



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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Box 1320
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories
Tel: (867) 669-2200 Fax: (867) 920-4735 Toll-Free: 1-800-661-0784
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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Wednesday, February 1, 2006****Members Present**

Honourable Brendan Bell, Mr. Braden, Honourable Paul Delorey, Honourable Charles Dent, Mrs. Groenewegen, Honourable Joe Handley, Mr. Hawkins, Honourable David Krutko, Mr. Lafferty, Ms. Lee, Honourable Michael McLeod, Mr. McLeod, Mr. Menicoche, Honourable Michael Miltenberger, Mr. Pokiak, Mr. Ramsay, Honourable Floyd Roland, Mr. Villeneuve, Mr. Yakeleya

ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good afternoon, colleagues. Welcome to the resumption of the Fourth Session of the 15th Legislative Assembly. Although it has been several months since we have met in formal session, I know that each of you has been working diligently in committee, Cabinet and in your constituencies during the extended adjournment. I would like to offer my personal best wishes to each of you and all the residents of the NWT for a happy and healthy new year. On behalf of the Legislative Assembly and all Members, I would also like to extend congratulations to the new Member of Parliament for the Western Arctic, Dennis Bevington.

---Applause

As a long-time northerner, Mr. Bevington is aware of the North's most pressing issues, and we look forward to collaborating with him to face the challenges that lay ahead. A special thank you goes to Ethel Blondin-Andrew for her many years of service to northerners as our Member of Parliament.

---Applause

Although Ethel has announced that she will not run for Parliament again, we are confident that she will continue to make a positive contribution to the lives of all northerners in the years to come.

It is with regret that I advise the House of the recent passing of Vital Manuel. Vital served this House proudly as a Page for over 10 years and was also a special constituency assistant to former Premier Stephen Kakfwi. His gentle demeanour and warm smile was always a welcome addition to these halls and he will be sorely missed. Our thoughts go out to his family and many friends during this sad and difficult time.

On a happier note, we rang in the New Year here at the Assembly by hosting the 23rd Canadian Presiding Officers' Conference from January 19th to the 22nd. We were fortunate to receive 37 Speakers, Deputy Speakers, committee chairpersons and Clerks from across Canada. Our business sessions, which took place here in this Chamber, were informative and thought provoking. In addition to showing our guests some warm northern hospitality, we were, I believe, able to give them a taste of how our unique system of consensus government operates.

This session marks a significant departure in the way that our Assembly proceedings are broadcast and made available to the public. Effective immediately, sessions will no longer be broadcast on the Aboriginal Peoples'

Television Network. Instead, the Assembly is working with local cable television providers, CKLB Radio and other community radio stations to provide longer and more accessible coverage of our proceedings. We have now also begun to broadcast our proceedings in audio and video stream on the Internet. By logging on to www.assembly.gov.nt.ca, you will be able to watch or listen to live and tape-delayed proceeding of this House. We will be working diligently in the sessions to come to improve further on our session broadcast service.

As we prepare to enter this budget session, I would like to acknowledge, on behalf of the Legislative Assembly, the diligent efforts of our standing committees, Cabinet, government and Assembly staff who have contributed to the budget development process. I know the last month-and-a-half has been a very busy one for all of you. I would also like to thank all members of the public who participated in the first round of pre-budget consultations that took place across the North last summer. I am confident that the views and concerns expressed by those who participated will find a place in our upcoming deliberations.

I look forward to a productive session over the next few weeks. I hope to hear lively debate on issues that are important to the people of the Northwest Territories and discussions that lead to positive, informed decision-making. I ask only that you conduct yourselves within the rules that you have set down for this House and continue to respect the dignity of the House and all of its Members.

Now, it is my duty to advise the House that I have received the following message from the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories. It reads:

"Dear Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise that I recommend to the Legislative Assembly the passage of the Appropriation Act, 2006-2007 and the Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2005-2006, during the Fourth Session of the 15th Legislative Assembly. Yours truly, Anthony W. J. Whitford, Commissioner."

Thank you, colleagues.

Orders of the day, item 2, Ministers' statements.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**Minister's Statement 61-15(4): Federal Election Results**

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on January 23rd, Canadians elected a new Parliament with the Conservative Party of Canada posed to form the new government. On behalf of the people and Government of the Northwest Territories, I would like to

extend our sincere congratulations to Mr. Stephen Harper on his election as Prime Minister of Canada.

---Applause

We were very pleased and encouraged by the commitment made by Prime Minister-designate Harper on election night to work with the northern territories to help achieve our dreams and to develop the potential of this great region. Once the new government is sworn in next week, we look forward to working with individual Ministers to make these words a reality.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to acknowledge and extend our gratitude to Prime Minister Paul Martin for his many years of public service to Canadians as Prime Minister, Minister, and Member of Parliament. In particular, I would like to thank Mr. Martin for his ongoing support and commitment for the goals and aspirations of northerners, and his efforts to advance a vision for the North that has helped bring a greater understanding of this important region to other Canadians.

We also extend our congratulations to Mr. Layton and the New Democratic Party for their strong showing on election night, and to Mr. Dennis Bevington who was elected as the new Member of Parliament for the Western Arctic. I had the opportunity to meet with Mr. Bevington last week to discuss ways we can work cooperatively on issues of importance to the people of the Northwest Territories. I am confident Mr. Bevington will do an admirable job for northerners.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge our outgoing Member of Parliament, the Honourable Ethel Blondin-Andrew, and extend our appreciation for her service to the people of the Northwest Territories over the past 17 years. We have seen much positive change during her time as a Member of Parliament and she should be very proud of her achievements.

---Applause

Mr. Speaker, during the first two years of our term, the Members of the Legislative Assembly have made significant progress in raising the profile of the Northwest Territories' issues in Ottawa and southern Canada. The Northwest Territories is a good news story in this country. Over the last 10 years, an entire new industry has been created around the mining of diamonds in the Northwest Territories, an industry that contributes greatly to the economy of Canada. The development of the oil and gas potential of the North can create significant economic growth and jobs, and provide added security of supply for the North American market.

But, Mr. Speaker, while we have taken important steps over the last two years with the national government, we have been unable to resolve the fundamental issues concerning the control of our resources and, in particular, the revenues generated by them.

Shortly after his election, Prime Minister-designate Harper committed to working with the provinces and territories to address the fiscal imbalance that exists between the federal government and provinces and territories. This is an important commitment and one that will allow us to make our case on the need to restructure and improve our financing arrangement with Ottawa, and to reconsider how

resource revenues are shared between the federal and northern governments.

Mr. Speaker, we believe the election of a new federal government provides a significant opportunity to forge a new working relationship with Ottawa. We are optimistic that we can hit the ground running on some important issues with the new government, and look forward to establishing a cooperative and productive working relationship with Prime Minister-designate Harper and the Members of his government. Mahsi cho. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Roland.

Minister's Statement 62-15(4): Notice Of Budget Address

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will deliver the budget address on Thursday, February 2, 2006. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On Pre-Budget Consultations

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (English not provided)

As a Member for Nahendeh and the chair for the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight, I was honoured to be part of the very first pre-budget consultations last August and September. Regular Members initiated these consultations to give people a chance to speak directly to MLAs and to provide input for government business plans and budgets.

I know many people who shared their advice with us in the pre-budget process are out there anxiously awaiting the budget address and the government's response to our committee's report to see whether government is going to act on their ideas.

However, I wish to remind people that, as we said in our report last October, many of these issues demand long-term solutions and are far beyond what can be accomplished in one year's budget and business plans. I think our constituents can expect to see immediate action on the few key issues in the 2006-07 budget, but it is in next year's business plans and budgets that I will see the largest impact.

Government is often compared to a big ocean ship that takes a long time to adjust its course. As an MLA, I have often wished that instead it could be a high performance skidoo and turn on a dime without slowing down. It is hard for me, as well, to accept the slowness of change and to be patient, but, unfortunately, that is the reality of government.

Mr. Speaker, I say these things because I do not want people to become discouraged or disappointed or to think we are not listening. Last summer's pre-budget consultations were only the first of what we hope will grow

and become a regular and key piece of how we, as Regular Members, hold government accountable to the priorities of our people. We are building a new process from the ground up, and as we visit more and more communities over the years, we will continue to build on what we started. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The Member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You may conclude your statement, Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mahsi cho. Thank you, honourable colleagues. For now, Mr. Speaker, I want to assure people that although they may not see any dramatic changes in this year's budget, we have set things in motion to put us on a better course for the future. We have not forgotten what the people have told us and they can expect to hear Members in this session, and in future sessions, continue to raise the issues that they brought to our attention. This is not the end of it, Mr. Speaker. It is just the beginning. Mahsi cho.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Member's Statement On 2006 Federal Election

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, since our last sitting in November, the winds of political change have swept across the NWT and many parts of our country. Canada elected a Conservative minority government in Ottawa, and in the NWT, the people voted for a change and the agent for change they have chosen is the new MP for the Western Arctic, Mr. Dennis Bevington. In my first opportunity to do so in this House, I would like to extend my warm congratulations to Mr. Bevington.

Mr. Speaker, I can speak from having watched them more closely than others, that he and his team were very diligent and focussed throughout their campaign. I have no doubt, Mr. Speaker, that Mr. Bevington will apply the same efforts, as well as his new energy and vision, in doing his job as the new MP and will do it very well.

Mr. Speaker, I believe we know in this House how rewarding but at times challenging it can be to represent and serve our people in all of the 33 very diverse and unique communities. I appreciate that the changes always bring opportunity and I look at this as a huge opportunity for all of us to approach things from different perspectives, where necessary, in order that we all achieve together the goals and aspirations of the people we have the collected privilege to serve.

I wish to also take a moment to thank Messrs Edjericon, Beaudin and van der Veen for putting their names, efforts and best arguments forward for people to choose from. It is an integral part of our democracy and it takes special strength and conviction to do so and I appreciate their efforts very much.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to acknowledge the service of Mrs. Ethel Blondin-Andrew. I believe we have all learned to appreciate her commitment to the North and

her strong work ethics and stamina in the way she served the people of the North through thick and thin. I believe that the distance in time will make it more clear of the strong legacy and achievement of her work. For that, we owe her much thanks and I wish to take this opportunity to wish her and her husband, Leon Andrew, the very best as they embark together on the next chapter of their lives. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Recognition Of Vital Manuel

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this morning I was reading a book and I read a quote in there from Ralph Waldo Emerson, I think. He said in the quote, what lies behind us and what lies ahead of us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us. That quote struck a chord into this statement that I'm going to read today in regards to a close friend of the Sahtu and the people in Yellowknife at the Legislative Assembly.

I want to pay tribute to Vital Manuel, who passed away on the 19th of January at the young age of 32 years old. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank you for your kind words in your opening address towards Vital. Vital was well known in this House as he served as a Page and a special assistant to the former Sahtu MLA Stephen Kakfwi, and also the Premier Stephen Kakfwi.

Born with spina bifida, Vital faced many challenges: to finish school, to have his own apartment, and to find work. He succeeded in doing all these things, and Vital was a very independent person, a very proud person. I know there are many people who are struggling today and I hope that Vital's strength and achievement can serve them as inspiration to all the people of the Northwest Territories. Vital's independence was important to him, but he was also very close to his people in the Sahtu, especially in the community of Fort Good Hope. He is remembered as a strong and loving person, known for his kind words and also known in the community of Fort Good Hope as lehtse Vital, Grandfather Vital.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to send my condolences to the Vital family and to all his close friends. I hope that this will be some comfort to them to know that many Members and staff of the Legislative Assembly, both past and present, share in their sorrow and will continue to hold many warm memories and thoughts of Vital in their heart. Mahsi cho.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On 2006 Federal Election

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in light of the recent federal election, I'd like to make a few comments in view of the significance of the federal government in relation to our government. I'd like to congratulate the people who ran to represent the Western Arctic in the House of Commons. Having choices is what makes our democratic system work. Each put forth

a credible effort to ensure the constituents were informed of their positions.

