward through the work of the Shelter Policy Review will provide guidance to the 17th Legislative Assembly as it considers and plans for how housing programs, services that will be delivered to NWT residents.

Mr. Speaker, one of the actions the GNWT identified under its strategic initiative was to reduce the cost of living. We expect that the results of this Shelter Policy Review will build on the significant investment that the 16th Legislative Assembly has made in housing infrastructure across the NWT and provide a framework that will positively shape housing programs, service, and supports to meet the needs of NWT residents over the long term. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 45-16(6):
MINISTER'S CULTURAL CIRCLE

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. One of the priorities for this Assembly is to strengthen awareness of our northern identity and uniqueness by promoting our culture. I am very pleased to advise this House that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment held a ceremony today to celebrate the tremendous cultural contributions made by people across this territory.

Some months ago the Minister's Cultural Circle was launched. We requested nominations for those Northerners who contribute to the preservation and promotion of the Northwest Territories cultures and heritage. Nominations poured in, Mr. Speaker, and the independent panel of judges chose four inductees from across the territory.

Mr. Speaker, the Cultural Circle helps build awareness about the importance of promoting, protecting, and preserving our unique culture and heritage. We received nominations in four categories:

- youth, 25 years of age and under, who demonstrate a strong commitment to engaging in the arts, cultural learning, and cultural practices;
- individuals who demonstrate a strong commitment to preserving and promoting culture through participation in various arts, culture, and heritage-related activities;
- elders, 50 years of age and older, respected for their contributions of practicing, promoting, guiding, teaching, leadership, vision or hands-on participation in the areas of art, culture, heritage, and language; and
- any organization, corporation, institution, organizing committee or social club that plays a lead role in developing and supporting activities that celebrate, promote or preserve the arts, culture, and heritage.

Additionally, a Minister's choice inductee is also chosen. The 2011 award recipients embody the commitment, diligence, creativity, and passion we want culture and heritage to inspire in us all. The inductees I was pleased to welcome into the Cultural Circle this morning are:

- Evan Tordiff of Fort Smith, our youth inductee;
- Abel Tingmiak of Inuvik, our elder inductee;
- Ben Nind of Yellowknife, our individual inductee; and
- The Aklavik Delta Drummers and Dancers, our group inductees.

- The 2011 Minister's Choice inductee is the Chief Jimmy Bruneau School for their project, Trails of our Ancestors.

Of these distinguished people, some are with us today in the gallery.

Mr. Speaker, we received many nominations, all reflecting committed and passionate people. Just as all the nominees built upon the foundation laid by people who came before them, we must continue to build upon their efforts for a strong, culturally rich North.

I hope all Members of this Assembly will join me in honouring the Cultural Circle inductees and thank them for their hard work preserving, promoting, protecting, and celebrating our unique cultures and heritage. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 46-16(6):
TOURISM HIGHLIGHTS

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, one of the goals of the 16th Legislative Assembly was to create a diverse economy that provides all Northwest Territories communities and residents with opportunities and choices. Today I am pleased to highlight how the Northwest Territories tourism industry has helped us to achieve this goal.

Tourism 2010 was the Government of the Northwest Territories tourism investment plan. Under this plan the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment provided \$1 million annually towards the tourism industry. We were also successful in leveraging an additional \$5.3 million in additional investments from the federal government, industry, and other partners. Building off the success of Tourism 2010, this government approved funding for Tourism 2015: New Directions for a Spectacular Future, a new five-year plan that will guide investment over the next several years.

In response to the market's growing demand for authentic Aboriginal tourism experiences, I appointed seven members to a newly formed Aboriginal Tourism Champions Advisory Council earlier this summer. The following individuals have been appointed to the nine-seat council:

- Mr. Grant Beck, Yellowknife;
- Mr. Knute Hansen, Fort McPherson;
- Mr. Doug Lamalice, Hay River;
- Ms. Ria Letcher, Fort Simpson;
- Ms. Margaret Nazon, Tsiigehtchic;
- Mr. Moise Rabesca, Behchoko;
- Ms. Judith Wright-Bird, Tulita.

The council will also include a representative from Northwest Territories Tourism, Ms. Jenni Bruce and Ms. Kelly Kaylo of Yellowknife in her capacity as co-chair of the Tourism Marketing Advisory Committee.

The council will promote and champion sustainable development of Aboriginal tourism in a manner that is respectful and appropriate.

Another major success in attracting people to the Northwest Territories and creating world-class tourism products is the Tourism Product and Marketing Diversification Program. Over the last five years 50 businesses received \$5.6 million from this program for 117 projects. In addition, the Government of the Northwest Territories provided \$300,000 in targeted support for barren-ground caribou and polar bear outfitters in 2009-2010, and doubled that investment to \$600,000 for 2010-2011 and 2011-2012.

Mr. Speaker, 2011 has certainly been a "royal" summer. We had the pleasure of visits from Prince Andrew and the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, William and Catherine. Those royal visits focused the spotlight of international attention on the Northwest Territories.

The Northwest Territories is no stranger to international attention, much of which was generated through Canada's Northern House at the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver. This collaboration between the three territories laid the groundwork for a pan-territorial marketing campaign to market Canada's North to southern Canada. Called simply, "Canada's North," this marketing campaign launched in March 2011 and will promote the North to southern Canadians as a travel destination.

Mr. Speaker, an important aspect of marketing our territory's tourism industry is our extensive territorial parks system. Our parks host approximately 25,000 campers annually. Over the past four years we have made many investments to maintain and improve infrastructure to serve our guests.

Our new visitors centre at the 60th parallel opened this past June. We have also added new shower facilities in our North Slave parks and invested in new trails, viewing platforms and other park infrastructure throughout the Northwest Territories to improve the guest experience.

Aurora tourism is also one of the hallmarks of our tourism industry, and our aurora viewing numbers have steadily increased.

This government can be proud of the work that has been accomplished for tourism and the support provided to the industry by the 16th Legislative Assembly. The tourism industry is growing because of that support and our tourism operators, as we work in partnership to increase diversity and

increase our presence abroad. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON AMENDMENTS TO THE MOTOR VEHICLES ACT REGARDING HANDHELD ELECTRONIC DEVICES

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've been an outspoken supporter of legislation to ban the use of handheld devices while driving and I've spoken many times about the dangers of distracted driving in this House. But, Mr. Speaker, it's taken too long to get to this point, but I am, anyway, extremely pleased that we will soon have legislation which outlaws driving and cell phone use.

I want to congratulate the Department of Transportation for planning ahead. They have developed a communications plan for educating NWT residents about the upcoming changes to the Motor Vehicles Act and the impact it will have on them as drivers.

MR. SPEAKER: Ms. Bisaro, your Member's statement is dealing on a matter that is before Committee of the Whole right now. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CAPITAL PLANNING FOR NAHENDEH SCHOOL FACILITIES

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We always tell our young people that they need to get a good education and that is the key to their success, but the examples we set are not always good. I refer, for example, to the school in Nahanni Butte. It's an old log building that needs to be replaced. We have to get this into the capital plan.

I wish I could refer to the school in Trout Lake, as well, but the situation is even worse in Nahanni Butte. In Trout Lake, technically that is not a school at all. No school. The people of Trout Lake send their kids to the recreation centre for classes. This has been going on for years now and the old school is long gone.

School is not recreation. It is not daycare. The Department of Education has a duty to provide students with a good learning environment. The teachers are doing their best, but all they have is a little renovated area in the rec centre to accommodate students all the way from kindergarten to grade 10. There is not enough separation between grade levels, and there is not even a gymnasium for the students or the

community. This government is letting down those students, the teachers, and all the people of Trout Lake.

I have asked time and time again for this government to at least start planning for this project, but all I get is talk and no plan, let alone any action. We hear a lot about the Aboriginal Student Achievement Program and this government has spent more than \$100 million on the super school in Inuvik. It is not too much to have a school, even a mini-school, in Trout Lake. It should not be too much to ask to get a modern little school in Nahanni Butte as well.

I have been polite but persistent on this issue. I have been pushing on this for years now and it's time to get the job done. It's time to break the ground for Nahendeh student achievement. I will be asking the Education Minister about this shortly. In his replies he should just borrow a line from President Obama and say, yes, we can.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON GNWT WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY PERFORMANCE

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm alarmed to hear about the apparently huge issue of health and safety performance in the GNWT workplace. Information received from the Minister of Human Resources describes GNWT performance under the Safe Advantage program created by the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission in 2007. It says that employers with proven safety and return-to-work practices receive a refund and employers with poor safety and return-to-work practices pay a penalty.

Since the program was created in 2007, the GNWT has never received a good performance refund. In fact, over the past four years we've paid \$255,000 in penalties, rising to a peak this year. During that time, claims experience costs topped \$2 million. This is not good, and I will be asking the Minister how our workplace injury rates and costs compare to other workplace categories.

There are also confusing results of management practice questionnaires completed by GNWT to report on its performance. Managers describe their performance in such areas as inspections, hazard management, and Occupational Health and Safety Program evaluation. Survey results have given steadily improving ratings, from 17 percent in return-to-work practices and zero percent on safety in 2007-2008, to 100 percent in return-to-work practices and 86 percent on safety in 2010-2011. Contrast this to the dramatic growth in penalties from zero four years ago to a quarter million-plus this most recent year and claims costs peaking at

another three-quarters of a million dollars in 2010-2011 and it's hard to understand how the survey ratings could be improving when claims and penalties are skyrocketing.

Incredibly, the GNWT does not have health and safety committees intended under the act. According to the Minister's explanation, the GNWT will establish a health and safety committee structure, which will require departments to have occupational health and safety committees and an overall committee, it will meet the legislated requirements of the act by the end of 2011-2012. We're talking "will," four years into the introduction of the program.

What are these injuries and what are we doing to avoid them? Information I've gathered indicates health and safety committees are a rarity. I will be asking the Minister how rare and how it's possible that our penalties and costs continue to go up while our ratings appear to improve, all in the absence of government-wide health and safety committee structure that meets the requirement of the act.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON RESOLUTE BAY TRAGEDY

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, today would like to take this opportunity to offer my condolences to all the families of those who lost their lives in the tragic crash at Resolute Bay this weekend. We realize how interconnected we all are as Northerners when we hear the initial news of something like this and know, inevitably, that we will know people who were involved in this.

Today especially I would like to send my condolences out to Aziz Kheraj and his wife, Alisak, on the loss of their little granddaughter, the miracle and the blessing of the granddaughter that did not perish, and for a speedy recovery for those whose lives were not lost.

For the crew that flew the plane and took care of the people, for the crews and flight attendants who fly us everyday all over this vast north country, I thank them and I want them to know that our hearts are with them today as they mourn the loss of their colleagues.

I guess all we can say is that our prayers are with those that grieve today. We grieve with them, and we hope that they'll find strength and comfort from the cherished memories that they have of their loved ones.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
SUPPORT FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS
IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Only a handful of communities in the Northwest Territories are small enough not to have a high school in their communities. Whatever the rationale this government gives, it's still wrong that our students and families receive no support with student accommodations.

In the past, many MLAs from small communities have also tried to get this government to provide more support for high school students, with no success. We have provided suggestions, options such as high school grades in our small communities, with no success.

In years past, more and more students get lagged behind the territory and the rest of Canada. How are we supposed to truly build a regional and northern capacity or prepare our use in the increasingly competitive world when we cannot even provide them the basics of learning?

In order for our students to succeed, we need a safe and secure place to live, and a healthy environment when they leave home.

I stated previously that this government and district office must do more to assist the families to find appropriate homes and facilities so that their children can go to school and learn in a healthy environment. Many students live in boarding homes where there's drinking, and drugs, and partying. That's a shame. There is no place for a student that can learn and have safety on their mind at all times.

Now that the region has no government-assisted boarding homes, parents are literally left on their own to make due, and the kids are left to defend for themselves once they leave their home and return to school. This is unacceptable. We owe this to our students, to the future, and the priority of our students across the territory in the small communities, especially in Sachs Harbour where we're having this issue dealt with for the past three years.

I will have questions at the appropriate time for the Minister.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
RESOLUTE BAY TRAGEDY

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, along with my colleagues, want to offer my condolences to the people of Nunavut. I'm glad the Premier said some words for them. At this time they certainly need our prayers and our support.

When I heard the news I was taken back, because some time ago I was involved in the incident in Fort

Good Hope and it's very heavy on the hearts of people, the families, the grandparents, people right across Canada. I can't imagine what the people up in Resolute Bay are going through. At this time today, they need our support. They need our prayers from this Legislative Assembly. They need our help over there to get them through some of the very difficult things that are going to happen in the coming year.

