



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Thursday, March 2, 2006****Members Present**

Honourable Brendan Bell, Mr. Braden, Honourable Charles Dent, 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

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Members, it is again my duty to advise the House of the unavoidable absence of both our honourable Speaker and Deputy Speaker. Therefore, pursuant to section 48 of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, I will now entertain a motion to appoint an acting Speaker. Mr. Menicoche.

Motion To Elect Acting Speaker, Carried

MR. MENICOCHE: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Frame Lake, that the Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay, be appointed Acting Speaker for the remainder of the session.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? I will now ask Mr. Ramsay to assume the chair as Acting Speaker.

---Carried

---Applause

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, colleagues. Orders of the day. Ministers' statements.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**Minister's Statement 88-15(4): International Women's Day And Wise Women Awards**

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon. Countries around the world will celebrate International Women's Week from Sunday, March 5 to Saturday, March 11, 2005, with the highlight being International Women's Day on March 8th.

There are many challenges in our work to advance women's equality. Through the dedication and commitment of organizations such as the Status of Women Council, Native Women's Association, the NWT Coalition Against Family Violence and a large number of dedicated people, much good work has taken place. We have seen the development and implementation of the NWT Family Violence Action Plan, increased participation by people from many communities in the Women's Voice in Leadership initiative and increased awareness of the importance of women's active participation in economic development.

It is incumbent on this government to ensure that we continue to support women in their work towards equality. Our government remains committed to work alongside the Status of Women Council, Native Women's Association, the NWT Coalition Against Family Violence and other groups and individuals in this important work.

Every year, the Status of Women Council of the NWT seeks nominations for the Wise Woman of the Year Awards. These awards are in recognition of the dedication and service women have given to their communities and regions. It is my privilege to recognize this year's recipients of the Wise Women Awards: Marie Speakman for the North Slave...

---Applause

...Eileen M. Koe for the Beaufort-Delta...

---Applause

...Tina Marie Gargan from the Deh Cho...

---Applause

...Laura Lennie for the Sahtu...

---Applause

and Louise Fraser for the South Slave.

---Applause

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate all the award winners and thank them for their dedication to improving the lives of women and families across the NWT.

On International Women's Day, March 8th, there will be a bread and roses luncheon here in the Great Hall when the Wise Women Awards will be presented. I welcome all of you to attend this special occasion and take the opportunity to personally congratulate these dedicated women of the North. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Ministers' statements. The honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

Minister's Statement 89-15(4): Post-Secondary Education And Skills

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to provide an update to Members on the National Summit on Post-Secondary Education and Skills I attended in Ottawa on February 24, 2006.

Mr. Speaker, in August 2005, the Council of the Federation recognized that governments, educational institutions and the private sector must work together to

develop and implement a plan for higher education and skills training for Canadians. Premiers McGuinty and Charest were tasked with convening a summit of stakeholders to examine key issues and challenges in post-secondary education and skills to help shape the development of the Canada-wide strategy.

The national summit, called Competing for Tomorrow, provided the opportunity to invite key stakeholders to participate in a variety of sessions. The NWT delegation included Brenda McDonald, executive director of Aboriginal Futures; Jay MacDonald, chairperson of the Apprenticeship, Trades and Occupations Certification Board; Yacub Adam, acting chairperson of Aurora College Board of Governors; Mike Vaydik, general manager of the NWT and Nunavut Chamber of Mines; and, Leon Lafferty, chairperson of the Mine Training Society. As you can see, this delegation is representative of key sectors including post-secondary education, apprenticeship and trades, mining, oil and gas development, and aboriginal human resource development.

At the summit in Ottawa, the NWT delegates participated in workshops where they expressed their perspectives and views on the challenges and needs of post-secondary education and skill development in the NWT. I would like to thank the five members of the NWT delegation for attending the summit and sharing the NWT points of view. This input, and that of the other stakeholders from across the country, will guide the Council of the Federation in developing a pan-Canadian strategy for post-secondary education and skills for Canada.