A special congratulations to Dennis Bevington for his tenacity in seeking and now winning the seat for this riding. Dennis is well-informed and respected in the work that he has undertaken on behalf of northerners and I know that he will represent us well.

I would also like to thank Ethel Blondin-Andrew for her work on our behalf over the past 17 years. I'd like to congratulate Stephen Harper in his new role as Prime Minister. It is a daunting undertaking. From our unique government to his, I would like to say welcome to consensus government. It will take much skill to move his agenda forward with the diversified personalities and agendas now in the House of Commons, but we look forward to hearing of the assignment of key ministerial portfolios which will work closely with our government.

We have heard much debate leading up to the election. I was disappointed with the degree of negative stereotyping that was expressed, not particularly in this riding. It was done in an attempt to scare the Canadian electorate away from a Conservative government, and I hope now we'll hear less of those cryptic references to hidden agendas and intolerance. I personally prefer it when political candidates focus on the positive solutions that they have to offer.

As an aside, Mr. Speaker, I never cease to be amazed by people and parties who hold themselves out as so inclusive and so tolerant, and yet so quickly berate others with a different moral or political conviction in an area such as traditional values.

For the North, Mr. Speaker, the Liberals knew us, they said they loved us, but it was hard to tell. The Conservatives want to get to know us and I am optimistic about how they will feel about us, and I'm certain that the New Democrats will get to know us well through our new Member in the House of Commons, Mr. Dennis Bevington. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Kam Lake.

Member's Statement On 2006 Federal Election

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm certainly very happy to be back in this House with the rest of my colleagues as we prepare to entertain the 2006-07 budget and address the issues that our constituents have raised with us since the last time we met. I'd like to start off by congratulating Prime Minister-designate Mr. Stephen Harper and his incoming Conservative government. I do believe, and have tremendous hope, that the change in government in Ottawa will pay huge dividends here in the North. Issues like resource revenue sharing, devolution, fiscal surety and the completion of outstanding land claims processes will be front and centre under this new Conservative government.

Congratulations, as well, Mr. Speaker, are also in order for our new Member of Parliament, Mr. Dennis Bevington. He will certainly be challenged by not being in a governing party, but I am certain that he will work hard on our behalf

in Ottawa and do the best that he can for us. I wish him all the best in his new pursuit and I do look forward to working with him in the future.

I'd also like to acknowledge, if I could, the dedication, devotion, and efforts of our outgoing Member of Parliament, Ms. Ethel Blondin-Andrew. Although we lined up on different sides of the political field, I certainly have a tremendous amount of respect and admiration for the work she performed in Ottawa on behalf of our government, the aboriginal governments, and the residents of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to wish her -- I know it was mentioned earlier -- and her family all the best in the future. Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time on today's Order Paper, I'll have some questions for our Premier on how our government plans to take up our issues in Ottawa and what strategy they will employ in doing so. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Before we go on, colleagues, I would like to draw your attention to the gallery to a former Member of this House and Member of the former riding of North Slave, Mr. Leon Lafferty.

---Applause

Members' statements. The honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

Member's Statement On Traffic Safety On Highway No. 3

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. (English not provided)

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak up on an issue that has growing concern in my constituency. That is the traffic safety at the intersection of the Behchoko access road on Highway No. 3. Mr. Speaker, that stretch of highway is a very busy road used by commuters, truck drivers, tourists. In fact, it has the highest traffic volume on the territory's intercommunity highways, Mr. Speaker. Over the last decade, the traffic along this stretch has increased 30 percent. More people commute from my community, Behchoko, Mr. Speaker, also Yellowknife commuters and down south.

Economic development, notably the diamond mine industries, have also increased the traffic moving up and down Highway No. 3. This increases the volume of traffic on the highway, Mr. Speaker.

It is certainly not the rural road it was once, not in terms of volume of traffic, nor in terms of conditions of the road, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the improvements on the highway between Behchoko and Yellowknife has been a crucial component of the Corridors for Canada project. The project was intended to improve the safety of the road, provide better access for diamond mine industries, and also enhancing the tourism opportunities. The improvement of paving the last part of the national highway system has made a huge difference for the Tlicho citizens, Mr. Speaker; however, it means driving a lot faster on the road, as well. The safety concern could be easily fixed, Mr. Speaker, by installing traffic lights at the intersection. The volume of traffic warrants a light system

similar to what is in place at the intersection of, say, Highway No. 3 or Highway No. 1.

I will have questions for the Department of Transportation at the appropriate time. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

Member's Statement On Government Decentralization

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Let me just say Happy New Year to my constituents, residents of the NWT, and all the Members of this House, firstly. I'd also like to congratulate the Prime Minister-designate Stephen Harper and our new MP, Dennis Bevington, on their election victories.

Just a point of interest, Mr. Speaker -- and I hope Stephen Harper is listening -- the community of Lutselk'e and my constituents of Tu Nedhe were the only communities in the NWT to vote a Conservative majority.

---Laughter

So I hope he remembers that.

---Applause

Mr. Speaker, addressing and resolving many important issues in my constituency of Tu Nedhe will continue to be my priority in this Legislature. Namely, issues like still high unemployment levels, lack of training opportunities, and no noticeable improvements in living conditions or health, especially for elders and the aboriginals. Sadly, this is the same situation that many small communities are dealing with and this is the same message that they have been trying to desperately convey to our government for the last number of years. Although these concerns are heard in this House quite regularly by all the Members, we seem to be seriously lacking progress on making some positive changes in the timely manner that actually improves the overall living and cost of living conditions in these smaller communities.

Mr. Speaker, in previous governments, many Members had raised concerns on our government's centralized, overgrown, overpaid, and underutilized bureaucratic system that is both plagued with old policies and practices, a lot of deadwood, and the seemingly perpetual ignorance for the issues for the small communities and their representatives bring to this House. It continues to be the case in this 15th Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I believe it is time for some major shifts in our government's organizational structure and attitude. What I am talking about, Mr. Speaker, is more decentralization. When this government started the centralization process in the mid-'80s, it was for efficiency and effectiveness. This worked for the five larger centres and especially Yellowknife, but new changes are needed that make this government more visible and accessible to smaller communities in our region, and it can be just as efficient and effective for all the residents, if not more. I'd like these changes to be made before this bureaucratic monster gets too big to move forward for the betterment of all residents, and, more importantly, before the questions

and concerns raised by the Members of this House start falling on deaf ears. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

Member's Statement On Recipients Of Aboriginal Achievement Awards

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize three well-known and respected northerners who are recent recipients of the National Aboriginal Achievement Awards. It is said, Mr. Speaker, that laughter is the best medicine, and with that being the case then George Tuccaro has been curing many people across the NWT for years.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

MR. MCLEOD: People in the communities always look forward to a visit from Mr. Tuccaro. My personal favourite is a jigging performance.

Billy Day is a well-respected Inuvialuit elder from Inuvik. He was part of the Committee for Original People's Entitlement, which was established to protect our culture, political rights, and our lands. They negotiated the Inuvialuit Final Agreement and from that came the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation. He participated in a meeting in California, which resulted in the founding of the World Council of Whalers. Billy still continues to live a traditional lifestyle. Inuvialuit will always be grateful to Billy and the other negotiators for the benefits that we enjoy today.

Shirley Firth-Larson was a member of the NWT Ski Team for years. This group of skiers was started in Inuvik, and they trained in Inuvik, and they put the NWT on the map, as far as I'm concerned. As a young boy growing up, we used to always think the ski team was really deadly because they got to travel all over the world, and we wanted to be just like them, but we were way too slow. We watched the Olympic Games and tried to catch a glimpse of our skiers because we were quite proud of them. She participated in four winter games, she's received many awards over the years for her skiing.

We congratulate all three of you and would like you to know that, as fellow northerners, we are proud of your accomplishments and your well-deserved award. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Pokiak.

Member's Statement On Reflection On 2005 In Nunakput

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, Mr. Speaker, I've decided to reflect back on 2005. Mr. Speaker, many elders in Nunakput passed away in 2005. In particular, my sister Annie Noksana and Uncle Bobby Taylor-Pokiak. My thoughts are with these families and I hope 2006 will bring a prosperous year.

Mr. Speaker, elections for municipal councils were also held in 2005. To the mayors and councils elected in Nunakput, I look forward to working with you during the life of this 15th Assembly. To the people of Sachs Harbour, thank you for your warm hospitality during my recent visit.

Mr. Speaker, also to those athletes from Nunakput who took part in the regional and territorial trials for the Arctic Winter Games, I commend them in their best efforts. I wish you all the best. Play fair and remember, winning isn't everything. Having said that, I know you will all come back with winners in your own right.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to thank Ethel Blondin-Andrew for her dedicated 17 years of service, to Prime Minister-elect Stephen Harper of the Conservatives I say congratulations, and to our newly elected Member of Parliament, Dennis Bevington, we have work to do. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Member's Statement On GNWT Pipeline Negotiations

MR. BRADEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Achieving devolution and a fair share of resources revenue sharing must continue to be the top priorities of this government, but in last November, Mr. Speaker, that priority, in my opinion, took a major setback when Premier Handley and Finance Minister Roland delivered a letter -- no ordinary letter, Mr. Speaker -- to the four major producer groups in the Mackenzie Valley pipeline and TransCanada Pipelines. It was a so-called letter of comfort demanded by these stakeholders before they would proceed with the regulatory hearings now underway. The letter offered strong encouragement to proceed to the next phase of the regulatory process.

Mr. Speaker, while this is a letter of comfort to the multi-billion dollar producer groups, it is a letter of extreme disappointment and dismay to many MLAs, communities, and northerners. The reason for the disappointment in our Premier and Finance Minister is that I thought their job was to protect, first and foremost, the interests of northerners. The letter went on, Mr. Speaker, "...we can provide you" -- the producer groups -- "with assurances that the GNWT is committed to promoting a stable and predictable fiscal and royalty regime..." What about promoting a stable and predictable fiscal and royalty regime for our own people, Mr. Speaker?

---Applause

The Premier and the Finance Minister did not. When we have fought so long and so hard to get a share of our own resources, they gave away a major bargaining position. Mr. Speaker, this was after the gas producers themselves got some \$2 billion in fiscal concessions from Ottawa. Even after the Deh Cho region, which did hold out for something, got \$31 million from Ottawa; even after the APG, the Aboriginal Pipeline Group, got a greater assurance of its share of the investment will get a backup loan from Ottawa; even after the communities along the pipeline route got \$500 million, a \$500 million commitment for social and economic impact, the Premier and the Finance Minister gave away our bargaining chip, which

was to force Ottawa to do the right thing for us. Even now, Mr. Speaker, after 30 years of this ongoing project, the public Government of the Northwest Territories is no better off today than we were three decades ago. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Member's Statement On Citizenship Judges

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to be back into the House. I just want to emphasize that. It's wonderful to be back after our long break. Mr. Speaker, today I'm very concerned about the fact that we don't have citizen judges here in the Northwest Territories. There's always a lot of news out there about the apathy of the Canadian public when it comes to elections and definitely their participation. However, in recent news, a Yellowknife resident and their family travelled all the way to Edmonton to become Canadian citizens just so they could vote in this past election. I personally applaud their dedication; however, their circumstances cause me to wonder why such heroic measures were required in the first place to obtain citizenship. Why couldn't they get their citizenship here in their new home of Yellowknife?

I contacted the MP's office, and with their assistance they said citizenship can only be obtained once a year, on July 1st, here in Yellowknife. They also mentioned the difficulty of finding judges to come up to Yellowknife to perform this ceremony. We know citizen judges are responsible for making the decision on citizen applications, presiding over ceremonies and administering the citizen oath, but apparently it's so simple; it's not difficult or complex. All it requires is simple accreditation by judges. That's it.