I want to say this: I know there are things in this Assembly that we need to deal with that are very important, such as the wildlife, such as the cell phones, such as the issues on health and education, but today I thought when I stepped outside, when I got on the plane this morning in Tulita, today is that we can put aside those differences, put aside and offer our energy and support to the people in Resolute Bay, to the people up in Nunavut, to help them get through this tragic event. There are questions that are going to be answered. Questions of why the good Lord let this happen, God. These things that they need our help with.

I want to say on behalf of the Sahtu people, that we offer our support to those people, and also to our friends; as the Premier said, Smiling Jack. I was telling my wife, what next? I offer my condolences to his family, also, on behalf of the Sahtu, and all for the supporters of Mr. Layton and the recent election that he came north here and he certainly was a man to be admired bringing his party up to a stature that nobody thought could happen. Smiling Jack did it and he did it above all, and he did it on behalf of his own beliefs and values and principles.

I want to say this in my Member's statement that we offer our condolences to the people in Resolute and also to people Mr. Layton has left behind.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
GNWT WORKPLACE HEALTH AND
SAFETY PERFORMANCE

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to follow up on the statement made by my colleague Mr. Bromley.

I was disappointed last week when Mr. Bromley shared the GNWT results of the Safe Advantage program with me. For the 2010-2011 year, the GNWT received a penalty of \$243,583.37. I understand that this is the largest penalty issued by the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission during the 2010-2011 fiscal year. In fact, it may be the largest penalty issued in the life of the Safe Advantage program.

According to the Safe Advantage program guidelines that I found on the WSCC website,

prevention programs are essential in creating a safe workplace. Further, it is important that both the employer and workers support and follow procedures outlined in the program and work to keep those programs up to date.

The penalties occur when claim costs are above experience-incentive ranges. Claim costs include all of the costs directed to an employer, such as medical aid, compensation, vocational rehabilitation, and pensions. Experience-incentive ranges are based on average assessments of individual employers. So, basically, penalties occur when the costs of workplace injuries to an employer is higher than the average cost of similar costs throughout the Northwest Territories. In short, this current penalty suggests that the GNWT has a worse than average record of workplace safety and prevention.

The Safe Advantage program has only existed for four years. In that time, as Mr. Bromley indicated in his statement, the GNWT has experienced a total claim cost in excess of \$2 million. This is embarrassing. It's my understanding that the Department of Human Resources is working to address the requirements set out in the Safe Advantage program. To this end, the Department of Human Resources is apparently working on a government-wide Occupational Health and Safety Program which will help to meet the legislative requirements set out in the Safety Act. Yet a review of the GNWT phone directory shows the only occupational health and safety position in the GNWT is at Stanton Territorial Health Authority. After four years, only one position.

There are also five health and wellness positions at the Department of Human Resources. One is a consultant and four are officers. I'm assuming the consultant is the one position in the GNWT working on the government-wide health and safety programs.

The GNWT must lead by example. We must strive for the safest workplaces in the Northwest Territories. We must stop being assessed these significant fines.

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. ABERNETHY: All the Members in this House have talked about using public money wisely. Having to pay these fines is not wise use of money.

Workplace incidents are completely avoidable. As leaders we must promote behavioural changes within the GNWT that will increase workplace safety and incident prevention, and work with our injured staff to encourage early and safe return to work.

Let's stop paying these unnecessary and avoidable fines and let's use our money to provide quality

services and programs for our residents, programs that help our residents, Mr. Speaker. Thank you so much.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NEED FOR MANDATORY REGULAR PERFORMANCE AUDITS ON CROWN CORPORATIONS

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to speak to the need for mandatory regular performance audits on territorial corporations owned by the GNWT, like the NWT Housing Corporation, the NWT Power Corporation, and the Business Development and Investment Corporation. This is an issue I have raised many times before in this House, Mr. Speaker, in this Assembly and certainly in the last.

As we all know, these corporations are, of course, subject to annual financial audits by the Auditor General's office, which examines the books and ensures the financial reporting practices are in accordance with recognized accounting principles. Mr. Speaker, while this is a very important accountable mechanism that the work is being done there, it does not do the needed added steps which gives the corporations and the directors or shareholders, that is, which are ultimately the residents of the NWT, an indication as to how effectively and efficiently these corporations are operating. This is something that should happen, Mr. Speaker, over the course of every five years, not unlike what the federal government does, and the Auditor General makes sure the federal corporations are acting and operating healthy.

I have said this before: we need to catch up with other jurisdictions that are already doing this, and by bringing our own legislation that ensures the corporations are not only following the rules but are also working as effectively as possible.

As I understand it, the review of the Financial Administration Act will very likely be on the agenda of the 17th Assembly. This would be an ideal opportunity to bring the needed amendments, and I would strongly encourage the Minister of Finance to instruct his staff to undertake the background work so that this option can be available and considered for the next committee and government that reviews the update of the Financial Administration Act.

This is a critical piece of work that needs to be done, and it proves to the citizens of the Northwest Territories that our corporations are working efficiently and effectively, and I think it shows demonstrated proof, Mr. Speaker, that we're getting the best dollar out of corporations as possible.

I will have questions for the Minister of Finance later today when the time comes. As well, Mr. Speaker, I will be tabling, at the appropriate time, a letter from the Auditor General of Canada who supports this initiative. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
NORTHLAND TRAILER PARK
INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to lend my voice again today to the plight of the 1,100 residents of Northland Trailer Park located here in Yellowknife. In March I last spoke of this issue as residents were faced with intermittent water services for weeks at a time, sometimes without water for a week, because of the aging infrastructure that continues to spring leaks because it should have been replaced over 15 years ago.

Of the 1,100 residents of Northland, there are approximately 600 children, there are day homes, there are elderly persons, persons with disabilities. Mr. Speaker, they cannot endure another winter of broken lines and intermittent water service. On top of it all, Mr. Speaker, is that residents can't go anywhere. Why is that? Because CMHC has stopped insuring mortgage loans for homes in the park for over 18 months now. They're prisoners in their own home. To add insult to injury, residents continue to pay property tax to the City of Yellowknife. Well, what is the assessed value of a property you can't sell, Mr. Speaker?

Again in March I warned this government that if something was not done to replace the infrastructure this summer season, that with a new winter, routine line breaks would occur with much more frequency and, ultimately, would result in a catastrophic line break for the residents of that trailer park. The Government of the Northwest Territories might like to say it's not our problem, but when that catastrophic water or sewer line failure happens, we will have over 1,100 people, 600 children, being displaced from their homes. It will be our problem, Mr. Speaker. We'll have no one to blame but ourselves.

As far as residents and Members of this House are concerned, the file has been on a Minister's desk in Ottawa for 15 months. How is this possible? Yes, there was an election a few months ago, but really, who is in charge of ensuring this file gets the attention that it deserves?

The situation is reaching the brink, Mr. Speaker, the brink of disaster. We can't afford to let this issue just sit there. We need to take action and we need to find a solution to this problem, Mr. Speaker. Residents in Northland need to have some hope

that someday someone will listen, and that someday they may be able to actually sell their homes and not live everyday in fear of a catastrophic line break that will lead them to having to leave their homes, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT IN
YOUTH PROGRAMMING

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

Mr. Speaker, over the past four years I have made many Member's statements in this House on the subject of youth and the need to invest in our youth. Mr. Speaker, our youth are our biggest and our most important resource. The youth are our future leaders, and by investing in them, we begin to teach and instil in them this fact from a very young age. This government must realize that in order to set the path so that our youth are one day able to take over from us, this government must make it a priority to invest in such a possibility with the youth.

I think this government has put some of the pieces of the puzzle together; however, much, much more must be done. One day one of the government's goals should be to set goals for the youth, along with a vision on what they want to see in the future. The youth of today will one day run the various governments across the Northwest Territories and must be supported. Mr. Speaker, in order for the youth to succeed in a healthy and balanced lifestyle along with their educational successes, we need to make it a priority to invest in the youth in every way possible.

We all know that youth across every community in the Northwest Territories is in dire need of a youth centre. With the youth centres that we invest in, we must make it a mandate to also invest in qualified youth workers and programming for the youth. We should have youth conferences to ensure that the next government recognizes that the youth are our future.

I believe the current government knows that the youth is one investment that returns the greatest dividends. The government needs to make it a priority in the next transitional planning. I believe that if we make a concentrated effort to invest in our youth, we will produce great and successful leaders. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
AKLAVIK DANCERS AND DRUMMERS

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was a real honour and privilege to be attending the awards ceremony this afternoon by the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment in regard to the different cultural groups in the Northwest Territories, and more importantly, the Aklavik Dancers and Drummers.

The Aklavik Dancers and Drummers have been performing for some 30 years throughout the Northwest Territories and around the world. Mr. Speaker, without mentioning the people that really deserve the mention, it's the elders who took the time to revitalize their language, their culture, their songs, their dances. In regard to the late Alex and Hope Gordon, old Mrs. Hansen, and the late Mr. Paul, formed by those elders who felt the importance of revitalizing the culture and language and the dancing and singing of the Inuvialuit people.

But, Mr. Speaker, it's hard work, and dedication, and commitment, and practice that made the Aklavik drummers what they are today. It's a real honour and privilege to watch the Aklavik dancers perform, especially with the young children that they have now taught the dancing and the singing, and seeing them perform at such a young age. It's a real sparkle in the eye of those people performing.

Mr. Speaker, without resurrection of the language, the culture, and more importantly, the dances and the drumming, and the songs, and understanding exactly what is being mentioned and also what's being performed, it's something that has to be cherished not only for the Inuvialuit but for other cultures in the Northwest Territories.

It can't be spoken about without mentioning the loss of one of their performers: Philip Elanik. Again, a performer that basically made you sit and listen, and watch him perform. He had so much energy and so much intensity, and more importantly, his performance and the way he yelled out the different songs and the energy that he carried was so important to watch, especially for those people who had an opportunity to see Philip perform.

Mr. Speaker, he will be sadly missed by the community of Aklavik, the Aklavik Drummers and Dancers, but more importantly, all those who knew him.

Mr. Speaker, again, I would like to have this opportunity to thank the Aklavik Drummers and Dancers for performing, and more importantly, being ambassadors for the Northwest Territories. Mahsi, thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of

visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to recognize those individuals that are in the gallery and organizations, the Minister's Cultural Circle inductees are here with us today. First, in the youth category here with us: Evan Tordiff, along with his mother, Sylvie, and sister Lauren; Abel Tingmiak, elder category that's here with us with his wife, Marcy Jane Tingmiak, that are here with us; Ben Nind of the individual category here with Natalie Labossiere; also here with us are the Aklavik Delta Drummers, the group category, Andrew Gordon, Eva Gordon, Alexander Gordon and Mary Ruth Meyook; also, just identifying one of our key staff players in this, Ashley Green is here with us. Also, I'd like to recognize my chiefs that are here with us: Grand Chief Eddie Erasmus and also chief of Whati, Alphonse Nitsiza. Welcome. Mahsi.

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

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also would like to welcome Mr. Frank Pokiak from my home community of Tuktoyaktuk. Frank is the chairman of the Inuvialuit Game Council. Welcome to the House, Frank.

I'd also like to welcome Larry and Yvonne Carpenter, constituents from Sachs Harbour. Larry is the chair of the Wildlife Management Advisory Council for the Northwest Territories.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to welcome Andrew, Eva, Alex, and Mary Ruth to the House. Thank you.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize two constituents in the gallery: recent recipient of the cultural award and, most importantly, my uncle, Abel and Marcy. Welcome to the gallery. I'd also like to welcome the good folks from Never Say Die. Welcome.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to also recognize a couple of constituents from Weledeh, and we have Ben Nind, who was the inductee for the Minister's Cultural Circle this morning in the individual category. Congratulations to Ben. I'd also like to recognize Chief Edward Sangris of Dettah, and drummer extraordinaire. I heard him performing this morning. Mahsi.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Along with the recognition of a few others that have already been recognized here, I'd like to welcome the chair of the Inuvialuit Game Council, Mr. Frank Pokiak, and Larry and Yvonne Carpenter as well. We have some other folks from the Inuvialuit Game Council; Steven Baryluk, Jennifer Lam and Bruce Hanbidge. As well, I'd like to extend our welcome to the grand chief of the Tlicho and the chiefs as well that have joined us. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll be remiss if I don't recognize the Aklavik Drummers and Dancers, who have already been recognized. So, welcome to the House.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. If we've missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to the Chamber. I hope you're enjoying the proceedings.