One of my colleagues stated during the summit that post-secondary education and skills are the engine that drives economic development. Nowhere is this more true than in the Northwest Territories where we have a great opportunity to build a sustainable future. It is my hope that a pan-Canadian strategy will:

- include approaches to close the gap in education levels between aboriginal citizens and the general population;
- address the need for the federal government to restore funding to at least the levels that they were in 1994-95; and
- provide options and solutions to address the shortage of skilled workers, especially in western Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the completion of the post-secondary education and skills strategy to help people ensure that northerners and all Canadians are well equipped to thrive in the 21st Century economy.

---Applause

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Premier Handley. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On Searching For Answers To Constituents Concerns

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have titled my Member's statement today, What do I Tell

Them? Sometimes in our duties as MLAs we receive many questions from constituents on the way our government does business. What do I tell them, Mr. Speaker, when the decisions in attitude puzzles even me? What do I tell family when they want to know why their mother and grandmother didn't return home? Do I tell them she was improperly transported when she came to Yellowknife for a medical appointment? What are we supposed to tell frontline workers and people needing treatment that a consultant says we don't need treatment centres when everyone in the regions knows we do? Who are we listening to? Is their opinion not important? They can tell us what works and what doesn't work. What are we supposed to tell our own frontline workers when they ask about the direction that the government is going? Do I tell them not to worry; a consultant from the United States knows what is best for us and will point us in the right direction?

Mr. Speaker, when my grandchild asks me about the decline of the caribou herds, do I tell him or her that our generation couldn't manage the herds well enough and that you and your generation may be out of luck? Then, he or she will ask me about the resources and all the money that left the territory and we have no money left from the royalties. I will have to be honest and say that we spent too much time disagreeing with each other while the gas flowed south and the money went to Ottawa.

Mr. Speaker, when I decided to run as an MLA, I told people that I would be honest with them. If I tell them that everything is okay today, Mr. Speaker, then I have broken that promise. Thank you.

---Applause

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

Member's Statement On Positive Working Relationship Of GNWT And Tlicho Government

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories represents everyone in the North and makes decisions that affect everyone on a daily basis. It is good for me to see, as a representative of the Monfwi riding, that the GNWT Cabinet meeting in Rae-Edzo on January 26th was a true success from our perspective.

While there, Cabinet met with the Tlicho Government, the executive council members, Grand Chief George Mackenzie, chiefs Leon Lafferty, Charlie Jim Nitsiza, Henry Gon and Charlie Football, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, the Tlicho agreement became law on August 4th of last year, 2005. Many of you have followed and observed the struggles of the Tlicho to get to that point. There are many things in that agreement that will take time for the government to come to grips with as we are the signatories.

Mr. Speaker, the meeting was a government-to-government meeting. It was very fruitful. They have made commitments to work closely together to see how the Tlicho Government can be implemented by both parties that both parties were committed to. Mr. Speaker, this goes to show that GNWT is very serious in recognizing the self-government and is willing to make the

agreement work in all of its intents and purposes. All the Cabinet Ministers were presented with cardholders decorated with the Tlicho logo, Mr. Speaker. This is our sign of give exchange. It has been part of our Tlicho tradition. I am proud to say that the meeting has benefited the cottage industry in my community.