Mr. Speaker, I have to underscore my concern that the citizen ceremony is only held here once a year. That does not seem fair for one of the territories and the Canadian cities here. We should have more respect from the federal government. If you miss the deadline, Mr. Speaker -- that is the July 1st deadline -- you have to wait a whole year to get your citizenship card. That is a lot of hardship on a particular individual; for instance, if you want to travel or if you have to leave the country on holidays or special emergencies. Even worse, Mr. Speaker, you could be deprived of rights and privileges that Canadians enjoy or have as a safety net outside of Canada. Why are we treating these new Canadians terribly? I don't think it is fair. I can appreciate and acknowledge that citizenship is a federal issue, but I think this territorial government, in conjunction with the pan-territorial government such as the Yukon and Nunavut, could do something.

Respect is a Canadian value. It is what draws some of these people here. Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Justice Minister later today. I will be encouraging him to find less bureaucratic ways of welcoming new Canadians to our country. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Members' statements. Returns to oral questions. The honourable Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. McLeod.

ITEM 4: RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS**Further Return To Question 203-15(4): Food Mail Program Pilot Project**

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I have a return to oral question asked by Mr. Yakeleya on October 20, 2005, regarding the Food Mail Program pilot project.

In order to reduce the cost of nutritious food and promote healthy eating, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, INAC, with funding from Health Canada carried out a series of Food Mail Program pilot projects in three isolated northern communities: Fort Severn, Ontario; Kangiqsujuaq, Nunavik; and Kugaaruk, Nunavut. The GNWT did not participate.

The pilot projects will be reviewed in the near future to evaluate the impact of reducing the cost of priority perishable foods and introducing measures to improve their recognition, quality and variety. Any decision to participate in a future program of pilot projects will be up to the Minister of Health and Social Services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Returns to oral questions. The honourable Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Krutko.

Further Return To Question 267-15(4): Rent Scale

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, I have a return to oral question asked by Mr. Lafferty on October 25, 2005, regarding the rent scale used by the NWT Housing Corporation for public housing.

Specifically, Mr. Lafferty asked how the rent scale is determined.

The rental amount is derived from a household's monthly income. This is the same in all communities. The cost of living and unit condition reductions are then subtracted from this. The cost of living reduction is a variable number and is dependent on the community and the number of people in the household.

The rent scale embodies the principle that residents of the Northwest Territories with the greatest need should receive the most help. Thus, the public housing rent scale ensures that all social housing tenants are treated fairly and equally across the NWT with regards to access and costs of shelter.

The rent scale also reinforces the principle of affordability as no tenants pay more than 30 percent of gross household income towards shelter costs. On average, public housing tenants currently pay 13 percent of gross household income for rent. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for the Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize an important resident in the Sahtu now living in Yellowknife, an artist, Antoine Mountain; and also, I am not too sure if she is behind me, Ms. Cindy Gill, also

from Deline who is importing to Yellowknife now. Two treasures we lost to Yellowknife. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would just like to recognize the Tlicho Government in the building, Grand Chief Mr. Mackenzie.

---Applause

Former MLA for North Slave and now currently chief of Behchoko, Chief Lafferty.

---Applause

I can't see from here, but other Tlicho community government leaders are here, as well. I would like to recognize them. I would like to recognize my constituent assistant, Pamela Richardson, as well. Mahsi.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize the president of the Native Women's Association of the NWT, senior president in Fort Resolution and an organizer of many events, organizations and committees in Fort Resolution and in Tu Nedhe, my mom, Terry Villeneuve.

---Laughter

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps today is Mother's Day here because I am so proud to recognize my mother, Esther Braden, and to tell her I love her very much. With her, Mr. Ed Jeske, a regular attendee of at least our opening days every session here in the Legislature. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also would like to welcome everybody, the leaders, artists, interested public, and the parents. I would like to recognize Mrs. Esther Braden and Mr. Ed Jeske who often chauffeur lots of seniors from Avens Court. I would like to thank Mrs. Braden for convincing my mother to come and see the first day because she usually likes to watch us on TV, so my mother, Taejeong Lee. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to recognize everybody that is here today with us, but specifically I have a constituent, Miss Tawna Brown, who is a graduate student at Carleton University, a long-time Yellowknifer, and I would like to welcome her here today. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon. I would like to recognize some people in the gallery today, too. David Clark, the president of the WCB is here; constituent Barb Wyness who is often with us during our sessions; and a former constituent and friend, Jennifer Babiuk. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. If we have missed anybody in the gallery today, welcome to the gallery. It is always a pleasure to have an audience here. I hope it continues through the rest of the session. Orders of the day. Oral questions. The honourable Member for the Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 307-15(4): Wilderness Camp Programs

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the honourable Minister Brendan Bell in regards to the correction services and specifically the wilderness camps that we talked about in previous sessions. I want to ask the Minister, will he inform the House in terms of this progress in terms of establishing wilderness camps in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Bell.

Return To Question 307-15(4): Wilderness Camp Programs

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the House knows, wilderness camp programs are an important part of our corrections programming. Over the last number of years, I think we had a number of attempts to get the program up and running and make sure that it is well utilized. We have had some success. Kozo Lake is open right now with eight inmates, I understand, as of mid-January. That is pretty much full capacity for that. We really don't have any other adult facilities operational at this time in the territory. That is a concern for me. I think part of the problem has been that the model we have been using has been overly complex and complicated, so we have had difficulty finding potential operators and also eligible inmates. I have proposed to the committee to undertake a pilot project and look at a new model that is much simpler and seeks to get interested elders out on the land for periods of time with eligible inmates. We are going to try a pilot both in the Sahtu and the Tlicho

regions. We are working with the two members in those regions to make sure that happens and make sure we find potential operators who would be interested. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

Supplementary To Question 307-15(4): Wilderness Camp Programs

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Minister's willingness to look at new models within the Northwest Territories specifically now a focus on the Sahtu region and also the other regions that have asked for it. In the Sahtu, I know there are a lot of concerns in regards to the complexity. I wanted to ask the Minister if he could provide some updates to me in terms of how that progression is going on. I think we have identified one camp person that may be considered for this new model. Would the Minister provide me with some update as to that progress within the Sahtu? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 307-15(4): Wilderness Camp Programs

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, indeed. We are, at the Member's suggestion, working with an elder from Fort Good Hope, Charlie Tobac. We are having preliminary discussions with him. I have had staff go up to visit with Mr. Tobac at his home to discuss the model. As I have said, we are trying to be as flexible as possible and, if there have been unnecessary complications in the past, reduce those hurdles. I think that has been part of the problem. Typically, we would issue an RFP and see very little interest. We were expecting elders to provide programming and counselling on the land, be able to also operate a business at the same time, invoice the department to ensure they were paid, and have their own equipment and provisions and own a camp, essentially. I think this is probably unreasonable to expect that we would have a high degree of success with this type of model. We are working with Mr. Tobac to ensure we understand how we could roll out a successful model and make sure it is as smooth and easy as possible to get inmates on the land working with Mr. Tobac. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

Supplementary To Question 307-15(4): Wilderness Camp Programs

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, would the Minister commit to Mr. Tobac or people in the Sahtu that there can be, and will be, hopefully, within the time constraints, the willingness of all parties involved that we could see adult inmates from the correction services moved into a wilderness camp in the Sahtu that is going to be redesigned by the elders and the Sahtu people along with the officials from the Department of Justice, that we would see something within this fiscal year that we would see a new model implemented in the correction services? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 307-15(4): Wilderness Camp Programs

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I can make that commitment. We are in the process of purchasing the equipment that will be necessary. I want to reinforce that, in some of our past efforts, the camps have become quite sophisticated. Cabins on the land are quite the facilities, actually. I want to make the point that this will not be as ambitious in that regard. We think we need a much simpler process. This is about going out on the land and making reparation for the people. We think that, in terms of programming, there could be a number of things undertaken, but certainly providing meat for our community is a worthy endeavour. We want to pursue a number of those opportunities and are looking for a model that can fulfill that. But we will roll it out as quickly as we possibly can. We are in discussions with Mr. Tobac and look forward to concluding those. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 307-15(4): Wilderness Camp Programs

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a thank you to the Minister in terms of taking this initiative to look at new initiatives developed by the people in the Sahtu region and the Northwest Territories in terms of implementing this type of program in our own communities and regions for our own people. I want to ask the Minister, of all the issues that we have to look at with this new model, would he look at taking some people from my region to look at other models that maybe have similar programs in southern Canada in terms of getting some feedback on some of the other types of wilderness camps that we could develop in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 307-15(4): Wilderness Camp Programs

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have, as a department, looked at other jurisdictions that might be able to offer some advice and some support in this area. What we found is that really there aren't other jurisdictions doing this type of wilderness programming on the land. We have been pioneers in this area. I think the most effective approach for us here is to work with the elders in the region. That is, in fact, why we have undertaken this program. We heard from elders in the region that they were very supportive of on-the-land programming, and yet, when we tried to roll out programs, there wasn't the uptake and we couldn't find operators. So we have gone back to them and asked them how we could make this more successful. That is why we are working with Charlie Tobac. That is why we think it is going to work this time. I want to indicate that we are absolutely committed to seeing this through and making it work. I would propose that after we have had some time to try this and we have seen it up and running, we then evaluate the pilot and have a discussion with the elders who have been involved; especially Mr. Tobac. At that point, we would be in a better position to assess it and talk about other options and models that might be feasible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Question 308-15(4): Canadian Citizenship

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on the heels of my Member's statement which was about the lack of citizenship courts here in the Northwest Territories and specifically in Yellowknife. Mr. Speaker, even though typically citizenship ceremonies would be a federal issue, citizenship court is only held here in Yellowknife once a year. Is the Minister aware of this? What is he doing about this problem? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Bell.

Return To Question 308-15(4): Canadian Citizenship

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am aware of the concern. The Member is right that, under the federal Constitution Act, it is the federal responsibility for these issues. Nonetheless, we are concerned. I did hear the story on CBC and have inquired into the reasons behind what seemed to have happened here. I get the sense from the federal government that setting it up one time a year on July 1st allowed it to be more special. They thought that this was an approach that they wanted to continue with. I have had discussions with our Minister responsible for immigration, Minister Dent, and he has agreed and has proposed to take the approach of writing the newly appointed federal Minister for immigration to suggest that we need to have a mechanism for making sure this can happen here more frequently. We will probably suggest that it need not be a judge. Under the legislation, there are provisions for other people besides judges to undertake citizenship oaths on behalf of Immigration Canada. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Supplementary To Question 308-15(4): Canadian Citizenship

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the information that the Justice Minister offered. He was quite right that you do not have to be a judge to do this. But, on the short term, we are still suffering under the circumstances of only having this once a year. He is right; I would hate to see July 1st lost as a very important day for new Canadians. Perhaps, would the Minister commit today on the fact that we should contact our territorial counterparts and maybe look at creating a citizen court circuit for the whole North, including the Yukon and Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 308-15(4): Canadian Citizenship

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think we could probably go even a step further and have some discussion with other provincial and territorial jurisdictions, because I have looked into the numbers. Apparently, there are only 19 citizenship judges appointed in Canada representing just five of the 13 jurisdictions. That leaves Atlantic Canada, Saskatchewan and the North without

citizenship judges. Obviously we need another approach. I think this is something that our Minister of Immigration will take up with the newly appointed federal Minister. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Supplementary To Question 308-15(4): Canadian Citizenship

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that is good news by all means. But would the Minister commit today that he will make every process and possibility of happening that we create accreditation for either Supreme Court justices in the Northwest Territories to perform this duty, or someone else applicable that could do this duty? Would he make that commitment that we could do this and work towards this right away? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 308-15(4): Canadian Citizenship

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I understand, there is nothing preventing a Territorial Court judge from conducting this right now. RCMP officers have been used in the past. We could use the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories. There are provisions for this in the Act, currently. It is just a matter of having the federal Minister designate these people as such. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 308-15(4): Canadian Citizenship

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. That makes the next question even easier. Will he commit today that he will write the federal Minister as soon as they are appointed to make sure this happens right away? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 308-15(4): Canadian Citizenship

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Minister Dent, in our discussions today, had already indicated to me that he intended to do this. I know he intends to do it as soon as possible and, in fact, as soon as we see who the federal Minister will be. I know that we will have some more discussions around that. But I think we can get back to the Member with a response from the federal Minister as soon as possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 309-15(4): Ferry Operations Information

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today my questions are for the Honourable Michael McLeod, the Minister of Transportation. I often

embark on a drive between Hay River and Yellowknife and vice versa. It is always an adventure. It won't be such an adventure when the bridge goes in, but it is always interesting now. The Minister, in the past, and his department have been very responsive to suggestions that might keep the travelling public on the highways more informed of the condition of the roads and the status of the ferry crossing and so on. Just over the past couple of months with Christmas and so on, I had a few issues with the information to motorists. I wanted to ask the Minister if he could respond to this. During the Christmas holidays, there were interruptions in the ferry service on the Mackenzie River at Fort Providence. I know because people in Hay River were waiting to go back to Yellowknife and wanting to be updated on the status of the ferry. I went on the web site one day and it said this information will not be updated between December 23rd and 28th. I would like to suggest that if people are going to travel to other communities and visit friends, it is at Christmas. I just wondered why there would have been a break in the provision of current information about the ferry from December 23rd to the 28th. Could it have to do with Donnie days, or everybody was out of the office? I would like to know what happened there. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. McLeod.