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

Oral Questions

QUESTION 167-16(6): CAPITAL PLANNING FOR NAHENDEH SCHOOL FACILITIES

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the Minister of Education some questions with regard to capital planning in the communities of Trout Lake and Nahanni Butte. As I said in my Member's statement, time and time again I've stood up here and I've asked the Minister to look at Trout Lake and their need for a school, a new stand-alone school, and I'd like to ask the Minister what he has done to date and what kind of planning is happening with regard to the community of Trout Lake and a new school. Thank you.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. The Trout Lake School, there's been some work on the school itself and part of just some minor capital upgrades scheduled for the school that was slated for 2010-2011 as part of the capital plan. We talk about the new capital plans that are coming up in the 16th Assembly and on to the 17th Assembly. So those are the discussions that need to take place with the school board, and I need to work closely with the school board and also the Members as well. Mahsi.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much. I know that the priority of this government and the past government in the 15th Legislative Assembly were concentrating on big schools, and more recently like a super school in Inuvik at a cost of \$100 million. I think in our small, remote communities this government should start making it a priority. There are small costs involved. Just off the top of my head, from a bird's eye view I would estimate about \$3 million and downwards for a small school to serve the needs of small communities. I'd like to ask the Minister about making this a priority of the government; put it in their transition documents, because I really foresee we've got to start taking care of our regions and communities. Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi. This government does provide priority to those schools in the Northwest Territories as part of the capital planning process as we move forward. The super school that the Member is referring to took over 10 years from the planning stages until the final result. So sometimes it does take some time. But definitely in the Nahendeh riding we're fully aware of the two schools that the Member is referring to, and we'll continue to work with the school boards to identify those priorities. The work is already underway in the schools as well. Mahsi.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: With the communities of Trout Lake and Nahanni Butte, how much pre-planning work has been done? How much dedication and effort has the department put towards these communities in terms of planning, costing it out, even a Class D estimate for these two communities? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: I don't have the actual breakdown, but I do have the paperwork with the PWS that we work closely together with the school board to identify the needs of the community, the schools, and also the needs of the school board. So we can provide that information to the Member or Members for their information as well. Mahsi.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. That's the type of rhetoric I've been hearing, is planning, and studying, and looking at it. I'd like to ask the Minister when will the Minister and this government make the regions and small communities a priority when it comes to schooling. Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi. One of the priorities is, of course, the schools, as part of my portfolio as Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. That is my priority. I have to look after all of the schools, make sure they're well operated, and also that it meets the community's needs as well. So those schools that have been identified for future consideration definitely will be in the work of

the 17th Assembly. So those are the discussions that need to take place as well. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 168-16(6):
SUPPORT FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS
IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Along the same lines of Mr. Menicoche, the government seems to be forgetting our small communities and the students. The students in the smaller communities are basically the future of our riding. Given that currently there are many students in Nunakput that for various reasons have left high school and moved back to their home communities, reasons such as nowhere to live or not enough moral support or resources, will the government immediately commit to funds and resources for the one high school teacher or students who could at least earn some high school courses in the community of Sachs Harbour? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Simply, we are not forgetting the students out there. We are covering the northern students, the isolated students, and also the students of the Northwest Territories. We provide funding to the school boards so they can sponsor those students in their schools, in their regions, as well as supporting them going through a transition of another community. So those are the support mechanisms that we provide through the school boards, Mr. Speaker.

At the same time, my department is working closely with the Beaufort-Delta Education Council to make it effective and efficient when students are attending from isolated communities. So we will continue to push the school board. The final decision also lies with the school board, Mr. Speaker. I have to respect that and we have to work with them. Mahsi.

MR. JACOBSON: I have been here for three and a half years and I have been hearing that same answer regarding my Member's statement that I have brought up every session regarding students in Sachs Harbour. The final decision is your decision. You could make a Minister's directive to do it. I am asking the Minister why can't he help the smaller communities, especially Sachs Harbour that needs a teacher in the community this year. If not, we should get a house in Inuvik slated to have students under a boarding home for students from

Sachs Harbour alone for a safe place to live. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: At the beginning, also mid-term and at the end of our term we were told not to make any major or drastic changes...

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Ohhh....

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: ...with the current government system. At the same time, again, this is an area that we need to seriously look at with the Beaufort-Delta Education Council. We provide funding to them so they can deliver those key deliverances into the communities and regions as well.

Yes, the Member has raised that issue in the House. At the same time, the Member should also be raising that issue with the Beaufort-Delta Education Council because we are working hand in hand with them. I need to work with them to strengthen those ties because, again, we provide funding through them to the region. Mahsi.

MR. JACOBSON: I haven't given up on the students in my riding. Maybe this government has. Will this government conduct a thorough review on why so many high school students from the small, isolated communities are dropping out on behalf of the small communities committee? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Clearly, we are not giving up on the students. We are supporting all students of the Northwest Territories. We represent 33 communities. Through the Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative, the tabling of the document in this House, clearly highlights the strategy that's in place to identify those students who are struggling, those students from isolated communities, and those students who may be challenged. Those are the people that we need to continue to work with. It's a new document. It's going to strengthen the communities, it's going to strengthen the education system of the Northwest Territories. I'm looking forward to working on that joint implementation stages, working with all the MLAs, Aboriginal leadership, educators as well, the parents, and the students.

Those are the new initiatives that are underway. Clearly, we are seeing some changes. Sometimes it does take time, but time is of the essence, so I tabled the document and I'm looking forward to establishing that as well. Mahsi.

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

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, the cost is very minimal to provide housing in Inuvik, especially when you have a house lined up and ready for us to come in with students from the community. I wonder if the Minister would get in touch with the Beaufort-Delta Education Council

with myself to see how far we can take this. School is about nine days away from starting in the Beaufort-Delta. Is it possible to get something done? It doesn't cost as much as a bridge.

---Laughter

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: We will definitely follow through with the Beaufort-Delta Education Council. It could be small, but at the same time we have to respect all the regions. It's not just one region that is faced with a challenge. At the same time, we'll definitely follow through. Mahsi.

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

QUESTION 169-16(6):
NORTHLAND TRAILER PARK
INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are in follow up to my Member's statement from earlier today where I talked about the plight of the 1,100 residents of the Northland Trailer Park located here in Yellowknife. They are prisoners in their own home. They can't sell their homes. All they have to look forward to this winter is more line breaks, intermittent water service. The issue is not new. The wheels of government are slow. They do turn slowly. I understand that, but this file has been on the Minister's desk in Ottawa for 15 months.

As I mentioned in my Member's statement, a catastrophic line break is almost imminent. That infrastructure should have been replaced 15 years ago. I'd like to ask the Minister of MACA where exactly the file... Actually, the first question I have is: whose desk is that file on in Ottawa, so that we can hopefully start a letter writing campaign or whatever it takes to get them to do something about this, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

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

MR. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The file in Ottawa is sitting on the Infrastructure Minister's desk, who I think is Minister Lebel. He's got the infrastructure file. At the same time, we supported the city's application to try and access some of the green funding for the residents out at Northland Trailer Park. Thank you.

MR. RAMSAY: I appreciate the Minister's response. I would like to ask the Minister when was the last time the department, MACA, government officials from the Government of the Northwest Territories sat down with municipal officials and the federal government to try to come up with a solution with what's happening at Northland. Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I pointed out the other day, we had written a letter to the Infrastructure

Minister, Minister McLeod had written a letter to the Government of Canada on July 18th requesting this particular type of meeting and getting more information on where the application is at. Thank you.

MR. RAMSAY: Obviously, we've got three days left in this sitting of the Legislature. We are going to go into election mode during the month of September. A new government won't come in until October. Something has to happen. I want to get a commitment today from the Minister that he can get a thorough update on exactly where this situation is at, what needs to happen so that the residents in that trailer park can have some hope for the future. When can we get a thorough report from the government on where exactly things are at? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We can provide a communication as to where we're at in this whole application process and the support we've provided. At the end of the day I think the municipal government plays a large, if not the largest, role in this situation that is happening out at Northland because those folks out there are municipal taxpayers. So I think the municipal government has to take a lead role or a larger role in the situation out at Northland. Thank you.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I agree with the Minister; it is a municipal concern, but what I'm saying is the Government of the Northwest Territories has to pay attention. If there is a catastrophic sewer line break or a water line break, it is going to be our problem, Mr. Speaker, in a big way. We have to be out in front of this. We have to try to be coordinating efforts between the city and the federal government to come up with a solution. Again, I think if we don't do that and we just try to let them sort it out... We need to be doing that.

I would like to ask the Minister for a commitment to get people to the table to, again, try to come up with a solution to the issue out at Northland. If there is a sewer line break there this winter, there will be 1,100 people, 600 kids, displaced from their homes that are going to be our problem, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: This government is not blind to the plight of the folks out at Northland and we have been doing what we can to support the city's application and making our feelings known to Canada. I can assure the Member and all Members that we'll continue to do that. We've been constantly trying to get a meeting with our Infrastructure Minister. Early indications are that a meeting may be able to happen as early as a couple of weeks.

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

QUESTION 170-16(6):
GNWT WORKPLACE HEALTH AND
SAFETY PERFORMANCE

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Following up on my statement earlier today, I'd like to ask questions of the Minister of Human Resources. I'd like to start by noting that the GNWT is one of the territory's biggest employers. The human, financial, and even governance costs of poor health and safety practices can be very significant.

The Minister's response to my written inquiry said that GNWT is taking steps to create the health and safety committee structures required by law by the end of this fiscal year. Can the Minister tell me why these committees are not already in place three years after the start-up of the Safe Advantage program and what was the hold-up?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. I missed who your question was directed to, Mr. Bromley. Could you clarify who your question is for? The honourable Minister responsible for Human Resources, Mr. Bob McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Member noted, the Department of Human Resources has been working very closely with all of the departments and the government to develop an Occupational Health and Safety Program. It's taken a couple of years to do so. We now have a program that we're implementing. It will be fully implemented by 2011-2012.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks for that response from the Minister. That is this year. So we expect to see that in the next few months. Good to hear.

As I said, also I'm confused by the apparent contradiction between the increasing fines and penalties that we're experiencing as an employer and increasingly good survey scores on return-to-work practices and safety. Can the Minister explain how our scores could be improving at the same time our penalties and claims costs are actually mounting into the millions of dollars?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: There are a couple of reasons for that. First of all, WSCC operates on a three-year cycle. For the first two years of this government we were in a neutral category. The third year, 2010, there was a significant increase in the amount of claims. There are two parts to it. One is a financial penalty and then the other part is on the management practices side. The penalty that we paid is because of the increase in claims. We were able to show on the management practices side that we do have a strategy and a plan to improve our performance. By doing so, we were able to get the WSCC to acknowledge that, and

instead of instituting, there was also the possibility of a further \$121,000 penalty which they did not assess because we were able to show that our management practices were being improved in the future.

MR. BROMLEY: I appreciate the response. It sounds pretty confusing still to me, so I'm going to study up a little bit on this. I appreciate those comments.

For some reason the WSCC has stopped publishing the accident frequency rates that tell us how different types of workplaces compare in terms of accidents, lost time, et cetera. Can the Minister of Human Resources tell me how the GNWT workplace accident and safety statistics compare to other major employers? Are we the best? The worst? What are the facts here?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: In the Safe Advantage program there are three categories that one can fall under. One is where your performance is so good that you get a refund. The second category is where you are middle of the pack, so you have a neutral assessment. Third is if you're in the category where over a three-year period you're exceeding the average of \$40,000, that you pay a penalty. So we're in the third category where we have paid a penalty of approximately \$243,000.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Of course, I didn't ask for those categories. It's obvious, as we've heard, that we're paying the biggest fine, so we're clearly in the worst category. I asked for rates, statistics, and I'm hoping the Minister will provide those to us. Examples of good safety practices are available at most mines and industrial workplaces. Safety is usually right in your face. Even when I attended a meeting at the Explorer Hotel, we started with safety protocols simply identifying where the fire exits are and other important facts. So I know these workplaces have vibrant health and safety committees up and running. Closer to home I'm disappointed to have to ask if the Legislative Assembly even have a health and safety committee in place.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Whenever we attend meetings with the mining companies and mining industry, we always start off with a safety first meeting. That's been expanded to oil and gas companies. I'm sure as part of with the opening prayer we can also start with a safety first commitment. I think that as we go forward, I really believe that as a government we're going to have to move in that direction. Safety is going to have to be first and foremost on everybody's minds.

As far as statistics, we have lots of statistics and I can give the Member the top three events that are causing the significant amount of claims. The first is

falls; 21 percent of our claims are due to falls. Thirteen percent are due to overexertion. Nine percent are due to bending, climbing, crawling, reaching, twisting. Those are the main reasons for the high number of claims in this government.

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

QUESTION 171-16(6):
PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS
DISTRACTED DRIVING

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are addressed to the Minister of Transportation. I'd like to ask some questions of him with regard to programs that the department runs relative to distracted driving. It's well known that distracted driving dangers are out there and that they're really quite valid.