Mr. Speaker, at this time, I want to thank the Cabinet for meeting in my home community which sends a strong message that the people in the small communities is what GNWT is all about. There is a continued positive working relationship between the GNWT and the Tlicho Government. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

ACTING SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Lafferty. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Member's Statement On WCB Assessment Rates For Quick Service Restaurants

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak today once again in support of the cause of the quick service restaurants in Yellowknife. As you are well aware, this issue has been on the front burner for a number of us, and I am not sure we are getting any closer to resolving and addressing some very real and legitimate concerns that these QSRs have. Make no mistake about it, Mr. Speaker; unless the WCB, the Minister and the governance council do something positive and do something soon, we risk putting some of these businesses out of business, Mr. Speaker. I am not going to let that happen. I appreciate the WCB's position that this is only a small group out of many businesses and that many of them are not complaining, but in public eyes, we are not here to speak about the happy clients we have. Thank goodness we get some of them once in a while. Our main task here is to be the voice of those small portions of our client groups who are most disadvantaged, the most grieved and the most frustrated. In this case, we have both the employers and injured workers in that area. I submit to you that the WCB Governance Council and the Minister have to step up to the plate on their behalf. The status quo is not working for them. We need a different look, different approach and different attitude. As it stands now, these QSRs are paying more than oil and gas well drillings, air transportation, trucking, public utilities, even forest fire, ambulance and rescue services. Some of them have seen a decrease of more than 25 percent. Yet the QSRs have seen a 25 percent increase for four years in a row. That is more than double during that time. No other group I can see has gone through such an increase at the same time.

Mr. Speaker, to top it off, I understand that the WCB is planning on moving the camp and industrial caterers into this subcategory, a category that is paying more than the QSR. This is going in the wrong direction, Mr. Speaker. There is no misconception on my part about what WCB is doing or not doing. Both the WCB Governance Council and the Minister have a choice of defending the status quo or doing something proactive and out of the box. I do hope that they will have the heart to do the latter and do it soon. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Members' statements. The honourable Member for the Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

Member's Statement On Hay River Reserve Kamba Carnival

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Spring has always been an important time in the North with our long and dark winters. Northerners, more than most people, are ready to celebrate the arrival of spring.

Historically, springtime festivities in the North have been an important social occasion when families, friends and neighbours join together, renew their ties and celebrate the return of the warm spring sun and the weather. That tradition continues today with spring carnivals being held in communities across the Northwest Territories. An important part of that tradition is the Kamba Carnival hosted by the K'atlodeeche First Nations on the Hay River Reserve. This annual spring celebration has been held for 23 years now, and I am pleased to announce that the festivities are getting underway once again today.

Since its humble beginnings, the Kamba Carnival has grown to become a popular and successful event. People from many other NWT communities and from other provinces come to enjoy themselves. This is an alcohol-free family oriented celebration that helps to foster the spirit of cross-cultural awareness. People from all ages are encouraged to test their northern skills in a variety of events including snowshoe races, tea boiling, axe throwing, log sawing, dog races, hand games, drum dances and talent shows. I extend an invitation to the Members here, and to northerners everywhere, to come to the Hay River Reserve this weekend and join in on the fun.

In recognizing this popular event, it is important to recognize the hard work and dedication of the organizers, the carnival committee who work year round to make the Kamba Carnival a success. It is not only the carnival committee but the many volunteers, the sponsors and the supporters who make it possible. I wish them all another very successful year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

ACTING SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. McLeod. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

Member's Statement On Acknowledging Accomplishments Of Nahendeh Constituents

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today, I would like to make special mention to the Nahendeh constituents. One to Debora McPherson for achieving over four years for certification in accounting. The past weekend, I had the distinction of watching the mixed adult broomball team that came second in the NWT broomball championships. After 17 years, we have achieved a medal there. As well, I watched the 16 and under Thomas Simpson school wolf pack basketball team that earned silver in the prestigious cager annual basketball tournament. I just want to add that Teyan Menicoche was most valuable player. If you recall, he was a Page here two weeks ago. As well, in speed skating, it is the fourth year for participation from Fort

Simpson constituents. They, too, are now progressing to earning medals.

If I may, Mr. Speaker, we have a Caitlin Jaffray, gold in the B division; Julian Porter-Heron, gold in C division; Alex Roche, gold in B division; Emily Parker, silver in B division; Alex Keith, silver in C division; Tyler Pilling, silver in B division; Ian Keith, bronze in C division; as well as Kevin Roche and Madison Pilling have gold medals for overall champions in their divisions.