Return To Question 309-15(4): Ferry Operations Information

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the comments. We always get a good report from the Member on some of her trips along our highway system. However, on this issue of the ferry information not being available during the holidays is not something I was aware of. Our department considers traffic information and maintenance crews an essential service, so I will have to commit to getting back to the Member to see why that information wasn't available for those days that she mentioned. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 309-15(4): Ferry Operations Information

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One other question I have for the Minister is with respect to the information about buffalo on the road. Right now there is a big sign which is a cut-out of a buffalo. That is to tell people, watch out, there are buffalo on the road or bison crossing sign. Is it possible or would it be easy to put up signs that would suggest to motorists that if they come across a herd of buffalo close to or on the highway, they could flash their lights for the next motorist coming down the road as a way of warning them that they may be coming upon something that is dangerous? Has that ever been considered? What would it take to do that? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 309-15(4): Ferry Operations Information

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the issue of buffalo on our highways, Highway

No. 3 and especially on Highway No. 7, has been something that we have been trying to deal with for some time now. We have been talking to ENR on a number of occasions to see what we can do to enhance the issue of having buffalo on the road, especially at night, to take all the precautions, to drive slower, to use your headlights in the evenings, and those things. As to whether or not we could incorporate a signal where when we are passing vehicles, that is something we would have to take a look at. That is not something we've thought of or discussed up to now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 309-15(4): Ferry Operations Information

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was actually a constituent of mine who recommended that. Normal people just flash their lights for oncoming traffic if there is an RMCP radar set up, but I think we should do it for buffalo. I think it would be more important. The other question I have is along the highway, there are signs. When you come by every community, it says...or even not by a community, it can be out in the middle of nowhere. It says, if you are in an emergency, phone this number: 669-1111. I was just curious of all the expense that we went to to put those signs up along the highway, how were you proposing people to get a hold of somebody? There is no cell phone service out there. I would say 99 percent of people don't have a satellite phone. What was the thinking behind those signs? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 309-15(4): Ferry Operations Information

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the signs were put in place so that the motorists and the traffic along the highways, if they came upon an emergency, and if they had access to a satellite phone or some of the mobile phones entrusted had a number readily available, or once they come into the first community in the case of Highway No. 3, whether it is Fort Rae or Fort Providence, they would know the number and it would be available to them. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 309-15(4): Ferry Operations Information

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if we are going to have signs kind of out in the hinterland, perhaps something easier to remember would be 911. Can the Minister please tell me what the status is of integrating our highway emergency system with that universally recognized number 911? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 309-15(4): Ferry Operations Information

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the responsibility for communications in the Northwest Territories falls under a separate department. That is Public Works. However, we have, as the Department of Transportation and Municipal and Community Affairs, had some discussions with some communication companies to talk about a number of things; first of all, the possibility of looking at cell phones or cell service in the Northwest Territories, to talk about what other jurisdictions are doing to bring cell phone services to some of the remote areas. We have also talked about temporary cell phone services. For example, on the Deh Cho Bridge project. We are also working with the emergency preparedness to discuss how we can become more comprehensive in terms of having our communications universal so that our firefighters can talk to the ambulance people, the ambulance people can talk to the highways people. Right now, we don't have a system that is compatible. So we are discussing a number of these things. We will continue to take these forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

Question 310-15(4): Traffic Lights At Behchoko Access Road Intersection

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier I spoke of the Highway No. 3 and the importance of public safety. Highway No. 3 is a major highway to Yellowknife from the South. Given the increase of traffic volume, especially with the winter road opening sometime this month, there is going to be a high increase in the traffic volume on heavy equipment, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, at this time, I would like to ask the Minister of Transportation, will he make the commitment in the House today to have traffic signals installed at the intersection of Highway No. 3 and Behchoko access road? I would suggest something similar to what is in place at intersection of Highway No. 3 and Highway No. 1. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 310-15(4): Traffic Lights At Behchoko Access Road Intersection

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think it would be premature for me to commit to installing traffic lights at the intersection of Behchoko at this point. We weren't aware that there was a safety concern at that intersection. We are doing a review of what roads are public access roads that we have on inventory. We will certainly look at the request from the Member. Other communities have also requested to have lights installed at their intersections. That is something that we will have to take into consideration as part of a review. We will also start looking at what public access roads now maybe should be turned over to the municipalities. There are a number of things that we will be taken into consideration. But as to a specific commitment to install lights, at this point I am not in a position to do that, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Supplementary, Mr. Lafferty.

Supplementary To Question 310-15(4): Traffic Lights At Behchoko Access Road Intersection

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. In follow-up, if the Minister is not committing today, but I understand he wants to work with his department on this particular issue, will the Minister at least commit his staff to talking to my constituents and other constituents who make heavy use of road and report back to the House with a plan to deal with the safety concerns? It is becoming a big issue in the Monfwi riding, the Behchoko specifically and Edzo that there is a high traffic volume that is coming into play. It has been addressed as a huge safety issue in the community. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. McLeod.

Further Return To Question 310-15(4): Traffic Lights At Behchoko Access Road Intersection

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member has indicated that it is a safety concern for his community. We would certainly commit to talking to the leadership and the residents of Behchoko. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Supplementary, Mr. Lafferty.

Supplementary To Question 310-15(4): Traffic Lights At Behchoko Access Road Intersection

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there has always been a government's vision for the NWT highway that includes an operating highway system that provides for improved safety, reliability for people and resource development. Now we are in the process of resource development and new upgraded community access roads, paving the road and whatnot. At the same time, I just have one final question to the Minister. When will he commit to meeting with the Tlicho leadership to deal specifically with the lighting system at Rae access road? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. McLeod.

Further Return To Question 310-15(4): Traffic Lights At Behchoko Access Road Intersection

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can't give a specific date, but we'll have our staff go into the community as soon as possible. Thank you.

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

Question 311-15(4): GNWT Work With New Federal Government

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Honourable Joe Handley, Premier of the Northwest Territories. I spoke in my Member's statement about dealing with a new political climate in Ottawa with a new Conservative government and as well here locally with a non-governing party Member of Parliament. So the political landscape in Ottawa has certainly shifted. I guess the big question in my mind and the public's mind is, how is our government

going to work with the new government in Ottawa to get our issues addressed? I guess the first question I have for the Premier is, how is our government going to work with the new Conservative government in Ottawa to address the issues we face here in the North? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 311-15(4): GNWT Work With New Federal Government

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me say, first of all, it will be different because we now have our Member of Parliament who represents one of the opposition parties. Our working relationship with the Member of Parliament will be somewhat different. Mr. Speaker, I am encouraged, though, by the Prime Minister's statements. In fact, on election night, accepting his victory, he did make the statement that he would work with us to realize our dreams in the North. In letters to me, he has been very clear in terms of his position on a number of major issues to us.

So, Mr. Speaker, I have written a letter to the Prime Minister congratulating him. A letter will be going out this week outlining our major priorities, which I'm sure he's very familiar with; but that will be done. He will be selecting his Cabinet next week and we will be corresponding with the new Cabinet Ministers as soon as they are in office. Mr. Speaker, we also will continue to have a good, strong relationship with the current government. I believe, from his correspondence, he supports what we're doing.

Mr. Speaker, I want to also emphasize that we will work with all of the Members in this House for advice on how we can deliver the message, what the message should be. I have also opened the door for our business community to participate, as a business coalition, in events if we were to do them, like another Northwest Territories Day in Ottawa. Mr. Speaker, I'll be meeting with regional aboriginal leaders on February 9th to discuss with them our working relationship, as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm optimistic. The Prime Minister-designate has made some firm commitments to us and I think, as I've said earlier, we hit the ground running. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

Supplementary To Question 311-15(4): GNWT Work With New Federal Government

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Premier for his response this afternoon. One of the questions I'd have for the Premier, I know he spoke of priorities, we've seen a number of these same priorities kicked around for the last number of years by this government and the government before it and even the government before that. I'm talking about devolution and resource revenue sharing specifically. I'm just wondering, from the public standpoint, and the Premier mentioned a letter that he's writing to Ottawa listing priorities, I mean, when is the government going to issue a list of priorities to the public so that the public can try to understand what we're up against in Ottawa and whether or not we can

actually deliver on some of these priorities by the end of the life of this government, which is only 19 months away, Mr. Speaker? So I'd like to ask the Premier if, indeed, he'll make a list of priorities that he's going to send to Ottawa available to the public and to Members of this side of the House so that everybody knows what we're asking for and we can try to get some things accomplished? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 311-15(4): GNWT Work With New Federal Government

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I will make available to all of the Members a copy of the letter that we're sending to the Prime Minister. Certainly Members are free to share that with their constituents, so it will very quickly become a public letter.

Mr. Speaker, I did give the Members a quick briefing on what I thought were the main priorities, and asked for input, if anyone has other ideas. If I can, very quickly, Mr. Speaker, they are financing and resource development, devolution included. Both our financing formula and devolution and resource revenue sharing are priorities. Mr. Speaker, another one is the major infrastructure needs we have in the Northwest Territories. That is a priority, particularly our road transportation system, but our airports as well, and municipal infrastructure. Mr. Speaker, another one is on economic development and support for the energy industry, which is just getting on its feet in the Northwest Territories in a big way right now with the Mackenzie Valley pipeline. Then, Mr. Speaker, the others are a whole package of social issues, from housing to post-secondary education to health. These are commitments that were made at the First Ministers' meeting that we need to talk with the Prime Minister about.