Early in 2011 the Minister made a statement or comment that the Drive Alive program would have different facets to it. In February, I believe, I made a statement about distracted driving and I asked the Minister about the Leave the Phone Alone pledge campaign, which he had indicated was going to be part of the Drive Alive program. At that time he gave me no information as to activities that the department had done with regard to the Leave the Phone Alone pledge campaign. So I'd like to ask the Minister, from February of this year to now -- we're almost at the end of August of this year -- what sorts of things has the department done with regard to the Leave the Phone Alone pledge campaign.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member is correct; we had indicated that we would take on a number of initiatives to encourage people to leave their phone alone while they're driving. It's our goal to reduce the number of collisions in the Northwest Territories attributed to driver distraction. We have a number of objectives that we've set, and that is to have a large percentage of people acknowledging that distracted driving, driving with a phone or other electronic devices can cause harm, and that's something they shouldn't do.

We have also an objective to reduce the traffic collisions, by a small percentage, increasing every year. We also want to increase the use of seatbelts. We'll do this by providing a number of messages. We've already started. We've sent out information to every house in the Northwest Territories. We will be taking out ads. We're working with the Students Against Drunk Driving, with their public campaign. We'll be providing them with some funding to do

some work on our behalf, or on behalf of this initiative. We'll be providing public announcements.

There is a lot of work that needs to be done. Some of it is already ongoing and some of it will be coming forward.

MS. BISARO: All the objectives of the department are certainly laudable. I certainly support them. In all of the words in the Minister's response, I really heard very little reference to the Leave the Phone Alone pledge campaign. In March of this year, again the Minister made a statement on the Year of Road Safety. He mentioned the pledge campaign as one of the initiatives. Again there was no real detail to it. To this day -- I checked the website before I came down today -- there is no mention on the department's website, there is no mention in any communications plan, that I can find for the department, of the Leave the Phone Alone pledge campaign. It leaves me to wonder how important this campaign is to the department. I'd like to ask the Minister if he could explain that.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: The campaign is very important to the department or we wouldn't be doing it. There are a number of strategies and tactics that we have committed to provide. We need to get the information out into the public. Some of it we've already started. I certainly can provide a detailed information package to the Member.

We are, as I indicated, providing information to each community in the Northwest Territories. We have a window sticker campaign that is ongoing right now. We have news releases that are being developed on the new distracted driving law when and after the legislation takes effect. We have plans for public service announcements on CBC's Northbeat. On CKLB we're taking out ads and in the newspaper, to promote awareness about the new law. We have a social media campaign using Facebook ads. We have a brochure that's going to be distributed. We're providing, as I said earlier, money to Students Against Drunk Driving so that they can do public service announcements. We're also going to involve the Students Against Drunk Driving in most of our public campaigns on distracted driving. We have, and are creating, a public service announcement for CBC TV website and radio. We have the French language version for radio also. We're providing funding for school media studies and for professional assistance. We're working with the enforcement people, the municipal people, the RCMP, and we want to start an advertising blitz in advance of back to school. There are a lot of things we're doing, and certainly we can provide that in further detail to the Member if she'd like that.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister for that somewhat exhaustive list of things. It's unfortunate that most of the verbs that he used are future tense. I'm really quite disappointed that between January

2011 and the end of August 2011 it seems as though there's very little that the department has done to promote this Leave the Phone Alone pledge campaign. I really feel that this is an absolutely wonderful opportunity to force people, to train people not to use their cell phones while driving. If they have a sticker on their vehicle which says they've pledged, they're quite likely to think three or four times before they pick up the cell phone while they're in the car.

I'd like to know from the Minister if he could tell me whether or not they will do such things as publicize the Leave the Phone Alone pledge campaign on their website, and if specifically the Leave the Phone Alone pledge campaign is going to be front and centre of their public activities.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: The answer is yes and yes and yes. I understand the Member's sense of urgency wanting to have this advertised and documented. We have the plans to do so. We had wanted to have the legislation passed first, prior to getting this out in the public. We have started, and I'm sure the Member will be happy to see, further information being provided.

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

MS. BISARO: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Minister. Yes, I will be happy to see it when I can see it. I guess I would like to ask the Minister: can he give me a date when I can go to the website and see a Leave the Phone Alone pledge access site? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: We ask the Member to be patient. We will have the information ready as soon as we have confirmation and we know that all the legislation is in place. We will be stepping up our initiatives through the public for information on their legislation, and that information will also be on the website as soon as possible. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 172-16(6):
IMPACTS OF FEDERAL
"TOUGH ON CRIME" AGENDA

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister of Justice. It's in regard to the federal government's tough on crime legislation and the possibility of minimum sentences.

I think, as a territory we should learn from other jurisdictions, regardless if it's the United States who took the same approach and who ended up building more jails and having more people incarcerated, and for simple, petty crimes, that they end up in jail because it's a minimum sentence.

As we know, the Northwest Territories probably has some of the highest crime rates in Canada in regard to Aboriginal people incarcerated into our jail system, which is almost 90 percent of the people in our system.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister: have we looked at the implication of this legislation on the Department of Justice to be able to implement a tough on crime agenda, especially when you're dealing with minimum sentences?

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. This federal legislation, tough on crime, has been in the works for quite some time now. First it was the Youth Criminal Justice Act and then this tough on crime. One of our main goals and objectives as we come to the table at the federal/provincial/territorial Ministers meeting is to push for more programming into the regions and into the communities. More specifically, for the three territorial jurisdictions, because we're quite unique compared to other provincial jurisdictions, and they're fully aware of that too. We've been pushing with the federal, especially with the federal Minister, and we will continue to do that. The last correspondence that we sent out to federal Ministers and also provincial Ministers is to have more programming delivered as opposed to strictly tough on crime, more jails and so forth. We want to focus on programming into the Northwest Territories, along with our colleagues Nunavut and Yukon.

That's the position that we've been pushing and we will continue to do that, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi.

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, that's the concern that I have, is that presently we already are having a financial shortage in regard to the Department of Justice, where money is being taken away for programs and services that should be there for the inmates to pay for extra guards so that we incarcerate these people and keep them housed in the institutions. So we're already taking the money away from programs and services to pay those additional costs. The fear that I have is that by having more inmates in our system, as a government do we have the capacity, resources or infrastructure-wise to take on more inmates with this legislation coming in?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, those are the areas that have been assessed through the 13 jurisdictions that we have to deal with. We talked about the resources and the manpower that's required when the legislation comes into force. At the same time, again, the federal government needs to recognize our uniqueness, the high cost of living in the Northwest Territories, the Yukon and Nunavut as well, that this particular program that

we're continuing to push with the federal government, it's one of the priorities of the Northwest Territories Justice department to identify those key areas. We will continue to do that, Mr. Speaker.

The Member is referring to possibly additional inmates and if we're ready for them. We could be ready for them. We have to be ready for them. But at the same time it's the resources that are required are coming from the federal government. So, Mr. Speaker, we are in a partnership in that with the federal/provincial/territorial Ministers meeting and we will continue to push that at the federal table. Mahsi.

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, as we all know, most individuals that are sentenced for two years and less spend their time in the Northwest Territories. Anything over two years, they are basically sent to a federal institution. I'd like to ask the Minister: have you been made aware of what the minimum sentence year is going to be and will there be implications on inmates that we have now, which may be having to do more than a two-year sentence and having to leave the Northwest Territories or is the minimum sentence, it could be two-and-a-half years. What effect will that have on our system?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, the tough on crime has been in the works, again, for some time now, and we are doing an overall assessment of the Northwest Territories, the corrections, the program delivery, and we can provide that information to the Members for their review as well.

This is an area of interest for us. Whatever happens at the federal/provincial/territorial jurisdictions, it does have implications in our jurisdiction, as well, when it comes to tough on crime and more program delivery for those inmates and the minimum jail time, whether they serve it in the Northwest Territories or outside the Northwest Territories, there are additional costs to that. That's an area that we've been pushing with the federal government: our uniqueness, how we operate in the Northwest Territories. We'll continue to push that. There has been some reassessment of our Department of Justice and we can provide that information.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I think, my question is: do we have the financial means and the capacity to take on this type of legislation that will be imposed on us by the federal government? Do we have the financial means to implement this type of legislation in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: If we don't have those resources, then definitely we need to go through our business planning cycle to identify the core needs of those inmates. If there are increasing inmates in the Northwest Territories, we have to identify those. Again, federal is also a key partner, so we will continue to push them. But within our own jurisdiction in the Northwest Territories, there is a plan in place. If the legislation comes into full force, what are the implications and we need to prepare for that. Mahsi.

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

QUESTION 173-16(6):
GNWT WORKPLACE HEALTH AND
SAFETY PERFORMANCE

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister responsible for Human Resources and are in follow up on some questions my colleague Mr. Bromley was asking earlier.

Mr. Speaker, I'm having some difficulty reconciling the responses I heard with what I see in the response in the way of what we've paid in penalties. Mr. Speaker, in 2008, the first year of the Safe Advantage program, the GNWT paid \$387,000 in claims. In 2008-2009 it was \$440,000 in claims and we had a penalty of \$11,000. In 2009-10 we paid \$429,000 in claims but we didn't have a penalty. This year, or rather 2010-11, we paid \$778,000 in claims with a penalty of \$243,000. Now we hear from the Minister today that because of these things and because of the Safe Advantage program, we are, in fact, developing health and safety committees to help address some of these issues. I'm wondering if the Minister could provide some clarity as to how, as we're developing this thing, our incident rates are going up instead of down. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our incident rates have been increasing for sure, but a large part of those costs are due to the fact that we've been paying compensation instead of focusing on medical rehabilitation and pension for injured workers. As a government, we've been working with other departments to develop occupational health and safety programs that will be government-wide, that all government departments will be represented on. We've been working very closely with the WSCC to have a blueprint or something so that we can continue to improve on our record. Through worksite assessments and so on, we've been able to prevent further penalties from being incurred. On a

go-forward basis we expect to see our claims and incidents reduced, and we're starting to see an improvement already. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ABERNETHY: I'd like to thank the Minister for that. That certainly provides some clarity. I wasn't sure, or I didn't understand that it was the compensation that we're paying instead of the rehabilitation that might be driving up these costs. I'm hoping the Minister can provide some assurances that we are changing our direction on how we're going to be dealing with these and we're going to focus more on promotion, or, sorry, prevention and rehabilitation rather than compensation. It seems to me that we really want to get our employees back to work, or better yet, we would like our employees not to go off work. So if I can get some assurances from the Minister that we are moving in that direction, that would be great. Thank you.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: I guess that's the approach that we want to take. We're having these occupational health and safety standards and committees, and in conjunction with that we've also started focusing on our duty to accommodate. We've hired a duty to accommodate officer. We'll be working very closely with WSCC so that we can work with individuals and help them get accommodated earlier rather than having to pay compensation, because, like, 62.4 percent of our costs are due to compensation. Thank you.

MR. ABERNETHY: Once again, thanks to the Minister for that response. I'm happy to hear that we're working in that direction.

The other part of that question was more focused on promotion. Earlier in the Minister's responses to my colleague Mr. Bromley, he indicated that 43 percent of all of our claims are a result of falls, overexertion, climbing, and twisting. Mr. Speaker, all of these are completely avoidable. All of these, through proper training, education, and proper quality assurance and health and wellness training for our staff, every one of these can be avoided. If they're avoided, we don't have claims costs, which means we also don't have people off for extended periods of time, we have employees that are healthier. So what is being done to enhance our promotion and training?

Yes, I understand from a previous response that these health and safety committee structures are going to be established, but I also know that we only have one health and safety officer in the Government of the Northwest Territories, or at least only one that I was able to find on the GNWT website, and that's at Stanton. Where's the rest of them, Mr. Speaker?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: In addition to all of the criteria with regard to Safe Advantage program that we're introducing, and I'll just go through very quickly and I referenced several times the

Government of the Northwest Territories Occupational Health and Safety Program and some of the things that we will be including are occupational health and safety management, occupational health and safety training, incident management, inspections, emergency preparedness, hazard management in Occupational Health and Safety Program evaluation. So we'll have the structure and we'll be working very closely with Workers' Safety and Compensation Committee so that we can promote workplace training, increasing awareness regarding workplace safety, and also working with the department so that we can identify and get rid of unsafe worksites. So all of these things we'll be working together to improve our record, because I agree that a large part of these incidents can be avoided, and that, as such, will reduce our costs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It sounds like the Minister and I are on the same page. We ultimately want to avoid having any of these incidents occur, and when they do unfortunately occur, we want to be able to help the people transition back into the workforce as quickly as possible.