Just one more list I have here, Mr. Speaker, is the 2006 Arctic Winter Games participants from Nahendeh. I have Valerie Gendron, mission staff; Mr. Shane Thompson, mission staff; Keri-Ann Loutit, soccer; Caitlin Jaffray, speed skating; Mr. Ken Baton from Fort Wrigley, cross-country skiing; as well, my daughter Miss Deidra Villeneuve, for soccer. Congratulations to all. You all did good. You are good models for us all. I wish you the very best and in all your future endeavours, as well. Mahsi cho.

---Applause

ACTING SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Menicoche. Member's statements. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Member's Statement On Ruling On WCB Chronic Pain Syndrome Policies

MR. BRADEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Ivan Valic is a 51-year-old man. His life has been shattered by a 19-year-long odyssey involving claims for chronic pain for the Workers' Compensation Board of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. Mr. Valic was a robust young construction worker in 1987 when he suffered the first of four work-related injuries over a 10-year period. Now, Mr. Speaker, he lives a solitary life in a basement apartment of Calgary. He has lost everything. He is an angry and frustrated man who has endured almost two decades of systemic manipulation, perpetual bureaucratic process and clear discrimination of Charter rights.

Mr. Speaker, a handful of powerful painkillers he eats every day at his own expense. It is the only way to keep at bay the debilitating pain in his back. Mr. Valic is an exception to the normal fate of injured workers rejected by our WCB. Over the years, he is persistent in pressing his case before the WCB board and its endless cycle of governance councils, appeals tribunals and review committees. He has persisted to the very top of the system, the Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories and here he may finally be getting some justice.

In an exhaustive 21-page ruling by the Honourable Justice Virginia Schuler rendered on December 14th of last year, Mr. Valic, represented by Yellowknife lawyer Jim Posynick, was indeed found to have been discriminated against under section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This is because the board's policy regarding chronic pain syndrome fails to treat those injured workers on an equal standing with other injured workers, Mr. Speaker.

Justice Schuler also found that in the board's decisions and the tribunal's decisions, Mr. Valic was denied natural justice. She found that the board's behind the scenes procedures violated Mr. Valic's right to a fair hearing. As a result of this reasoning, Justice Schuler quashed their

rulings. She also ordered that a new appeals tribunal be re-established to hear Mr. Valic's case, and the matter shall be given timely attention.

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

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Braden is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Braden, you can conclude your statement.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, colleagues, Mr. Speaker. To the matter of the board's failed policy on chronic pain, Justice Schuler has left this to be resolved by either the board or by a legislative action of this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, this decision is a significant indictment of the failure of our WCB to manage in a fair and compassionate way, let alone a legal and proper way, the very reason it exists. I will conclude my statement with one more reflection on Mr. Valic's situation. The sad part of this story is, as of today, Mr. Speaker, that he is really no further ahead today in his life than when he was injured 19 years ago. He is still an angry and frustrated man seeking justice, fairness, dignity and comfort. Is this too much to ask? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Barren-Ground Caribou Management Plan

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the barren-ground caribou management plan has always been a topic of many discussions, Members' statements and public interest since the strategy was first made public. It may as well continue to be a contentious issue, especially for hunters and trappers here in the NWT.

I would hope that this being the last session until May, that my Member's statement will be the final gut shot on this issue. Mr. Speaker, the seven immediate actions that the government has come out with in this strategy have to be revisited and rewritten to more accurately reflect some of the recommendations and ideas that will no doubt be coming from the caribou management meetings by the various co-management boards and agencies over the next couple of weeks.

I would like to get the Environment and Natural Resources Minister to retract a couple of these rules, especially to hunt bulls only requirement which many hunters and trappers do not support and the increase in wolf tags for non-resident harvesters.