Mr. Speaker, included in that list, I want to say as well, are other commitments that have been made, for example, to residential school survivors that we need to know where the current government stands on that as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

Supplementary To Question 311-15(4): GNWT Work With New Federal Government

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Premier for his response. I'd like to, as well, ask the Premier, and I know he mentioned it briefly, but how is the Government of the Northwest Territories going to involve aboriginal governments here in the Northwest Territories in dealing with the federal government? During the election campaign there was a lot of negativity in some camps towards the Conservative government coming into power and dealing with aboriginal people. I'm just wondering, has the Premier got a strategy so that he can lay to rest some of these fears that were out there to the aboriginal governments here in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 311-15(4): GNWT Work With New Federal Government

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have not had opportunity to speak with all the aboriginal leaders. I will have a meeting with the regional leaders on February 9th, but I have talked to many of them and all the people that I have talked to recognize that Canada has voted in a new party as a government. The North has voted in a new Member of Parliament, and everybody is going to work positively to achieve what we can. We have many common agenda items right now and I have no doubt, as we discuss this further with aboriginal leaders, that they're going to approach this very positively, in spite of comments that may have been made earlier on. We all want to move forward on the pipeline, on continuing that strong economy, on self-government, on devolution and so on. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Final supplementary, Mr. Ramsay. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

Question 312-15(4): Access To Midwifery Services

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Mr. Speaker, I have been finding that often the women of Nahendeh who will be giving birth have to stay at length in Yellowknife. Typically, at the most, up to a month, maybe even six weeks away from their loved ones and their family, Mr. Speaker. I also note and commend the constituents of the honourable Minister's riding who have lobbied and created a midwifery act and program. This enables women to have their babies in their communities. Can the Minister tell me what steps are being taken to move this program into other regions? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 312-15(4): Access To Midwifery Services

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have legislation and policies and regulations that now apply across the Northwest Territories. We have midwifery services in Fort Smith and Thebacha. As well, we have a midwifery position in Yellowknife and in the business plan for 2007-08. We're going to be making the case to expand those midwifery services outside, or further, to other regions. I know the Member has indicated his riding of Fort Simpson is interested, and they are on our list to move into in the coming business plans. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

Supplementary To Question 312-15(4): Access To Midwifery Services

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the honourable Member for that response. I wasn't quite sure, was that this coming business plan will the contact be made, this coming year? Will it be in the workshop forum? I know that it has to interest some people who want to be qualified and expressed interest

and get training. Is that the type of information that will be shared in the communities? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 312-15(4): Access To Midwifery Services

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the key is to identify the resources to in fact be able to hire the required midwives, nurses, hopefully nurse midwives, but midwives that can work in the community. As well, as the Member has indicated, we have to consult with the region and communities and ensure that there's an interest, look at the statistics and what kind of infrastructure there is going to be necessary to in fact have that service. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

Supplementary To Question 312-15(4): Access To Midwifery Services

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again, I wasn't too clear if it was going to happen this coming fiscal year. If the Minister could answer that for me. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 312-15(4): Access To Midwifery Services

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the Member is talking about the budget and business plan or budgets we're currently reviewing, it's not in this particular business plan or budget. We'd be looking at the subsequent year. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Question 313-15(4): GNWT's 'Letter Of Comfort' To Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Producers

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to address my questions to Premier Handley. This is in respect of communication with proponents of the Mackenzie Valley gas pipeline. Mr. Speaker, we have been seeking a fair share of our resource royalties for years in the NWT. There was a golden opportunity to really get somewhere; that is to bargain with the gas producers' need for certainty on tax and royalty regimes, to translate that into certainty for our own need here in the NWT for fiscal fairness from Ottawa. Mr. Speaker, why didn't the Premier and the Finance Minister stand up and fight for the future of northerners, instead of giving into the demands of the gas producers and the pipeline companies? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

Return To Question 313-15(4): GNWT's 'Letter Of Comfort' To Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Producers

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We, as a government, have to be able to balance a number of issues at one time. We can't deal with one issue at a time. So there are a number of things in play, and I don't know if the Member can keep up with all the things that are happening here or not.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Boo.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: I can suggest that while we are looking at creating a fair fiscal environment and a good balanced fiscal environment, we're also looking at resource revenue sharing.

Mr. Speaker, I have to say that Mr. Braden's implication in his statement earlier on that somehow creating this instability would somehow help us to make a better deal on resources revenue sharing at a time when the federal government is in an election, I just don't quite understand his reasoning there. I want to take this opportunity to assure all businesses, whether it's a big pipeline business, a diamond business, the mom-and-pop grocery store on the corner, that we, as a government, believe in a good, fair, balanced fiscal environment as being number one. If you don't have that, you don't have business, you don't have jobs and you don't have programs. So, Mr. Speaker, I don't follow Mr. Braden's logic. If there is one there, I don't follow what it is.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Boo.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, what we agreed to with Imperial is an agreement that said we are going to be fair. We are a responsible government that we're taking over through devolution responsibilities, and we're going to be fair with you in the same way we're fair with every other little business in the community. We're not going to hold you hostage or use you for a pawn to achieve some other objective we might have. We're responsible; we're fair; we're good government. We're not some banana republic. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Interjection

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Supplementary, Mr. Braden.

AN HON. MEMBER: That's it; the gloves are off.

Supplementary To Question 313-15(4): GNWT's 'Letter Of Comfort' To Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Producers

MR. BRADEN: I'll be putting in a requisition for a pair of new running shoes to make sure that I can keep up with this government and this Premier on the breakneck speed in which they fail, Mr. Speaker, to consult with us. This is a consensus government.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

MR. BRADEN: Consultation is an enormous need and an expectation that we have and that we're going to be able to do our job over here. But this was, among many, the greatest example, the worst example, Mr. Speaker, of how this government has failed to consult with the Members on this side.

There is a major policy position at stake here -- huge -- potentially affecting millions of dollars in future revenues. Why did the Premier and the Cabinet not consult with MLAs until hours before they released that letter?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Why?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 313-15(4): GNWT's 'Letter Of Comfort' To Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Producers

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hope Mr. Braden gets those running shoes, because he'll need them to keep up with us.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Ohhh.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I must say that, going right back to our strategic plan in the government, we talked about a strong economy and having a good fiscal environment. I hope the Member refers back to some of those documents. In terms of consensus government, that has been talked about for the last I don't know how many years; certainly the life of this government and the government before.

Mr. Speaker, we are working with industry, and, as I say, with all industry, not just the pipeline, but everybody to create that certainty. We've talked about it I don't know how many different occasions with all the Members. This doesn't come as any surprise. But we believe in a good fiscal environment. We also have to, as I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, keep these issues separate. We're not going to use somebody as a pawn to achieve something else. Our negotiations on resource revenue sharing are with the federal government, not with Imperial.

Mr. Speaker, I have to say, I am really heartened by the commitment that the Prime Minister-designate has made toward a devolution of those responsibilities to us and the fact that he has said that we should be the primary beneficiaries of the resource revenues, and he has also said that he believes in resolving that whole fiscal imbalance issue right across the country. But, Mr. Speaker, those are things that we're working on at the same time here. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Supplementary, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary To Question 313-15(4): GNWT's 'Letter Of Comfort' To Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Producers

MR. BRADEN: Yes, going to be wearing out lots of running shoes here, Mr. Speaker. Is it now official GNWT policy to give letters of comfort and certainty to all resource related projects that might come up in the future before having to talk with his colleagues on the other side here? Is this going to be the way we will continue now to develop letters of comfort, letters of certainty?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 313-15(4): GNWT's 'Letter Of Comfort' To Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Producers

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In terms of the principles in the letter, those are long understood and agreed to. Mr. Speaker, I have to again

remind the Member to check back in his notes. He will find that the Minister of Finance met with the committee before the letter went out. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Final supplementary, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary To Question 313-15(4): GNWT's 'Letter Of Comfort' To Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Producers

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, one of the terms of comfort that we offered was to say that it's the intention of the GNWT to maintain a post-devolution royalty regime for the three anchor gas fields. Now, we have always said, government has always said that First Nations' governments have got to be at the table whenever we talk devolution. Did we consult with the First Nations on this position? Did we compromise their interest by agreeing to lock in to royalty rates in a post-devolution environment?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 313-15(4): GNWT's 'Letter Of Comfort' To Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Producers

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, again I have to remind the Member that the Aboriginal Summit has been in existence for years. There are ongoing discussions with them on resource revenue sharing. There are bilateral discussions between them and us. There are trilateral discussions between them, us and the federal government. They are involved. They know our positions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 314-15(4): Respite Care Program

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It appears that we're strong with...We're starting with a bang in this first day of five weeks of session to come.

---Laughter

Mr. Speaker, my question, however, is to the Minister of Health and Social Services. It's in regards to the respite care program. Mr. Speaker, for many months and the number of years I've been here, there has been a call for the need, or speaking about the need, for the respite care program. We've finally got one in Yellowknife. It's being run by Abe Miller and the Association for Community Living. But, as far as I'm aware, it's a pilot program and the last time I asked questions to the Minister, he indicated that he was reviewing the program with the view of continuing it. So I'm wondering if the Minister would tell this House where he's at with that review process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 314-15(4): Respite Care Program

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The issue of respite care is an issue of concern for all communities. We have had a pilot here. It has been evaluated. It can be very successful. We put the funds forward to carry down towards the end of the fiscal year

and we are coming forward to continue the program and to look at expanding it outside of Yellowknife. That will be in the detail of the budget coming before this House. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 314-15(4): Respite Care Program

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that answer and the efforts that the Minister and the government are making in that regard. Mr. Speaker, as the Minister stated, there is a huge need for this, and I think Members on this side of the floor have been getting lots of calls from those parents or caregivers who are able to get some relief, which is what this program is meant to do, except I think there is an opening for about a dozen placements and there is a waiting list of probably five times longer, if not longer than that. It seems like there is no system in place to move these services along. I would think that once someone has a need, it doesn't really change. So I would like to know if the Minister has looked into how best to manage the programs, so that we serve as many people as possible but also give more people a chance to access that program. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 314-15(4): Respite Care Program

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member identifies some of the challenges that face us in the administration and delivery of this program, and we are working in Yellowknife to identify who will administer this and to identify the pool of available individuals who are willing and able to provide the respite service. So those are legitimate concerns and we are addressing those. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 314-15(4): Respite Care Program

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that we will probably have an opportunity to discuss this in detail as the days come along, but I am just wondering if the Minister could indicate to the House as to whether there were any programs under federal funding that he's aware of, or are we already accessing any federal money on that? The previous government in Ottawa spoke about homecare funding and I guess we need time to sort out all the promises and commitments by various parties, but could he indicate to the House about any federal funding available for this? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 314-15(4): Respite Care Program

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For this particular program, we are looking at and intend to access or make use of the territorial health access fund that was agreed to by the former federal government back in September 2004.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Final supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 314-15(4): Respite Care Program

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe this is a pilot program. It's running out of Yellowknife, but I have no doubt that this will have to expand to other communities. I am just wondering if the Minister could commit to this House to make this one of his priority issues to deal with his federal counterpart as soon as that person is known to advance this issue? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 314-15(4): Respite Care Program

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I have indicated in this House on previous occasions, this program is an important one and the intention is to move it outside of Yellowknife and provide the service as comprehensively as we can across the Northwest Territories. So, yes, we are eagerly waiting, as the Premier indicated, on the opportunity to find out who the new Ministers will be and we will be gathering and contacting them as soon as we can with a list. That particular item will be on that list. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

Question 315-15(4): Suicide Prevention

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Minister of Health and Social Services in relation to some suicide prevention and follow-up. I know that Stanton hospital is equipped with a psychiatric ward that deals with a lot of suicide cases in the NWT. I had an incident over the holidays, Mr. Speaker, about a person who tried to take their own life during the holidays and was quickly medevaced to the Stanton hospital, only to be returned to the community into the same volatile...that she just tried to get out of the very next morning; less than 24 hours flown back to the community and put into the same environment that they had just got out of. Can the Minister help me understand if this is the regular practice of the department, or are there any procedures in place that will require the person to stay either in the psychiatric ward or the hospital for at least a couple of days so they can look back and get some counselling and look at what the next steps can be? Can the Minister help me understand what the practice and the guidelines are for that today? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Return To Question 315-15(4): Suicide Prevention

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the practice is for the health professionals to be engaged as quickly as possible and to make their assessment on a case-by-case basis, then make their diagnosis and recommend a plan of action. I am not in a position to speak specifically to the issue or the case referenced by my colleague, but I could commit,

if he wants to discuss it further, to more specifically to check on the particulars of that case. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Supplementary, Mr. Villeneuve.