In developing this plan, and I'm very, very pleased that this plan has been developed and that it will be introduced hopefully soon so that others can see it. I think in order to be effective and develop it appropriately, we need to have a sense within the Government of the Northwest Territories of where the majority of these incidents occur. I don't know if the department actually has a breakdown by department or by worksite or work type where these incidences are occurring. If we do, I would ask the Minister provide it to Members so we have a bit of a sense as to where these things are going so that we can focus in as an Assembly on solving these problems, and if the Minister doesn't have that in HR, it must exist in the WSCC because they're able to break down to the penny what our penalties are, which means or suggests to me that they have a pretty thorough listing of where all these things are occurring. So can the Minister commit to providing the Members with a bit of a breakdown as to where these incidents or the majority of these incidents are occurring, so that we can have a better understanding and work to solve this problem in the future? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: I can provide the following information: The top three natures of injury were: sprains, strains, and tears, 15 percent; bruises and contusions, 13 percent; cuts and lacerations, 9 percent; and the top three locations of injury were Yellowknife, 51 percent; Fort Smith, 16 percent; Inuvik, 10 percent. The majority of the incidents are

in facilities that operate 24/7, 365 days a year, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 174-16(6):
GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT IN
YOUTH PROGRAMMING

MR. BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement I talked about the youth, and programs and infrastructure that are needed for the youth in the communities. I have questions for the Minister of youth. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister what this government is going to do to ensure that some of the much needed infrastructure that was built for the youth is going to continue on to the other communities that don't have that infrastructure yet. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. The honourable Minister responsible for youth, Mr. Robert McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The communities have done a really good job at identifying projects for the youth and they've been identifying dollars. They've actually been putting money towards it, and that's been encouraging. I think one of the legacies of the 16th Legislative Assembly could be the amount of money that this Assembly has put into youth. Never has any Assembly before us put as much money into youth as we have, and it's through the work of all Members of this Assembly identifying that youth are a priority, not only identifying that they're a priority but actually putting money towards it to the tune of almost \$4 million. So I think that's been a significant investment in youth by the 16th Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

MR. BEAULIEU: That's a good response; I appreciate that. The infrastructure that I referred to, again, is there has been a good response from the government. But again, not all the communities have the much needed infrastructure. So I guess recognizing the fact that the communities have the capital dollars in their possession to do with as they please, spending it in their community. However, I'm wondering if the department, MACA, in response with the youth, has provided some sort of support to the communities to ensure that this start of the infrastructure, this \$4 million in infrastructure that has come will continue to the communities even if the money has to be found from outside the GNWT. Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: The communities themselves are getting their capital dollars and they've put a lot of money into youth infrastructure. I've been fortunate that I've been able to attend the opening of the youth centre in Paulatuk, and community centres, and in Fort Resolution they're

doing a youth centre there and a lot of it is a decision that's made by the community. What our role is, is we continue to support them through the Youth Centre Initiative, which the money in the Youth Centre Initiative has almost doubled and the uptake in it has gone from 17 to about 34 community youth centres taken. So that's where we see our role.

We continue to work with the communities. They identify their five-year capital plans and, again, I've been quite encouraged by the amount of money that they've identified and put towards youth infrastructure in their community. Thank you.

MR. BEAULIEU: Does this government plan on moving forward with any transitional document to try to provide support for the communities to hire qualified youth workers? I think that if we have some program dollars, or we have some infrastructure, the one piece of the puzzle that seems to be missing is qualified youth workers who work with the youth so that they have programs that are viable at the community level.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Each community will usually have a recreation coordinator and they'll hire their own youth workers as their budget allows.

What we've been able to do through the work of this Assembly is put more money into regional youth officers to work with the communities. We've also made the multi-sport games and the Youth Ambassador Program permanent line items in the budget. That assures us that those items are going to stay as part of the Legislative Assembly's way of doing business.

The youth centre, the youth sports event through the work of the Rural and Remote Communities Committee have put almost \$400,000 into multi-sport or regional sport games so the youth have an opportunity. We'll continue to work with the communities.

The Member also makes a good point that we need to ensure this is all part of a transition document so that the 17th Legislative Assembly can carry on some of the work that was started in the 16th.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I see that the government has supported community-built infrastructure and supported communities for some programming money. The one piece of the puzzle that is actually missing is our actual youth workers at the community level. I think they have recreation workers. The money is flowing to the communities. In trying to make the government understand, I think that's probably the most essential. Providing qualified youth workers working at the community level I think will gain the greatest results for the success of the youth. I'd like to ask the Minister again if that is something that his department could

look at to see the benefits of having actual qualified youth workers at the community level.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I can assure the Member that is something that we can have a look at. Whether we're able to do it financially is another question, and decisions such as that would have to be something that the 17th Legislative Assembly would have to take into consideration. We could also make our thoughts and recommendations to them in the form of transition documents. I can assure the Member that we will have a look at it.

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

QUESTION 175-16(6):
MANDATORY AUDIT REQUIREMENTS
FOR CROWN CORPORATIONS

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I talked in my Member's statement about the Financial Administration Act and I took a look at the opportunity before us that is potentially to be reviewed. Right now we're in the coming days that will enter into the new government. I highlighted the importance of value for money audits, which are also referred to as performance audits. If the review of the FAA is actually being considered at this time, it would be probably wise for the government to consider a comprehensive opportunity like this to include performance audits on our corporations to ensure that they're done on a regular basis to ensure that we're getting the best value for these corporations.

My question will be directed to the Premier today and my question specifically will be: if the FAA is being updated at this particular time with an eye to the future, would the Premier be willing to put down as part of the development opportunity of the FAA, to put in performance audits as a fundamental element on our corporations to be done, say, every five years, as it is done federally?

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On top of the process that we have in place where our corporations table their annual reports and business plans in this Assembly, that's one method where Members have access and can measure how our corporations have done business. As for the ongoing work around the Financial Administration Act, I will have to speak to the Minister on that work and see what's been incorporated and the timelines for that.

MR. HAWKINS: I appreciate the Premier's answer about the corporations tabling their annual reports, but, quite frankly, most Members I would be surprised have an auditing or accounting

background. Therefore we read them for what they are, to ensure that the ledger sheets are balanced.

Performance audits, as cited by the Auditor General of Canada, really look at assets, safeguards, controls, human, physical, and financial resource management, and ensure that operations are carried out efficiently. That's not addressed in the table of the annual reports. That's really what I'm getting down to. That type of work needs to be done on a regular basis, as cited by the Auditor General of Canada that she does do. I should say the former Auditor General of Canada. Can the Premier cite any occasion that he's aware of where the Business Development Corporation, the NWT Power Corporation, or the Business Development Corporation have had performance audits of this nature that I have been referring to?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: One of the things we've done in the life of this government is looking at how departments have been performing with budgets, and look at the growing demand for more resources, and have an internal look at it that way as we do the work around refocusing our government. The additional work of these types of audits has been done in the past on a number of our corporations. That is as the Auditor General of Canada's office makes that request, we co-operate and they do that review. The other way is Members of this Assembly can call on that and we wait for a response from the Auditor General. That is one of the methods that we do use, and a number of our corporations have been called into this review process.

MR. HAWKINS: I appreciate the answer from the Premier. As the former Auditor General has clearly stated, they do not have the mandate to perform these performance audits on territorial corporations unless, of course, the House passes a direct motion that issues that request. At the same time, the former Auditor General has put into writing that they would be more than willing to do those types of audits if granted the authority to do that. In essence, if the FAA is up for debate and review, this would be a good opportunity to invoke that offer. As well, all Members know that there is little or no cost to the territorial government if the Auditor General of Canada actually does them. That's the question I'm really asking the Premier, is would he encourage the Minister of Finance to look at this particular issue, seize the opportunity before us, whereas we can have the Auditor General ensure our corporations are running as efficiently as possible by doing regular performance audits.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: That's one of the wonderful things about our consensus style of government: Members are fully aware of the work that's going on. The Minister updates the committee and he would be able to inform them as to what level of work is going on, and the future Assembly

could also make recommendations as this work will have to continue on into the 17th Assembly.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I gave the Premier credit for the first three answers but certainly not the last one, because I'm still working and I think this Assembly should still be working on these particular issues. That's why I'm thinking it's quite important, if not critical, that we continue to work on these issues going forward, because we still have a mandate. Although technically it may end shortly, it's still active. That's why I'm asking for this.

Would the Premier inquire with the Finance Minister at the appropriate time to see if they could incorporate this opportunity again while the FAA is being reviewed? There is no better time to take these types of issues for consideration. We will let it be weighed, measured, and treated accordingly, if it's seen to fit the business of the government going forward.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: As I tried to respond to the Member earlier about the fact that the Minister brings that work, the review to committee for their input as to how that work is going, and their response and advice to our Ministers helps us guide in that work.

As we're having this discussion here in this Assembly, I'm sure he will be able to pick up on it. I will speak to him on the work that is ongoing. Clearly, that work will not be completed in the life of this government and that's why I say as that work continues and the 17th Assembly will have to make final discussions and give final direction as to the depth of that work that's ongoing within the Financial Administration Act work.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The time for question period has expired. Before going to the next item on the orders of the day, I'd like to acknowledge the presence of Chief Clifford Daniels, who has joined us in the House.

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 Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

Reports of Standing and Special Committees

COMMITTEE REPORT 7-16(6):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE
REPORT ON BILL 9, WILDLIFE ACT

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your Standing Committee on Economic Development

and Infrastructure is pleased to provide its report on Bill 9, Wildlife Act, and commends it to this House.

Introduction

Bill 9, Wildlife Act, was the product of more than 10 years of work to replace the existing legislation which dates back to 1978. The committee conducted extensive public hearings on it and had several amendments prepared to address specific concerns brought forward by Members of the public. Members are mindful of the substantial time and money invested in the development and consideration of this bill, and our decision to report it back as not ready for consideration by Committee of the Whole was a difficult one to make. Nonetheless, after careful deliberations, the committee has determined that the bill should not proceed at this time for the reasons set out below.

Bill 9 was referred to the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure on March 10, 2011. Between April and June 2011 the committee held public hearings in Yellowknife, Fort Smith, Ulukhaktok, Aklavik, Inuvik, Hay River, Whati, Dettah, Deline, Norman Wells, Fort Good Hope, Fort Liard, Jean Marie River, and Fort Simpson. The committee heard from many individuals, organizations, Aboriginal governments, and renewable resource boards and councils during the public review process, both at our hearings and via written submissions. We'd like to thank all the participants in those public hearings.

Overall Readiness of the Bill

Committee members are concerned about the overall readiness of this bill for enactment. During the public review process we heard from some individuals and organizations that the bill is long overdue and should proceed. However, other individuals and groups indicated that they had not had sufficient opportunity to participate in its development. Some also commented that they felt the bill was being rushed. The government itself was still conducting legal reviews months after the bill was introduced and brought forward over 30 proposed amendments to address issues it had identified. Further, as the next section of this report describes, no agreement has been reached on provisions to create a wildlife management conference, which is an essential component of the bill.

The Conference

The composition of the proposed Northwest Territories Wildlife Management Conference was a concern that was brought to the committee's attention early in the public review process. The conference was to be an advisory body similar to that created in the Species at Risk NWT Act, and its roles were to include addressing wildlife management issues of common interest, reporting annually to the Minister, and providing reports to

assist the Legislative Assembly in its review of the act which were to take place every seven years.

In November 2010 the government released a consultation draft of the bill. In this draft the conference membership included renewable resource boards established under land claim agreements: the Inuvialuit Game Council, the Tlicho Government, the GNWT, and Canada. The draft also included a provision allowing representatives of Aboriginal or treaty rights holders from unsettled claim areas to be invited to participate in conference meetings. It is the committee's understanding that this was the composition agreed to by the settled land claim area members of the working group which collaborated on the bill's development and was made up of representatives from the GNWT, the Tlicho Government, the Inuvialuit Game Council, the Gwich'in Tribal Council, the Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated, the Northwest Territories Metis Nation, and the renewable resources councils from the four settled land claim areas.

When the Minister introduced Bill 9 in March 2011, the provisions had changed from the draft to include Aboriginal representatives from unsettled claim areas in the conference membership: the Dehcho First Nations, the Northwest Territories Metis Nation, and the NWT Treaty 8 Tribal Corporation. The committee heard objections to this change from the Inuvialuit, the Gwich'in, the Sahtu, and the Tlicho representatives. A key concern was that the new board composition included a mixture of political governments and members representing authorities with legislated wildlife management responsibilities. Some felt that this structure would be unworkable and strayed from the original intent of the conference agreed to by the working group, which was to create a forum for wildlife management authorities. Some suggested that a separate political forum could be established if necessary.

The NWT Wildlife Federation also objected to the lack of representation for non-Aboriginal harvesters on the conference. The Minister has suggested, and some committee members agree, that the federation can be represented through the GNWT-appointed members; however, the public raising the concern want the bill to reflect an agreed upon process that clearly identifies how those without treaty and Aboriginal rights will have input.

The committee carefully considered all of the concerns raised, and proposed to the Minister that an amendment be made to the bill that would retain the membership as outlined in November 2010 consultation draft but that would make it a requirement that the conference invite the participation of representatives from unsettled claim areas as well as prescribed organizations representing persons with an interest in wildlife

management and harvesting in the NWT. Unfortunately, the government also released the committee's proposals to some working group members without the committee's knowledge or consent, which added to the confusion and bad feelings surrounding the bill. Those without a process to be involved were not consulted at all.

Although some of the committee felt that the proposed amendment was a reasonable compromise, the Minister rejected it twice. Instead, the committee has been advised that the Minister proposes to remove the conference provisions altogether, allowing the matter of the conference membership to be addressed by amending legislation in future years. With respect, the committee cannot agree to this approach which will leave a significant gap in the bill and the wildlife management regime in the Northwest Territories. The issues that have made the conference provision so contentious will not be any easier to resolve in the future, and if we as the legislators of today cannot see our way to address them, then it is the committee's position that this bill is not ready to proceed at this time. If it is the intent of some committee members to reintroduce our proposed amendment to the conference provisions during Committee of the Whole deliberations and should that motion pass at that time, some members may be able to support the bill going forward.

Conclusion

The committee is well aware of the importance of new wildlife legislation to Northerners and would have liked to see the initiative completed during the life of the 16th Assembly. However, the impending dissolution of this Assembly is an artificial deadline and is no reason to enact a bill that is not ready. Should the bill not pass during this sitting, committee members are confident that the Assembly will be able to build on the significant work already undertaken and see it through to completion, and we would strongly urge them to do so in the first year of that mandate.

Mr. Speaker, that concludes the report of the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure on the review of Bill 9, Wildlife Act.

MOTION TO RECEIVE COMMITTEE REPORT 7-16(6) AND MOVE INTO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE, CARRIED

Therefore, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nunakput, that Committee Report 7-16(6) be received by the Assembly and moved into Committee of the Whole for consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question is being called.

---Carried

MR. SPEAKER: Committee Report 7-16(6) will be moved into Committee of the Whole for further consideration.

Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. Mr. Roland.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 60-16(6):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HEALTH
STATUS REPORT - AUGUST 2011

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document entitled Northwest Territories Health Status Report, August 2011. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 61-16(6):
LETTER FROM AUDITOR GENERAL
OF CANADA REGARDING
PERFORMANCE AUDITS OF
CROWN CORPORATIONS

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a letter sent to me from the Auditor General of Canada, dated the 26th of February 2007, and it's regarding my issue of concerns for performance audits on northern corporations. Thank you.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 62-16(6):
PACKAGE OF LETTERS CONCERNING
PROPOSED CHANGES TO
BILL 9, WILDLIFE ACT

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table six letters before the House today, all with concerns with the recent changes to the Wildlife Act.

Mr. Speaker, the first letter is from the Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board to the chair of the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure on Bill 9, the Wildlife Act.

The second letter, Mr. Speaker, is the Wildlife Management Advisory Council of the Northwest Territories, dated July 29, 2011, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Wildlife

Management Advisory Committee on Bill 9, the Wildlife Act.

Mr. Speaker, the third one is the Inuvialuit Game Council, dated August 3, 2011, to the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Bill 9, NWT Wildlife Act.

The fourth, Mr. Speaker, is the Gwich'in Tribal Council, dated August 15, 2011, to the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources regarding the completion of the Wildlife Act project.

Mr. Speaker, the fifth is the Tlicho Government, dated August 17, 2011, to the Environment and Natural Resources, Government of the Northwest Territories, Tlicho Government's position on proposed changes to Bill 9, the Wildlife Act.

Mr. Speaker, also, the sixth letter is the Gwich'in Tribal Council, dated August 3, 2011, to the Minister of Natural Resources regarding Bill 9, NWT Wildlife Act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

TABLED DOCUMENT 63-16(6):
ANNUAL REPORT OF THE EQUAL PAY
COMMISSIONER FOR THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES FOR THE PERIOD
JULY 1, 2010, TO JUNE 30, 2011

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. Pursuant to Section 40.23(2) of the Public Service Act, I wish to table the Annual Report of the Equal Pay Commissioner for the Northwest Territories for the period July 1, 2010, to June 30, 2011.

Item 15, notices of motion. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

Notices of Motion

MOTION 11-16(6):
DEVOLUTION NEGOTIATIONS

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Wednesday, August 24, 2011, I will move the following motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, that this Legislative Assembly strongly recommends that the GNWT suspend devolution negotiations for 12 months, or until such time as a general agreement to proceed has been reached;

And further, to accomplish this goal, that the GNWT establish an Aboriginal devolution commission, comprised of representatives of all the NWT's Aboriginal governments of land claim organizations;

And furthermore, that the Aboriginal devolution commission's mandate be a review of the current agreement-in-principle on devolution to assess the benefits for Aboriginal groups, and to make recommendations to the GNWT respecting a fully cooperative process of reaching a final agreement within 12 months of the commission's establishment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MOTION 12-16(6):
MENTAL HEALTH
COURT DIVERSION PROGRAM

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, August 24, 2011, I will move the following motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Frame Lake, that the Government of the Northwest Territories begin research to examine options and potential benefits for introduction of a mental health court diversion program as an adjunct to the new court system;

And further, that this government make note of this initiative as a recommendation included in the transition advice being offered to the 17th Legislative Assembly. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. The honourable Premier, Mr. Roland.

Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

BILL 24:
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES),
NO. 2, 2011-2012

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Wednesday, August 24, 2011, I will move that Bill 24, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2011-2012, be read for the first time.

BILL 25:
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES),
NO. 2, 2011-2012

Mr. Speaker, as well, I give notice that on Wednesday, August 24, 2011, I will move that Bill 25, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2011-2012, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Committee Report 6-16(6), Report on the Review of Bill 10, Northwest Territories Heritage Fund Act; Bill 9, Wildlife Act; Bill 10, Northwest Territories Heritage Fund Act; Bill 15, An Act to Amend the Deh Cho Bridge Act; Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act; Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Territorial Parks Act; Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Public Utilities Act; Bill 22, An Act to Amend the Territorial Court Act; and Bill 23, Tobacco Damages

and Health Care Costs Recovery Act, 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. We have Committee Report 6-16(6), Bills 9, 10, 15, 16, 17, 18, 22, 23. What is the wish of committee? Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The committee today wishes to deal with Bill 15, An Act to Amend the Deh Cho Bridge Act; Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act; Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Territorial Parks Act; and Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Public Utilities Act. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Committee concur?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): So with that, we'll take a short break and begin with Bill 15 in that order.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): I'd like to call Committee of the Whole back to order. Prior to the break we agreed to begin with Bill 15, An Act to Amend the Deh Cho Bridge Act. At this time I would like to ask the Minister responsible for the bill if he has any opening comments. Minister McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to present Bill 15, An Act to Amend the Deh Cho Bridge Act, which proposes amendments to update the act to reflect changes and advancements in the Deh Cho Bridge project. The Deh Cho Bridge will provide all-day, year-round access across the Mackenzie River, replacing the operations of the Merv Hardie Ferry and the Mackenzie River ice crossing, and this bill makes three main amendments to support these future operations.

First, all reference to the Deh Cho Bridge Fund is being removed. This special fund is no longer needed, now that the Government of the Northwest Territories has assumed control of the project.

We are also implementing shared liability for tolls. This means that both the registered vehicle owner and the driver may be liable for tolling offences. An automated toll collection system is in development and will allow for more efficient trucking operations by not requiring all commercial vehicles to stop and pay their toll on site. To ensure proper enforcement as part of this system, we require the ability to charge either the driver or the registered owner of the vehicle for tolling offences.

Finally, Bill 15 provides the authority to make regulations respecting the use of commercial

vehicle transponders. A transponder is an industry-standard device that receives and transmits a radio signal to identify an individual vehicle to a computer system. When a commercial driver uses a transponder, our computer will identify the vehicle for a toll, allowing the driver to continue without delay. Transponders will also reduce administrative burdens on both the department and commercial operators.

Mr. Chair, these are relatively minor administrative amendments, but they are also necessary to reflect changes to the project and for the department to move forward with implementation of the toll collection system. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. With that, I'd like to ask the Minister if he would bring in any witnesses. Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Yes, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Is committee agreed that the Minister bring in his witnesses?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

Mr. Minister, for the record, could you introduce your witnesses.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, on my left I have Mr. Russell Neudorf, deputy minister of the Department of Transportation, and on my right I have Ms. Kelly McLaughlin, legislative counsel with the Department of Justice.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Welcome, witnesses. General comments in regard to Bill 15, An Act to Amend the Deh Cho Bridge Act. Any comments? Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure met on August 16, 2011, to review Bill 15, An Act to Amend the Deh Cho Bridge Act. Following the public hearing and clause-by-clause review, a motion was carried to report to the Assembly that Bill 15 is ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole. This concludes the committee's general comments on Bill 15. Individual Members may have additional questions or comments as we proceed. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. General comments, Bill 15. Detail. Turn to page 1, clause 1.

---Clauses 1 through 6 inclusive approved

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Does committee agree we have concluded clause-by-clause?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The bill as a whole?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Does committee agree that Bill 15 is ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Agreed. Bill 15 is now ready for third reading.

---Bill 15 as a whole approved for third reading

With that, thank you, Mr. Minister, thank you, witnesses.

As we agreed, the next bill we begin with is Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act. Minister of Transportation, Mr. McLeod, do you have opening comments?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I do. Mr. Chairman, I'm pleased to present Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act, which addresses the issue of distracted driving posing a restriction on the use of handheld electronic devices, such as cell phones, music players, tablet devices, and personal digital systems while driving. This bill also proposes a raise in the threshold for mandatory reporting of a collision from \$1,000 to \$2,000 and provides a mechanism to restrict services for unpaid fines under the Deh Cho Bridge Act.

We will be joining 11 other Canadian jurisdictions in prohibiting the use of handheld electronic devices while driving. This legislation is not just for cell phones, it restricts all handheld electronic devices that could increase the risk of a collision if used while driving. This action supports our continued efforts to improve road safety in the Northwest Territories.

In our consultations we have heard growing concern about the number of collisions and near misses that occur because someone was paying more attention to their phone or other device than to their driving. Both the enforcement community and municipal governments have indicated their support for this legislation.

I continue to believe that public information and education is important to produce long-term changes in behaviour. This past January our Drive Alive program launched its Leave the Phone Alone pledge campaign which will continue this fall with the distribution of our new poster. We will also be working with Radio Taiga to prepare a French language campaign. I encourage all Members to take the pledge to leave the phone alone while driving, and more pledge stickers are available for any interested Members. With the help of the department, members of Students Against Drinking and Driving, or SADD, will also be creating distracted driving radio public safety announcements.

Bill 16 also addresses accident reporting. The property damage threshold for reporting accidents to the policy is being raised from \$1,000 to \$2,000.

This threshold is nationally harmonized by the Canadian Council of Motor Transport Administrators, of which the Northwest Territories is a member. The amended threshold supports our continued contribution to statistical reporting based on common national standards.

The third set of amendments addresses service restrictions for unpaid fines. Under the Motor Vehicles Act, services like vehicle registration and driver licensing may be withheld from clients with outstanding fines under our acts and regulations. Bill 16 extends this list to outstanding fines under the Deh Cho Bridge Act and its regulations. This will ensure consistency in our policies.

I would also note that if this bill is approved, the department would plan to bring this legislation into force on January 1, 2012, providing time needed to draft the required regulations pursuant to this bill, and to inform drivers about the upcoming changes.

Together, these amendments advance our continuing goal of improving road safety for all NWT residents and visitors to our territory. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. At this time I'd like to call on the standing committee which has reviewed the bill if they want to make any comments in regard to the bill. Economic Development and Infrastructure, Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure held public hearings on Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act, during the months of May and June 2011, in Yellowknife, Deline, Norman Wells, Fort Good Hope, Fort Liard, Jean Marie River, and Fort Simpson. While the committee supports these amendments, some Members feel they could have gone further by addressing other distractions, such as hands-free devices, personal grooming, and dogs riding in vehicles. Members also raised concerns about the effect of the legislation on drivers travelling on winter roads where safety requires the use of communication devices; for example, to warn of obstructions or large vehicles ahead. The committee urges the government to ensure exempting regulations are made to allow for the use of handheld devices where warranted by safety considerations, such as those presented by our winter roads.

During the clause-by-clause review of the bill on August 17, 2011, the committee passed and the Minister concurred with two non-substantive amendments as requested by the government. Following the clause-by-clause review, a motion was carried to report Bill 16 to the Assembly as ready for Committee of the Whole as amended and reprinted. This concludes the committee's general comments on Bill 16. Individual Members may have additional questions or comments as we proceed. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. At this time I'd like to ask the Minister if he'll be bringing in any witnesses. Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Yes, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, on my left is Mr. Russell Neudorf, deputy minister of the Department of Transportation. On my right is Ms. Kelly McLaughlin -- sorry, Mr. Chairman, on my right is Ian Rennie, legislative counsel with the Department of Justice.