Supplementary To Question 315-15(4): Suicide Prevention

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would surely be willing to sit down with the Minister just to go through the details. I know when this event was unravelling, we are talking 10:00 p.m. at night to 8:00 a.m. in the morning. I don't know how the Department of Health and Social Services engages with the clients on a one-on-one basis or does a diagnosis in that time, especially if it's in the middle of the night and there is only a limited number of staff on board. I was wondering if there is a 24-hour process that allows these professionals to make a good diagnosis and actually help these people recover? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 315-15(4): Suicide Prevention

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is no specific time frame that I am aware of. The cases of the individuals/patients are assessed and determinations are made by the professionals dealing with that particular circumstance. So once again, I would have to find out more as to what transpired so that I could provide that information to the Member, so he could get a better understanding of all the circumstances that were at play and how it all came about and the sequence of events. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Supplementary, Mr. Villeneuve.

Supplementary To Question 315-15(4): Suicide Prevention

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just as a point of interest for the Minister, this isn't the first time that it's happened in my constituency. There have been other cases where there has been a quick turnaround and people are sent right back into the unstable environments that they try to get out of. None of them have received any follow-up, any counselling or any phone call from any doctor or psychiatrist that has done their diagnosis here in the city. So I just want to make a point that in smaller communities, they are getting lost in the bureaucratic system with suicide prevention and counselling. I just want to mention to the Minister that he should overlook and take a good review of the whole system and how it works in the small, remote centres. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. I didn't hear a question there. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for the Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Question 316-15(4): Sahtu Memorandum Of Understanding

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Minister of ITI, the Honourable Brendan Bell, with regard to the ongoing discussions with the Sahtu Secretariat. We settled our land claim in 1993 and there is

a chapter in our agreement on economic measure with regard to government services and programs and contracts. There are provisions in there to look at exploring that chapter more diligently. I want to ask him for an update on that specific chapter and the Sahtu Secretariat. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 316-15(4): Sahtu Memorandum Of Understanding

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think Members know by policy decision of this government, we engaged with the Gwich'in to sit down and talk about an MOU that would see the GTC represent companies in the Gwich'in settlement region and there would be targets for procurement in that region. At the same time, we made the commitment some years ago in the past government to do likewise in the Sahtu region. We have now sat down to start these discussions with SSI, who will be the umbrella group representing the MOU. We have provided them with a contribution to sit down and do some policy development work and also identify beneficiary companies. So we are into this now and have started those discussions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

Supplementary To Question 316-15(4): Sahtu Memorandum Of Understanding

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, would the discussions and the MOU would be honoured as long as the agreement is still in force with the federal government and the territorial government in terms of MOUs, as long as this agreement should last within our lifetime? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 316-15(4): Sahtu Memorandum Of Understanding

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as a government we've made the policy decision to pursue an agreement in the Sahtu region. I have spoken in this House about our commitment to conclude an agreement. You have the Premier's word that we would pursue an agreement. We are doing so and we will stick to that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Question 317-15(4): GNWT's 'Letter Of Comfort' To Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Producers

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in follow-up to Mr. Braden's questions today, I would like to ask the Premier some questions about this letter of comfort that he provided just so that there is clarity about it, because I don't think the public knows too much about it. As the Premier indicated, it was brought to our attention prior to it going out. My reaction to it at the time was Imperial Oil and the producers were asking about certainty and comfort on taxation, royalties about

the future and going ahead with their project. I would like to ask the Premier, do we set the royalties that are going to be paid by gas producers in the Mackenzie Valley? Do we have control over the Crown lands over which the pipeline is going to run to assess taxes to the proponents? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 317-15(4): GNWT's 'Letter Of Comfort' To Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Producers

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, we don't set the royalties and, no, we don't have authority over the Crown lands. But what the company wanted before they invested \$7 or \$8 billion was to know what was going to happen post devolution. Were we going to be ambushing them with some weird and expensive royalty regime? They wanted some certainty. What were we going to do post devolution? That is the context in which we answered the question. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 317-15(4): GNWT's 'Letter Of Comfort' To Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Producers

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's nice to know that the industry has such confidence that we are going to actually get devolution in our lifetime.

---Applause

I want to ask the Premier also, the letter that he wrote and signed, I would like to know if it's binding on future governments. Is it binding on aboriginal governments? Is it binding on the federal government? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 317-15(4): GNWT's 'Letter Of Comfort' To Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Producers

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, no. This is a letter of comfort. This is not a contract or something that is binding on a future government. We make it very clear in the letter that there is nothing in this letter that should be construed to somehow fetter the discretion of future governments, nor does it fetter the discretion of aboriginal governments. It's a letter of comfort saying here is what the government of today's position is with regard to a stable fiscal environment. That's as far as it goes. It's not fettering this one. It is certainly subject to any legislation that we may pass here. That was clear in the letter and in the discussions leading to the letter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 317-15(4): GNWT's 'Letter Of Comfort' To Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Producers

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, then, to the assumption that somehow we were giving away the farm

with this letter of comfort, I sort of fail to see what we have actually given them. I think the letter has integrity and it has intention attached to it, but I don't think it's like a province that sold their power to the U.S. -- a certain province we know -- for years to come. They are going to be stuck with an agreement forever. I don't think it's anything like that. So in an effort, then, to clarify how this letter was interpreted or responded to by the Producers Group, I just wish the Premier could put it in context in terms of our intentions, their intentions and how this might have propelled them to go ahead with their hearing process. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 317-15(4): GNWT's 'Letter Of Comfort' To Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Producers

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, when Imperial and its partners invest \$7.5 billion, that's a lot of money. It's enough money to run our whole government for seven years. When they invest that much money in one project, they want to get as much comfort as possible on a bunch of fronts. One of them includes the federal government and they've been negotiating with the federal government on that and they had a letter of comfort with the federal government for some outstanding issues. They also realized that we are negotiating devolution and resource revenue sharing. We will become more province-like within the life of this pipeline if not before the pipeline. They realize that is going to happen. So they want some comfort from this current government on where do we stand. Do we have some plan to somehow levy some tax on them? We made it clear to them that this is not binding on anybody. This is not a contract. It is simply a letter of comfort to say we are responsible, we are grown up, we will be fair to you, we will be fair to everybody. We believe municipalities will be fair when they levy municipal taxes, and we believe aboriginal governments will be fair when they negotiate fees for crossing their land. Mr. Speaker, this is simply a letter of comfort. I don't understand some people who see bogeymen around every corner who are afraid that this letter of comfort is somehow...Mr. Speaker, I realize the Member who asked the question understands what this means as a letter of comfort. That's all it provides. It's not binding as a contract. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Item 6, oral questions. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 8: RETURNS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, I am in receipt of returns to written questions 6-15(4), 8-15(4), 9-15(4), 12-15(4), 13-15(4), 14-15(4), 15-15(4), 17-15(4), 18-15(4) and 19-15(4). Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Return To Written Question 6-15(4): Taskforce On Year-End Expenditures

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Hawkins on October 12, 2005, regarding a task force on year-end expenditures.

I will not be establishing a task force to review year-end spending by departments. However, I do share the Member's concerns and have sent a letter to all Ministers

directing them to ensure departments monitor and control discretionary spending during the last quarter of the fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Return To Written Question 8-15(4): Access To Special Needs Funding

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Ms. Lee on October 14, 2005, regarding access to special needs support.

1. How much money, on a year-by-year basis, has been allocated for special needs funding for the last five years for the NWT as a whole?

The total amount of inclusive schooling funding allocated in the years 2000 to 2005 was as follows: \$9.079 million in 2000-01; \$11.336 million in 2001-02; \$15.266 million in 2002-03; \$15.937 million in 2003-04; and \$16.817 million in 2004-05.

2. What is the breakdown each divisional education council/district education authority received for this funding for special needs over the same time period on a yearly basis?

Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table statistics on the amount of inclusive schooling funding that each DEC/DEA received annually in the past five years.

3. What is the criteria set out to determine how students with special needs qualify for special needs support?

Students qualify for support when a combination of assessment information, student performance indicators, parental information and/or other information indicates that a student requires either short-term remediation, an individual education plan, or program enhancement for the gifted student.

Sometimes specific conditions have been identified -- for example, dyslexia or spina bifida, hearing or sight impairments -- that warrant specific supports. However, many other students also need supports. For example, a new Canadian who does not speak English may attend English as a second language class, or a student whose parents do not read and are unable to help with homework may get help in homework as and when necessary.

A student in the NWT does not require a formal diagnosis or label in order to qualify for supports. This is because standardized assessments are often inappropriate for NWT students who are not represented by the norm group. While formal diagnoses are desirable, they are not mandatory once information is available to show what supports are needed.

4. What is the process used to determine who among our student population have special needs and require additional support?

The process used to determine which students have special needs and require additional supports is as outlined in point three above.

5. Please provide all ministerial directives issued in this regard.

Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table the departmental directive on inclusive schooling 1996.

The directive recognizes the importance of allowing all children equal access to education programs in their home communities with their peers. It also recognizes the importance of school/home/community partnerships that are required to offer relevant education programs. The directive is currently under review with the involvement of the education authorities across the NWT. Implementation is planned for the beginning of the 2006-07 school year.

6. What is the number of students who require special needs support in our school system at the current time?

According to the last student support needs assessment in 2000, six students out of 10 were receiving at least one type of support in their schooling. This number includes students receiving a broad range of supports as mentioned in question three above.

The number of students with identified specific conditions in the school system was 800 students, or 8.3 percent of the school population in 2000. The department conducts periodic needs assessments because the student population changes slowly, over a period of several years.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Return To Written Question 9-15(4): NWT Emergency Measures

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Yakeleya on October 14, 2005, regarding NWT Emergency Measures.

Mr. Yakeleya asked what departments are involved in the Emergency Measures Act.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs is given the authority under the Civil Emergency Measures Act to approve the Northwest Territories Emergency Plan, and designate various territorial and federal government departments with emergency responsibilities related to their mandates.

The Government of the Northwest Territories departments designated with emergency responsibilities under the Northwest Territories emergency plan are: Municipal and Community Affairs, Health and Social Services, Financial Management Board Secretariat, Executive, Environment and Natural Resources, Transportation, Public Works and Services, and Justice.

The federal government departments designated under the Northwest Territories emergency plan are: Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Border Services Agency, Parks Canada Agency, Environment Canada, Fisheries and Oceans, Human Resources and Skills Development, Indian and Northern Affairs, Industry, Public Works and Government Services, and Transport Canada.

Mr. Yakeleya also asked who in the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs takes the lead role.

Mr. Speaker, the deputy minister of Municipal and Community Affairs is appointed as the emergency measures officer by the Minister under the act, and takes the lead role for emergency management within the Government of the Northwest Territories. To assist the deputy minister in fulfilling these responsibilities, Municipal and Community Affairs has established two

emergency management positions; one to support community emergency planning and response, and one to coordinate territorial emergency planning and response. As well, regional superintendents in each regional office play an active role in emergency planning and response in their respective regions.

Mr. Yakeleya also asked how often are the emergency measures policy guidelines updated.

Mr. Speaker, like most legislation and government policy, the Civil Emergency Measures Act and the policies associated with the act are not updated frequently. The department, however, is currently considering changes to the disaster assistance policy, and is also preparing to begin a comprehensive review of the Civil Emergency Measures Act. The increased national concern of terrorist attacks and the passage of the federal government's new national security policy have necessitated the review of the Civil Emergency Measures Act.

Mr. Yakeleya also asked how many times does the staff meet with the communities.

Mr. Speaker, the regional superintendent, on average, visits each Sahtu community once every two months. These visits are usually at the request of the community government. Regional staff also visit each community in the Sahtu approximately once every three months. During these visits, Municipal and Community Affairs' staff meet with the community council or staff members to discuss their issues, priorities and concerns in program areas such as capital planning, recreation, land administration, fire protection/emergency measures and council and staff training. During the floor emergency of 2005 in Fort Good Hope, Municipal and Community Affairs' staff visited the community five times. The community emergency management coordinator, whose position is located in Yellowknife, provides advice and support to regional staff and also meets with communities upon request to provide training or hands-on assistance during an emergency.

Mr. Yakeleya also asked how communities are categorized in the emergency measures.

Mr. Speaker, communities are categorized as local authorities under the Civil Emergency Measures Act and, as such, are the first level of government responsible for responding to emergencies. The act outlines the authority and responsibility of community governments for emergency preparedness and response.

Finally, Mr. Yakeleya asked if there are any territorial-wide emergency measures action plans to deal with territorial-wide issues.

Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories emergency plan is the Government of the Northwest Territories' plan for responding to territory-wide emergencies. The Northwest Territories emergency plan guides the Government of the Northwest Territories emergency operations when the Government of the Northwest Territories responds to an emergency, supports a community government's or lead agency's response to an emergency, or is called upon as part of a response to a national emergency.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Return To Written Question 12-15(4): Impaired Driving Day

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Yakeleya on October 18, 2005, regarding the Impaired Driving Day.

There are currently over 500 schools nationally that participate in the National Students Against Impaired Driving Day. In the Northwest Territories, St. Patrick's High School participated in this year's events. This Students Against Drunk Driving chapter, which has been operating for over 10 years, has been a strong voice for responsible behaviour and for measures to step up the fight against impaired driving. The Department of Transportation made an in-kind contribution of banners to the high school.

From 2000 to 2004, only the Inuvik region reported alcohol-related motor vehicle collision fatalities. During that period, five of 11 fatalities were alcohol related, which is approximately 45 percent of the total. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Return To Written Question 13-15(4): Seniors' Facilities

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Ramsay on October 18, 2005, regarding seniors' facilities.

The Deline seniors' facility was constructed in partnership with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation in 1993 at a cost of \$2.56 million. The 16 unit complex contains 10 independent living suites and six extended care suites. Currently, six of the 10 independent living suites are occupied. The average vacancy rate for these suites is 80 percent. The extended care suites are currently being rented out to a preschool group.

The Fort Resolution seniors' facility was constructed in 1996 at a cost of \$1.69 million. The Fort Resolution seniors' facility consists of a main building with four units and six satellite units. All six of the satellite units are fully occupied and two out of four of the units in the main building are occupied. The historic occupancy rate can be estimated at approximately 80 percent.

The seniors' facility in Tuktoyaktuk was construction in 2001 at a cost of \$1.99 million. The 11 unit Tuktoyaktuk seniors' facility is currently occupied by five elders and one caretaker. There may be other elders that may potentially move in to fill some of the vacant units; however, any moves by elders will not take place until the spring when it is warmer. There has been reluctance by seniors in Tuktoyaktuk, who have lived in and raised their families in detached public housing, to move into the new facility. They have lived in detached public housing for many years and consider the units as their family homes. An estimate for the historic occupancy rate is not available for this facility.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Return To Written Question 14-15(4): Market Housing Initiative

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mrs. Groenewegen on October 18, 2005, regarding the market housing initiative.

In response to Mrs. Groenewegen's request, the cost of the market housing initiative is detailed as follows:

Phase 1: \$2.75 million

Phase 2: \$1.65 million

Monthly cost of maintaining vacant units:

- Fort Good Hope: \$655
- Fort Liard: \$535
- Fort Providence: \$565
- Lutselk'e: \$570

The corporation has acquired 44 housing units in the last two years with the intention of providing market housing to communities in need. Twenty-two modular units were purchased in 2004-05 with 20 of the units currently occupied: 15 units rented under the Market Housing Program, two units rented under the Supported Lease Program, three units sold, and two units vacant at this time.

The rented units are occupied as follows:

- 15 essential service suppliers occupy 11 units;
- a total of three GNWT program clients occupy three units;
- a total of two community government employees occupy two units;
- a total of one other community resident occupies one unit; and
- a total of 25 educational service provides occupy 24 other market housing units.

For 2005-06, a further 22 units are being constructed. Ten new duplexes and two units being transferred from public housing. These units are in the final stages of completion with only one rented at this time.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Return To Written Question 15-15(4): Mental Health Treatment

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Braden on October 19, 2005, regarding mental health treatment.

The Territorial Treatment Centre and Trailcross provide specialized services for youth in the Northwest Territories. In fiscal year 2004-05, each facility operated eight beds at a cost of \$1.160 million and \$1.305 million respectively.

Southern residential placements provided specialized services for 27 children in fiscal year 2004-05 at a cost of \$1.227 million.

There are four southern programs or institutions that provide specialized services for adults that are not available in the NWT. They are Mental Health -- AB Hospital Edmonton -- Specialized Mental Health Services, Not Criminally Responsible Clients Programs, and Behavioural/Residential Programs.

In fiscal year 2004-05, 52 adults received one of these services at a total cost of \$3.832 million. As of early November 2005, 41 adults were receiving these services at a total cost of \$2.125 million.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Return To Written Question 17-15(4): Treaty-Land Claim School Instruction

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Yakeleya on October 25, 2005, regarding treaty/land claim school instruction.

1. What are the grade levels in the Sahtu schools where students are taught about treaties 8 and 11 and the Sahtu land claim?

Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table a document including a chart of Sahtu schools and what they are teaching about Dene history throughout the kindergarten to Grade 12 levels. In particular, the chart will provide information on the NWT Social Studies curriculum for grades 4, 5, 6, 7 and 9 levels including a requirement to teach about treaties 8 and 11 in Northern Studies.

In the Northern Studies 10 curriculum, treaties and land claims make up one complete module of the course, with the option for teachers and students to expand the students' exploration in the topics noted in the table within a second module.

2. What is the percentage of the courses on treaties or land claims that are taught per grade?

This question relates to teaching practice in the classroom and the amount of time spent on these topics. Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table a chart identifying the amount of time allocated by community school. Percentages are approximates as the time spent on these topics varies depending on the manner in which the subject is taught.

3. Can the department list the resources/documents that are used in teaching the students about the treaties or the land claim in Sahtu schools?

The department provides resources and documents produced to support both the study and actual teaching of the treaties and individual land claims. The department has provided all schools with the NWT History Timeline and Teaching Resource that has a component devoted to treaties 8 and 11. The Education, Culture and Employment web site -- <http://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/> -- includes many documents that teachers and resource persons can use in preparing to teach about treaties and the Sahtu land claims. In addition, schools have found the resources listed in a table that, later today, at the appropriate time, I will table.

4. Who are the teachers or community members used in teaching the treaties or the land claim in Sahtu schools?

Schools and communities choose the appropriate resource people to help teachers and students explore issues such as land claims and treaties. Teachers involve elders and other community resources in conjunction with the curriculum as noted in a chart that later today, at the appropriate time, I will table. In addition, teachers are planning to invite speakers including the chief negotiator for the self-government negotiations in Deline, the chief in Tulita, staff from local Dene and Metis organizations and other experts including elders.

5. How much of the social studies content is on the Treaty 11 and the Sahtu land claims?

The school curriculum includes references to Treaty 11. Teachers can explore issues of significance to their communities including study of the treaties.

According to the revision of the social studies curriculum for grades K to 12 that is currently underway, references to specific treaties are likely to be made in all schools at the grade 4, 5, 7, 9 and 11 levels.

6. How many elders in the Sahtu have been invited to Aurora College, our learning centres, or our schools as professors or instructors specifically to provide instruction on aboriginal courses?

Elders are regularly invited to Aurora College community learning centres, other college institutions and to schools. Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table information on the inclusion of elders who share their knowledge and expertise, traditional and otherwise. Numbers refer to all elders involved locally at the college and/or school levels, unless specified otherwise.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Return To Written Question 18-15(4): Adult Literacy

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Lafferty on October 25, 2005, regarding adult literacy in the NWT.

1. Could the Minister tell me how much funding went to adult literacy basic education through Aurora College?

In the years 2004-05 and 2005-06 the Department of Education, Culture and Employment contributed \$4.1 million per year to Aurora College for adult literacy and basic education. This includes \$700,000 in Literacy Strategy funding.

2. How much did Aurora College actually spend on the Literacy Strategy for each community last year?

In 2004-05, Aurora College spent \$700,000 in Literacy Strategy funds for ALBE in the communities. At the appropriate time today, I will table a breakdown of ALBE spending by community. The Literacy Strategy funds are directed primarily to communities that previously lacked funding for adult basic education programs.

3. Can the Minister give an explanation for the enrolment data to include completion rates in the Adult Basic Education Program for 2004-05 by community?

In 2004-05, 38 percent of the 651 ALBE students enrolled in Aurora College courses completed their course levels. Included in the tabled information I have referred to earlier, is a complete breakdown of ALBE enrolments and percentage completion rates. Completion rates for ALBE programming have historically been highly variable and are dependent on a range of factors.

4. Can the Minister provide information on total budget allocation for various literacy funds under the Literacy Strategy, and the amount each community receives through the various literacy funds available through the strategy?

Funding for community literacy is accessible through the community literacy development fund administered by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. The total NWT Literacy Strategy budget allocation for 2005-06 was \$2.460 million. I have included a breakdown of literacy funding allocations by community in the information I am tabling today.

5. Can the Minister provide information on what has been done to follow up on the recommendation of the internal evaluation of the NWT Literacy Strategy and the government's response to the recommendations on the internal evaluation?

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Aurora College and other partners have been working diligently to address the recommendations presented by the NWT Literacy Strategy interim evaluation.

And evaluation of the Literacy Strategy is scheduled for spring 2006. The recommendations presented in the interim evaluation will be utilized as a starting point for this evaluation, which will result in the development of a revised and renewed Literacy Strategy for the NWT.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Return To Written Question 19-15(4): ATCO/Novel Housing Project

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Ms. Lee on October 25, 2005, regarding the ATCO Novel housing project.

- Q. Given that the NWT Housing Corporation has been actively engaged in the negotiations with the federal government and ATCO Novel housing project in Calgary, Alberta, when would the Minister provide the detailed plan on the entire Novel housing project and discussion?

There are a number of key prerequisites to the Novel initiative becoming a reality. First and foremost, there must be a pipeline project. Second, ATCO must be the successful supplier of workforce housing and Mackenzie gas project must accept the Novel product as meeting its workforce housing needs. Third, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation must agree to contribute over \$90 million to the project. Finally, MGP must agree to release the workforce housing at the end of pipeline construction at no cost.

To date, there have been extensive discussions with ATCO to ensure the housing product meets or exceeds Housing Corporation standards and can be cost effectively converted to quality permanent homes. There have also been extensive discussions with CMHC to secure their commitment to providing critical financial assistance to the project. There have only been preliminary discussions with Imperial Oil Ltd. as they have been reluctant to engage in full discussions until they make a decision on proceeding to the next stage of the pipeline project. Although the Government of the Northwest Territories has been very active in promoting the Novel initiative, we are at a stage where many questions still exist. As a result, a detailed plan such as you request is not practical at this point in the process. However, a status report and discussion with the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight and/or the

Standing Committee on Social Programs could occur at either or both committees' convenience.

In 2005, a proposal was submitted to then federal Minister responsible for Labour and Housing, the Honourable Joseph Frank Fontana, to ensure a funding commitment from the federal government.

Following a positive response from the federal government, and an announcement by MGP to proceed with the next stage of the pipeline project, implementation planning and consultations can commence in earnest.

The implementation planning process will take place over several years as it will involve consultations with communities, aboriginal groups and self-governments, labour, northern business and manufacturers. As the earliest availability for the conversion of Novel homes in communities appears to be 2011, it is our intention to use this time to the fullest extent possible to complete a comprehensive implementation plan. This time frame will provide northern business and industry with the opportunity to participate fully in the economic benefits that will be derived from this project here in the NWT.

Q: What is the budget breakdown of this project in terms of who is paying for what: How much is the federal government paying; how much is the territorial government payment; how much is ATCO paying?