---Laughter

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

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think it's a good thing that the Minister is not sitting in a car.

---Laughter

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like to say at the outset that I'm extremely pleased to see that these amendments have finally come to this point. I think it's a good start. I am one of those people who believe that we ought to be also legislating against the use of hands-free devices in a vehicle. They've been proven to be as distracting as many other things. I know the Minister feels that it is covered under the Motor Vehicles Act under penalties for distracted driving. I would hope that in a year or two's time that we will do an evaluation of the effect of this particular change in our Motor Vehicles Act and that we will evaluate the effect that banning cell phones has had and consider banning hands-free as well.

I think it's important to note that the NWT Association of Communities supports this bill and they wrote to committee and also, I believe, to the Minister, to express that support. They represent all of our communities and I think this is an issue that is going to affect all NWT residents no matter where they reside.

I also noted at the end of June of this year there was a little note in the Yellowknifer paper on the 29th of June from the RCMP urging motorists not to use cell phones, that summer was coming up and kids were out of school. They, as well, recognized the dangers of driving and using cell phones at the same time. They see the results of accidents that occur. It's a small wonder that the RCMP is supporting this kind of a change.

Certainly I will not be voting against this motion, but again I do hope that in a couple of years' time there is an evaluation of the effect that this ban is having on our traffic accidents, and that we will then consider to make it even more restrictive for people driving distractedly and put greater penalties in place.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. I'll allow for all the individuals to make general comments and then we'll go to the Minister for responses. Next I have Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate this opportunity to comment on this legislation. I want to start by saying that I'm pleased to see this legislation come forward. This legislation does begin to address the many, many constituent concerns that have been raised from my Weledeh constituents who have had near misses as they're walking along the road, some in vehicles. This is a real concern and I believe this is a sincere effort on the side of the department to address this.

Unfortunately, however -- and I cite largely the material provided by the department here -- this doesn't go far enough. Citing from these documents, the first thing I want to note is that a consistent message in the literature is that hands-free cell phone use when driving is no safer than handheld use.

Parsing into that a little bit and looking at the credibility of the research behind that statement, I want to note that the Canadian Automobile Association, the CAA, has argued that it is not enough to ban drivers from using handheld cell phones, because research shows that hands-free devices are just as dangerous. My concern here is that our public will have a false sense of security. I want to basically let them know that this is a good start but they cannot afford to let their guard down when they're out walking, because of this legislation. There's no evidence that this goes far enough.

Another example, the most recent study published on January 29, 2010, by the U.S. Highway Loss Data Institute highlights the concern that handheld cell phone bans offer little real safety benefit. The department has also provided me with information research from the American Automobile Association Foundation for Traffic Safety which has shown that drivers have a false perception that hands-free devices are safer. They point out that the conversation is the primary distraction and not the device itself.

Complicating the use or the matter of parsing this out is the lack of statistics respecting how effective the law is in reducing the number of jurisdictions. So whereas research shows this it's very difficult to demonstrate it on the basis of statistics, that's largely because there are no jurisdictions currently collecting specific data on collisions caused by cell

phone use. I want to acknowledge that that is a challenge. What is tragic here is that I have not yet heard the Minister commit to any effort to gather statistics for the basis of an evaluation on which this legislation could be improved, if the evaluation demonstrates it needs to be. Having made this point, I want to ask the Minister again, will the department collect the appropriate statistics to enable them to evaluate the effect of this legislation and return to it to bump it up as that evaluation indicates.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Next I have Mr. Abernethy and Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Abernethy.

MR. BROMLEY: Excuse me, Mr. Chair. I'd like an answer to that question.

MR. ABERNETHY: We were going through...

---Interjection

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): As we began, I noted, after Ms. Bisaro, that I will allow all individuals to speak and allow the Minister to answer the questions after you do your general comments. Mr. Abernethy.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think this is an important piece of legislation. I'm glad to see it finally coming through. I thank the Minister and the department for doing the work to bring it forward, including the research that was identified and quoted from by my colleague Mr. Bromley. Every one of us I think has seen or almost been involved in an incident resulting from somebody who is driving while distracted. The incidents that I've witnessed have almost always been when somebody's texting, which is a significant distraction, in my mind, and/or dialling a phone. I've seen a number of them a lot closer than I'd like to have seen. So I'm happy that this piece of legislation is coming through. I think it's important. I think it's a great first step. Eventually we may get to the point that my colleagues are talking about, but for now I think this is a really good first step and I'm happy that the department is taking it. Those are my general comments.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Next I have Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank the Minister and the department for bringing forward these amendments to the Motor Vehicles Act. I feel strongly that road safety is more than a convenience; it's a right for all. Often at times we forget about the privileges and rights we take advantage of and start to turn privileges into rights and get confused by what they really mean. The fact is we do have a right to want to feel safe and be safe on those roads, and this amendment addresses one of the privileges that people are using at this time and I look forward to the change on the roads. Whereas people are using the cell

phones as a distraction and it does put safety at a compromise for pedestrians and other drivers alike.

This is a real compromise that I think will move forward for public safety. I'm confident the steps taken by Bill 16 will ensure that our roads are that little more safer, which is really where the laws are finally evolving to address modern times and realities. When laws were conceived in the Motor Vehicles Act back in the day, cell phones weren't an issue at the time. Now they have to be re-addressed in a way that responds to the changing of the times.

I've raised this issue of distracted driving, like a number of my colleagues here, on numerous occasions. I suspect every one of us is very pleased to see that the department has heard the concerns. I'm grateful for that and I suspect my colleagues are grateful as well.

The Minister, as I've raised questions in the House, has recognized the importance of these particular issues, and I will truly say that, although there was much jousting in question period over the years, to hear him today read his comments to the record really shows that the department and the Minister have heard the concerns raised by many. In my view, personal responsibility is important, but clearly Bill 16 is one of those things that help address an area where the individual responsibility has taken over and forgets about others on the road.

I've said, and I continue to say, that this issue is really not just about distracted driving but about public safety. I think this is putting public safety first, which is important. It's not just my voice or my colleagues' voices in this House that demonstrate the importance of this particular matter; we've heard this echoed by many people. Some of the champions, as we know, are SADD -- in this case they call themselves Students Against Distracted Driving -- the City of Yellowknife has spoken in favour of this, the NWTAC has spoken in favour of this, a number of my constituents have echoed serious concerns about this particular issue. Many provinces have all recognized the importance of addressing this particular issue in one form or another.

Many will say that the downside of having to give up the right -- or I call it privilege -- of being able to use their phone while they're driving is quite challenging and unfair, but the downside is quite low when you think about it. The downside is that when people have their phone ring and they still feel the urge or necessity to answer it, all they need to do is pull over and answer it. To me the downside really is low when you balance out the impact by taking that call what could happen.

I had spoken to a constituent of mine, Michele Thoms, on many occasions on this particular one. She's the SADD student advisor over at St. Patrick

High School. She had invited me in to talk to the students a couple of years ago regarding this particular problem, and the youth themselves recognized how important it is to have modern legislation address, attack, and certainly solve problems out there. To them, they couldn't understand why years ago the government hadn't responded quicker to address this particular problem.

I'm just going to wrap up by saying I thank the department and the Minister for seeing that this is an important issue to respond to. I'm glad that we're responding to it in our mandate within this 16th Assembly. It would have been disappointing if it had continued to drag on, but clearly the government recognizes how important this need is for public safety on our roads. Of course, we all know the challenge of regulating and managing good behaviour of everyone is always a difficult one, but this is just one more step to make sure that our roads are safe for others.

As cited already by I think Mr. Abernethy and maybe even Ms. Bisaro, people can provide countless stories until the cows come home about driving experiences where they've seen people drive through red lights, not stop at stop signs, near misses of pedestrians, people driving and wandering all over the roads, and all while using their cell phones in one form or another. Does this law answer every particular problem? I suspect it doesn't, but I'll certainly say it's an effort worth noting, and a compliment needs to go to the department and all those involved who took the time to respond and encourage the department to address this issue.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Next I have Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Yakeleya, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Jacobson.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Basically I'm happy to see this bill come forward, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act. I'm in full support of it. The communities in our riding that do have cell service, it's just good safety for the children in the communities that we represent. I'm in full support of the bill.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The department's initiative is a step closer to another safety awareness for our people who are using our roads, especially ones that are driving. This bill is a good step towards safety.

The one issue that I have is going to have a concern for me -- and I want to ask the Minister if he would elaborate later on -- as to the portable use of handheld electronic devices in our region on the winter roads. We know that we have winter roads that we rely on these handheld devices for our

safety, for knowing if there are big semi-trucks coming in our direction, safety for our people in our vehicles. Also these handheld electronic devices are also used to service oil rigs and oil leases, camps that are going to be starting up in the Sahtu this winter for working, and not all companies have extra money to buy these radios that should be mounted on the dashboards. So these handheld electronic devices would be a big help if we had some clarification on that from the department's attention. Otherwise you're going to have a few companies in the Sahtu being charged under this new law here. That's something I would not support the department on.

The restrictions on the cell phone talked about here, I think, again, as I said, the Minister is in the right place to do this. It's the right time. But also all cell phone users, you know, in Yellowknife here sometimes, and other areas, people who are on their cell phones sometimes don't look at when they're crossing the street or not. They're so busy on their cell phone they don't look around and see if a vehicle is coming or not. I think there's a general awareness campaign not only for people who are driving vehicles but for people in general who use cell phones. Some of them use these headsets and they cross roads, they don't check. Just like when we had people who were hiking with us on the CANOL Trail, we said there's no personal electronic device for the headsets, otherwise they won't hear the animals or they won't hear us or that. So you've got to be safe about it. It's just good general education awareness about these devices that it could be good, but also it could hurt you. This reminder here is a good one in a general sense. The legislation itself is good. It talks about some specific things.

The other point I wanted to ask the Minister, in his remarks back to us, is that there are lots that have animals in them, cats and dogs, in front seats, on people's lap. Sometimes you don't know who's driving, the person or the dog, because you see the dog in front of the person. I experienced that last week here in Yellowknife. I had to take a look twice because that little dog's face got in front of that person's face and I thought that the dog was driving. Well, it's scary. I want to know, because that kind of legislation is needed or we'll find it somewhere else in the regulations for distracted driving.

I want to ask the Minister on that one there, because they put people at risk, too, having the animals in the front seat or the back seat. I have a little boy who goes to school here, and every time he gets into the vehicle I know his life is in my hands, and if someone is not responsible for their driving, well, it affects me, it affects my boy. My boy, I love him so much. If anybody has some things with the animals there, think about my boy's life over a dog's life or a cat's life. That's serious for

me. I know it's funny sometimes, Mr. Chairman. It is when you think about in, but when you come down to really think about it, we have children on the road, we have children in our vehicles and we have to be reasonable, someone said responsible, and think about it.

For me, I want to say I support this amendment to the Motor Vehicles Act. I would like to get some clarification on some of the issues that I've brought up and I want to know that some communities do not have cell phone coverage. Some communities rely on the handheld devices. We don't have a SADD chapter in the Sahtu but we have a lot of good kids who write a lot of good educational posters and awareness about the dangers of drinking and driving, about seatbelt safety and all those other things. I mean, we'd certainly like to see them up in our region and start a chapter, you know, not just as in Yellowknife.

As a legislator, I'd like to see things happening in other regions such as my own in the Sahtu, and we use the winter roads. We don't have all-weather roads here. Winter roads are somewhat different from the roads in Yellowknife, Hay River, Inuvik, Simpson, Res. My people depend on the winter road. That's our lifeblood and not to restrict us in the Sahtu there.

Mr. Chair, that's all I wanted to say. I am supporting the bill. I need some clarification or there is going to be some more rumbling.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Next I have Mrs. Groenewegen and Mr. Beaulieu. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to speak in favour of the bill. I've heard from many constituents on this issue and seen the error of my ways. It is important to people. It is important for safety on our roads. I would like to thank the Minister for bringing this legislation forward and will be supporting it wholeheartedly. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Next, I have Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, will be supporting this amendment to the act. I think it's important for the safety of other drivers and pedestrians on the road that you're not distracted while you're operating a motor vehicle, so I would support that. Both talking on the cell and texting on the cell while driving seem to be unsafe things to do. This would restrict that, so I support the bill. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Next, Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to lend my comments to my colleagues that have spoken in favour of Bill 16. I am very

supportive of the amendments to the Motor Vehicles Act going forward through Bill 16 that would address texting and cell phone use in vehicles. I think it's a big issue out there for public safety, and as technology improves, these phones are used for much more than just phoning and texting. You know, you can get on the Internet, those smartphones and things like that, and driving around, I mean, you can see it, and oftentimes I find myself having to pull over on the side of the road and try to finish texting or phoning somebody.