The recent proposal to the federal government provides an estimated breakdown of project financing. As noted earlier, this initiative is premised on being able to level the MGP's investment in workforce housing for pipeline construction. The goal is to have MGP fully depreciate its investment in workforce housing over the construction period and release the workforce housing at the end of construction at no cost. The budget breakdown is as follows:

CMHC contribution - \$119 million
GNWT contribution - \$116 million
Private purchasers - \$62 million

Total project funding - \$297 million

How much of the final cost to purchasers will be assumed by GNWT versus private homeowners depends on the demand for the units and the ability of private purchasers to finance the cost. Obviously, the lower the capital cost to home buyers, the more units will be privately purchased and the fewer the GNWT will purchase for public housing purposes. Currently, we are estimating that 50 percent of the units will be privately purchased. The fundamental goal of this initiative is to provide quality affordable homes to meet the critical housing needs of non-market communities. Although there will be over \$220 million of economic activity available for NWT businesses in the lot development and conversion process, the end goal of affordable housing cannot be compromised. Without this approach there is no way the GNWT could deliver 1,420 homes in this time frame at this cost and make such a substantial dent in critical housing needs.

Q. How is the territorial government going to fund its portion of the project?

Based on the assumptions contained in the proposal to CMHC, the net cost to the GNWT is currently estimated at \$116 million. This cost will go up or down, depending on the number of units sold to private purchasers. Some of this cost can be funded from within the Housing

Corporation's existing funding level, but some of it will require new financing. Given the substantial cost-benefit of this approach and the dramatic improvement in community housing that will be achieved, it is proposed that any net cost will be a wise investment well within the Housing Corporation's and the GNWT's financing ability.

Q. What impact would this have on other NWT Housing Corporation projects?

The proposed project will not have a negative impact on the Housing Corporation's program delivery. As the Novel units would not become available until 2011, the existing housing program and investments will continue in the interim. The infusion of homes through this project will allow us to make significant reductions in core housing need levels across the NWT after pipeline completion.

Q. Have the NWT Construction Association, NWT Chamber of Commerce, or NWT Association of Communities and other aboriginal governments been given such a public plan for discussion with their constituents? If not, when would they be?

Aboriginal leaders from across the NWT have been actively engaged in the Novel initiative. Over 30 northern leaders have toured the ATCO plant and the Novel show home to demonstrate the quality of construction and the quality of the end product. Community and aboriginal acceptance of the Novel product is seen as critical to the success of this initiative. The Housing Corporation, ATCO and the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation have been working on a pilot project using the Novel product.

Assuming commitments are made from the MGP to proceed with the pipeline project and the federal government makes a positive commitment on our recent funding proposal, the Housing Corporation will begin to work actively with the MGP group on the workforce housing component of the pipeline project. Consultations will also commence with communities on lot and infrastructure requirements, and with the business and manufacturing sector on how they can take advantage of the \$220 million of local economic activity that will be provided by the Novel project. There will be more than enough work and opportunity to go around. In fact, our largest concern is with the capacity of the northern business community to meet the needs of the project.

Q. How does this ATCO Novel housing project plan include involvement of northern buildings and suppliers, not only on how to take part in the ATCO Novel housing project, but on other options that could be available for the \$220 million plus housing project?

The Novel home represents a very significant opportunity for northern business, suppliers, contractors, manufacturers, labour and skilled trades and transportation companies. It is expected that the conversion work required to complete the home will be done in the communities with northern workers using materials supplied through northern companies. The Novel home features that will be completed in the communities include: completion of interior sheet rock walls, doors and trim; crack filling, sanding and painting; installation of new bathroom fixtures; installation of new kitchen cabinets; installation of new flooring throughout; installation of heating systems; electrical fixtures; exterior skirting; exterior steps; water and sewage tanks.

Every component of the conversion process represents an opportunity for northern business and labour. The Housing Corporation fully expects this project will attract a

lot of interest from both business and labour. It should be noted, however, that we are still in the early stages of this process. If we have a commitment from industry that it is proceeding with the gas pipeline and we receive a positive commitment from the federal government, we will then be in a position to discuss with northern business the very significant business opportunities that will be generated by the Novel project.

- Q. What other options have been considered for how to spend \$220 million plus housing investment and meet the social housing needs of the North, other than going with the ATCO Novel housing, and what cost-benefit analysis has been done on them?

It is the unique opportunity represented by the pipeline project that makes it possible to create 1,420 new homes in northern communities. In this sense, this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity made possible by leveraging the significant capital investment in workforce housing being made by industry. This capital investment gives this project a head start over traditional stick-built approaches. Another unique feature of this project is the significant conversion component built into each home, which will generate employment and business opportunities.

Generally speaking, stick-built homes are more expensive, resulting in fewer homes and a slower pace in dealing with core need problems and satisfying future population growth and demand. Manufactured homes, though more affordable than stick-built, are still more expensive than the Novel home and do not represent the same level of economic activity for northern business and labour. Manufactured homes are often categorized as "trailers" in the North. The Novel home is not a trailer. It is an attractive, quality built two or three-bedroom home of approximately 1,378 square feet.

Novel home features include: durable metal roofs; R40 insulation; wood soffit; built up wood beam support; durable exterior wall construction; drywall interior; stipple ceilings; 1.75 bathrooms; modern kitchen area; energy-efficient exterior windows and doors. The Novel home represents extensive opportunities for local labour and business.

- Q. How does this ATCO Novel plan include training opportunities for northern labour in northern communities, in what communities, in what regions, how many people, and how?

The training and capacity development component of this project will be developed as we proceed further with the implementation planning process. We view this as an important aspect of this project and have received assurances from ATCO that they will support training for northern labour. The locations will be determined as the planning process continues.

- Q. How does this plan include meaningful partnerships with other departments and agencies such as Aurora College, Department of ITI, Transportation and others, as well as the construction and building industries in the North? Please explain their roles in detail.

The size of this project required interdepartmental coordination and planning at the government level, and consultations with business, communities and labour. The Housing Corporation supports this approach. Following commitments to proceed by the MGP and the federal government, the Housing Corporation will submit to the GNWT a proposal to structure an interdepartmental

working group to facilitate the planning and the implementation of the project.

- Q. What work has been done with municipal governments and aboriginal governments to ensure a cooperative partnership regarding land development?

The role of municipal and aboriginal governments in the development of Novel homes is extremely important, particularly so in the development of suitable building lots and subdivisions. It is our intention to consult actively with all community government bodies through the NWT as soon as it is determined the gas project is proceeding and the funding from the federal government is available.

- Q. Is there an inventory or plan on how the government will find 1,400 lots for those mobile units to be placed on?

The Housing Corporation continues to work on community lot inventories for all its program delivery requirements. MACA, as well, has a database with lot information per community. It is clear, however, that a lot of work will need to be completed in identifying and developing suitable building lots to accommodate the 1,420 new homes. The current proposal calls for investment in lot development to commence 24 months before the arrival of the housing units in the communities. This will leave time for zoning subdivision development and infrastructure investments to be made.

- Q. Has there been any survey or means for input from the potential tenants to gauge the interest or support for this mega project?

As mentioned earlier, over 30 community and aboriginal leaders have toured the ATCO plant and Novel demonstration home. Plans are underway to field test the conversion process and to place show homes in select -- central -- northern communities. Marketing materials are being developed. The Housing Corporation has not as of this date surveyed residents to gauge interest in the Novel home. However, the 2004 NWT community survey revealed 2,260 households in core need in the NWT. According to the NWT Bureau of Statistics, approximately 1,600 new homes will be needed to satisfy incremental population growth and further overcrowding in NWT communities between 2005 and 2014.

- Q. How much money would it cost the proponents of the pipeline project Novel housing, whoever is responsible, to pay for the removal of the campsite trailers if they had to move them after use and not be turned into Novel housing units?

Estimates for the removal cost of traditional workforce housing dorms from the NWT following completion of the pipeline by the MGP are \$25 million.

- Q. The Minister indicated in this House that he expects to move 100 mobile units a year. Given that estimation, it would take at least 14 years to move 1,400 units. Where would these units be stored in the interim and secured and protected from the elements and potential vandalism?

We estimate Novel home delivery and conversions will begin in 2011 and be completed by 2014. We estimate delivering 460 to 470 per year. Implementation planning will also take into account work camp decommissioning schedules. The timing for delivery of Novel homes to communities will take into account the decommissioning schedule. This will support delivery efficiencies and reduce handling and storage requirements. In this

respect, the need for security requirements will be reduced as work camp security will remain in place until the completion of the decommissioning process.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to opening address. Item 10, petitions. Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

ITEM 12: REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON THE REVIEW OF BILLS

Bill 13: An Act To Amend The Financial Administration Act

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, I wish to report to the Assembly that the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight has reviewed Bill 13, An Act to Amend the Financial Administration Act, and wishes to report that Bill 13 is ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Bill 14: Public Airports Act

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to report to the Assembly that the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development has reviewed Bill 14, Public Airports Act, and wishes to report that Bill 14 is ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 76a-15(4): Inclusive School Funding 2000-2001 To 2004-2005

Tabled Document 76b-15(4): Educating All Our Children: Departmental Directive on Inclusive Schooling 1996

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have several documents to table. Further to my Return to Written Question 8-15(4), I wish to table the following document entitled Inclusive School Funding 2000-2001 to 2004-2005 and Educating All Our Children: Departmental Directive on Inclusive Schooling 1996.

Tabled Document 77-15(4): Treaty/Land Claim School Instruction

As well, Mr. Speaker, further to my Return to Written Question 17-15(4), I wish to table the following document entitled Treaty/Land Claim School Instruction.

Tabled Document 78-15(4): Adult Literacy Statistics

Mr. Speaker, further to my Return to Written Question 18-15(4), I wish to table the following document entitled Adult Literacy Statistics. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Item 13, tabling of documents. Mr. Clerk.

Tabled Document 79-15(4): Response To Petition 2-15(4)

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, I am in receipt of response to Petition 2-15(4) presented by Mr. Braden to the Legislative Assembly on October 19, 2005. The response is from Minister Miltenberger.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Tabled Document 80-15(4): Medical Supply Purchases

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two documents to table today. The first one is a letter from the Minister of Health and Social Services addressed to me regarding medical supply purchases.

Tabled Document 81-15(4): GNWT Supports The Mackenzie Gas Project

The second item I have today to table is the comfort letter written by our Premier, Mr. Joe Handley, and also signed by our Finance Minister, Mr. Floyd Roland. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Item 13, tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

ITEM 14: NOTICES OF MOTION

Motion 12-15(4): Provisional Rule Changes To Implement Designated Budget Days

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Friday, February 3, 2006, I will move the following motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Frame Lake, that "designated budget days" be implemented on a provisional basis; and further that Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of each week be "designated budget days;" and further that the House shall commence sitting at 11:00 a.m. on "designated budget days;" and further that the time of adjournment on "designated budget days" shall be 6:00 p.m.; and further that notwithstanding Rule 34(6), the time allotted for Ministers' statements on "designated budget days" shall not exceed 10 minutes; and further that notwithstanding Rule 38(4), on "designated budget days," when a Minister answers an oral question, only two supplementary questions per Member directly related to the same subject may be asked; and further that notwithstanding Rule 27(2), the daily order of business in the Assembly on "designated budget days" be amended on a provisional basis to remove the items: replies to opening address, reports of standing and special committees, and motions; and further that notwithstanding Rule 4(1), the House shall not sit on Friday, February 17, 2006; and furthermore that the "designated budget days" provisional rules be effective Monday, February 6, 2006, until the prorogation of the Fourth Session.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motion for first

reading of bills. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Roland.

ITEM 15: NOTICES OF MOTION FOR FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 18: Appropriation Act, 2006-2007

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Friday, February 3, 2006, I will move that Bill 18, Appropriation Act, 2006-2007, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Item 15, notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters. Item 20, report of Committee of the Whole. Item 21, third reading of bills. Item 22, Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, orders of the day for Thursday, February 2, 2006, at 1:30 p.m.:

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

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Thursday, February 2, 2006, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 15:24 p.m.