If there are some penalties out there for doing that type of behaviour, I think it's going to be a good deterrent and something that should be addressed, because we've got a lot of children out on the streets walking around and all it takes is a second for an accident to happen. You look down and try to press a key on your phone and the next thing you know there's a little kid on a bike running out in front of you or a car coming and you're outside of your lane or something.

I think this is a step in the right direction. Long overdue. The rest of the country's been moving forward with this. I know we've been talking about this for awhile so I'm glad to see it here. I'm fully supportive of it and I wanted to thank the Minister and his staff for the work that they've put into these amendments. Also, I know some of my colleagues spoke of SADD and their involvement in this, as well, and I think that's to be commended as well. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Members. We've done general comments. With that, I'll allow the Minister to respond to the general comments. Minister of Transportation, Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, also, to all the Members that made comments. This issue of distracted driving has certainly come forward as an emerging issue. When it was raised here several years ago there has been a lot of research done in here with distracted driving. We've had many organizations -- the NWT Association of Communities, we had the RCMP, people from SADD, the city -- come forward and bring some information that would support the need for new legislation. We also, of course, had many of the MLAs raise the issue and bring examples and also concerns by residents of the North to our attention.

We worked hard to try to find a balance on this piece of legislation. We know some people are not totally satisfied that it didn't go far enough. There are so many things you can include in a piece of legislation such as distracted driving. You can include drinking coffee. You can also include smoking a cigarette or putting on makeup, animals, children in a vehicle. We always encourage that every driver should minimize distractions. The proposed legislation reflects common current best

practices from legislation from all across Canada and since last year there are probably about seven jurisdictions that have adopted similar legislation. So we're seeking a balance between enforcing safety and making sure that it is enforceable, and we're also mindful of the fact that we've got to obtain public support.

There has been a question raised about how do we measure effectiveness of this legislation, and right now there is currently information that's collected by the RCMP, and the information that's collected on collisions also includes information on driver distractions as a potential cause in the collision. We also summarize these statistics in our annual reports. Transport Canada also currently conducts surveys in each jurisdiction that reports not only on cell phone use but on seatbelts. We also will be conducting roadside surveys like we do with our seatbelt information. We also intend to evaluate the effectiveness of this legislation in probably two to three years when we have enough statistics.

The question that was raised about winter roads, right now this legislation provides the authority for regulations to be developed to exempt certain classes of users from law, and it can also show how the device may be used. So it's intended to develop regulations to permit the handheld two-way radios on winter roads, but at the same time we still expect people that are out on winter roads that are using handheld devices, to stop and pull over.

With the question on animals in the vehicle, right now we still have legislation, Section 154 of the Motor Vehicles Act, Driving Without Due Care and Attention, as a tool that can be utilized to discourage that. We certainly can relay the concerns from the Member.

We are also supportive of the SADD organization, Students Against Drunk Driving. We know that there are some areas of the Northwest Territories that don't have a chapter. We certainly support any initiatives. Of course, it needs a champion in that region to pick it up and make it work, but we certainly would support any type of initiatives of that nature. We intend to have this campaign in all of our communities, the larger centres and smaller communities. I think we have a very effective campaign planned that will not only go through this year but also next year so that people are well aware that this is a concern, and our goal is to reduce the number of accidents that are happening and have people pull over or not use any electronic devices while they're driving. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like to continue my general comments that were wrongly cut off by the Chair earlier today. That's correct. I would like to note...

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Bromley, I would like to advise you to withdraw that statement. I believe you are challenging the Chair. I request that you withdraw that statement. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Mr. Chair, I would like to withdraw that comment. At the same time, I would like to note that it is my right to do general comments. I was cut off after three minutes on the clock.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Bromley, I'm just basically following direction, that once you concluded your statement there weren't going to be any questions and we were going to allow each Member to make their general comments and move on and allow the Minister to reply to the general comments of everyone at the end. I stated that when Ms. Bisaro spoke. So that was the rule I put on the floor of the House. So if you were offended, well, excuse me. That's why we're having a second round of general comments. Again, your concern will be noted and also my concern of challenging the Chair will also be noted.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will be happy to provide you many examples, many of which you will be very familiar, of exactly this situation in which the Member was allowed to have that question to the Minister during his general comments. With that, I will continue, Mr. Chair.

I wanted to note that the department did come forward with a communications plan, which we had asked for and were very happy to see. I think there's a lot of good material in that. The Minister does note in that that he will be working with the Students Against Distracted Driving, and he also has commented that he will be including as his target audience those in communities without cell phone coverage, because it's well known that many people in those communities do have cell phones and travel frequently to centres which do have coverage. So I appreciate that as well.

I would like to note, though, that in the communications plan there is an intention to promote hands-free alternatives to handheld electronic devices, and I think everybody would agree that the main purpose of this legislation is safety, and the department has provided us with extensive and comprehensive evidence that in fact those alternatives are just as deadly and raise exactly the same safety issues. So I wonder if the Minister would, at a minimum, remove the promotion of hands-free alternatives to the handheld devices and simply stick with trying to avoid distractions to driving as the main focus. Perhaps he would include, based on the evidence that he's provided us, some notification that in fact there could be concerns that even hands-free devices are a safety issue.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Minister of Transportation.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, we're trying to find the reference that the Member is making. He's asked two questions about talking and removing promotion of hands-free alternatives. I'd like to point out that that's something we will look at removing. I think it's a good point that the Member is making and we certainly, by way of providing exemptions, are not intending to promote any type of hands-free electronic devices. However, we recognize in some cases, such as winter roads, that is the only communication device available. So we will be looking very carefully on how and what type of devices can be used.

For the most part, most people, including the truckers and residents, are using LAD phones, which are hard wired and don't require a handheld operation. So we certainly will take the Member's advice and follow up on both of his comments, and remove the reference to promotion and carefully scrutinize what devices are allowed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): General comments. Detail.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Okay. Turn to page 1, clause 1.

---Clauses 1 through 13 inclusive approved

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): To the bill as a whole.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Does committee agree that Bill 16 is ready for third reading? Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, I believe there were a number of motions for amendment.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. McLeod, clarification. I assume that these are your amendments. Could you clarify exactly what amendments you're talking about?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, there was a reprint and I don't believe that was the same document that was just referenced. If we could have Mr. Ian Rennie talk to the issue.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Rennie, could you elaborate?

MR. RENNIE: Mr. Chairman, there were two motions and there is a reprint, but I don't think the reprint was what was just gone through. I can read the motions.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Apparently the bill we have in front of us is Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act, reprinted. So I'm not too sure.

MR. RENNIE: Okay, there was an 8.1 that was not gone through. Section 8.1 on page 3.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Just for clarification, I believe you're talking about 8.1. I believe it is part of clause 8, so the whole 8 comes in as one clause so

we didn't have to call it out. That's the reason I didn't call it out, because apparently clause 8 is total clause 8 and clause 1. So it has been dealt with in that manner. I believe we have dealt with clause 8.1. So hopefully, for the record, maybe the Minister or yourself can clarify. Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With that clarification, I think that's what we were looking for.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): If you're wondering what happened, we did everything right. We are agreeing to third reading of the bill. We have dealt with the item which the Minister had a concern with, third reading. Just for the record, does committee agree that Bill 16 is ready for third reading?

---Bill 16 as a whole approved for third reading

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): I'd like to thank the Minister and his witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, escort the witnesses out.

As we agreed, the next bill we'll be dealing with is Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Territorial Parks Act. With that, I'd like to ask Mr. Bob McLeod, Minister of ITI, if he has any comments on Bill 17.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: I do, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to introduce Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Territorial Parks Act.

It is time to modernize our legislation to match the same level of protection and security in other Canadian parks.

The proposed amendments relate to safety precautions and procedures that exist in most other Canadian jurisdictions.

These amendments will set a framework within the act that will give the department the authority to deal with specific concerns that have been identified repeatedly within our parks.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At this time I would like to ask the committee responsible for overseeing the bill if they have any comments with regard to Bill 17. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure met in May and June to review Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Territorial Parks Act. The committee held public hearings in Yellowknife, Deline, Norman Wells, Fort Good Hope, Fort Liard, Jean Marie River, and Fort Simpson. Members of the public and committee have expressed general support for these amendments that are intended to make territorial parks safer and more enjoyable for all visitors.

Following the clause-by-clause review on August 16, 2011, a motion was carried to report Bill 17 to the Assembly as ready for Committee of the Whole.

This concludes the committee's general comments on Bill 17. Individual Members may have additional questions or comments as we proceed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): With that, I would like to ask the Minister if he will be bringing in any witnesses. Mr. McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Yes, I would, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Does committee agree that the Minister may bring his witnesses?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

Mr. McLeod, for the record, could you introduce your witnesses.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my left I have Deputy Minister Peter Vician, and to my right I have Kelly McLaughlin, legislative counsel.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Thank you, witnesses. Welcome. Are there any general comments in regard to Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Territorial Parks Act? Detail?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Page 1 of Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Territorial Parks Act, clause 1.

---Clauses 1 through 6 inclusive approved

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): To the bill as a whole.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Does committee agree that Bill 17 is ready for third reading?

---Bill 17 as a whole approved for third reading

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Thank you, witnesses.

Okay, the next bill we agreed to deal with is Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Public Utilities Act. At this time I would like to ask the Minister responsible for the act if you have any opening comments. Mr. Bob McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to introduce Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Public Utilities Act.

Members will recall last year's release of *Creating a Brighter Future*, a comprehensive response to almost two years of extensive consultations held with communities, key stakeholders, the general public, and Regular Members. *Creating a Brighter Future* detailed this government's public commitment to a number of specific actions with respect to the Northwest Territories' electricity system, including commitments to introduce amendments to the Public Utilities Act.

These legislative amendments have been drafted to advance the vision of an efficient, equitable, and

transparent electricity system, and include provisions which will:

- clarify the Executive Council's ability to issue broad policy direction to the Public Utilities Board while at the same time not restricting or limiting the Public Utilities Board authority to decide on individual cases;
- allow for the establishment regulations regarding the general rate application process and submissions by utilities. This change would allow for standardized filing requirements that would specify the level of detail and background information to be provided in a general rate application;
- enable the Minister to seek the Public Utilities Board's advice on matters that are solely within the Minister's discretion without offending the principles of procedural fairness or improperly delegating his or her authority; and
- provide for amendments of a general housekeeping nature to modernize the act, and to remove or modify any overly perspective language.

Mr. Chairman, I trust the committee will find the amendments satisfy public commitments to amend the Public Utilities Act. These amendments will advance the vision of safe, reliable, and affordable electricity available through our territory, and reflect the essential nature of electricity services for Northwest Territories Communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. At this time, I would like to ask the committee which reviewed the bill to make comments. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure met during the months of May and June to review Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Public Utilities Act. The committee held public hearings in Yellowknife, Deline, Norman Wells, Fort Good Hope, Fort Liard, Jean Marie River, and Fort Simpson. Power rates are a serious concern for people across the Northwest Territories. Those who spoke to the bill at public hearings were supportive of the amendments and the ongoing discussion of energy provision in the Northwest Territories.

Following the clause-by-clause review on August 16, 2011, a motion was carried to report Bill 18 to the Assembly as ready for Committee of the Whole. This concludes the committee's general comments on Bill 18. Individual Members may have additional questions or comments as we proceed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. At this time, I'd like to ask the Minister if he'll be bringing in any witnesses. Mr. McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Yes.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Does committee agree the Minister brings in his witnesses?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

Mr. Minister, for the record, could you introduce your witnesses.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. To my left I have Alan Cash, deputy secretary to Cabinet; on my left, I have Mark Aitken, the director of legislation with the Department of Justice.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Welcome, witnesses. General comments in regard to Bill 18.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Detail.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Detail. Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Public Utilities Act.

---Clauses 1 through 28 inclusive approved

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): To the bill as a whole.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Does committee agree that Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Public Utilities Act, is ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Bill 18 as a whole approved for third reading

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): With that, I'd like to thank the Minister and thank the witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, escort the witnesses out. What is the wish of committee?

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

---Carried

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

Report of Committee of the Whole

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

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 15, An Act to Amend the Deh Cho Bridge Act; Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act; Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Territorial Parks Act; Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Public Utilities Act, and would like to report that Bills 15, 16, 17 and 18 are ready for third reading. 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 Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

---Carried

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

Orders of the Day

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Schauerte): Orders of the day for Tuesday, August 23, 2011, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Opening Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 9, Wildlife Act
 - Bill 10, Northwest Territories Heritage Fund Act
 - Bill 22, An Act to Amend the Territorial Court Act
 - Bill 23, Tobacco Damages and Health Care Costs Recovery Act
 - Committee Report 6-16(6), Report on the Review of Bill 10, Northwest Territories Heritage Fund Act
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
 - Bill 15, An Act to Amend the Deh Cho Bridge Act

- Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act
- Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Territorial Parks Act
- Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Public Utilities Act

23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Tuesday, August 23, 2011, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 5:08 p.m.