I believe that a full-blown public education campaign will alleviate a lot of this public pressure and put to rest especially the public's perception that this government continues to enforce wildlife management rules without proper consultation or public input. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

ACTING SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Villeneuve. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Member's Statement On Fiscal Wishes For The NWT

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a band called the Bare Naked Ladies sings a song called If I Had a Million Dollars. Mr. Speaker, I always liked the song. Again, I have my own version to share with the House. I performed a version of this song during last year's budget session. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the rules of this House still do not allow guitars or keyboards or even backup singers to be with me, so you have to bear with me as I read my Sahtu version.

AN HON. MEMBER: Can we hum along?

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, if I had a billion dollars, I will establish a territorial one-stop shop elders' secretariat. Listen to the elders' concerns. You are born to do that.

If I had a billion dollars, I will build a road to connect the Sahtu. Then we connect to the south and show them a thing or two. Would the Tuk people help, too?

If I had a billion dollars on the winter road, I would build a Tim's just to drive through. It's such a smooth trip. We won't even have to stop in or spill my double double, too.

If I had a billion dollars, I will enhance and develop the wilderness camp because you just can't separate the people from the land. That's cruel.

If I had a billion dollars, I will hire the elders to count the caribou, female and male, too. They know what's going on, so much more than me and you, and that's no bull.

If I had a million dollars, the regional superintendent will take a Sahtu regional forum. Finally as a region, the Sahtu will stand alone.

If I had a million dollars, more resources towards the housing core needs. I will have all the Sahtu houses with the utmost speed. It will leave some for the other communities, too.

If I had a billion dollars to support the traditional economies, hunters and trappers would fall under the most sought after choice of our snow activities.

If I had a million dollars, I wouldn't forget the forgotten people. I will fund the Metis Nation too from the university or college entry program and to end their frustration.

If I had a billion dollars, I will hold the Stanley Cup in a little town called Deline. It is the birthplace of the game. Then playoffs will happen there someday, too.

If I had a billion dollars, my colleagues will certainly get a day's funding plus per capita. We will be on equal footing to access health care.

If I had a billion dollars, Mr. Speaker, we would all be rich. Thank you.

---Applause

ACTING SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Yakeleya. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Member's Statement On Recommendations For Caribou Management

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My Member's statement today is about Caribou Forever. The report tells us that 40 to 86 percent of the caribou have disappeared over the past five years. Are the caribou restrictions addressing the real problem? Or, Mr. Speaker, do we just react rashly to an emergency situation that should have never started? Resident hunters are being singled out, Mr. Speaker. With the lack of numbers on how many caribou are really being taken, are we really solving the problem? We don't have solid numbers on the wolf population. We don't know for sure what the real reason is why the caribou are disappearing, or is it really just a cyclical cycle that we have come into a low phase with the caribou numbers?

If the GNWT had been monitoring this problem all along, we might not be in this reacting position we are in today. We have invested millions of dollars into the commercial harvesting industry, Mr. Speaker, but now it is in jeopardy because we have to pull it right back in a fast reaction.

A number of hunters that I am aware of are outdoorsmen who like to get their five tags, but, Mr. Speaker, many of them say that they only take about two caribou anyway. So the problem I see is we have numbers in the sense of we know we are selling five tags, but we don't know how many we are really allowing to be shot.

I would like to suggest maybe a creative incentive, Mr. Speaker, in a better way of handling this by getting the hunters to return unused tags. I have a constituent who told me the other day that he has a little ring of caribou tags of about 50 of them that have accumulated well over a decade, Mr. Speaker. That a family has gone out, purchased the tags and there is proof in the pudding, Mr. Speaker, that the residents aren't necessarily shooting them all, so we don't know what the facts are.

In the situation that I see this, we could come up with smart solutions, Mr. Speaker. We could set a different rate for the third tag. We could set a different rate even higher for the fourth tag. This would be a fair and reasonable response for those hunters who go out there and use caribou to put food on their table.

I think we need to get buy-in on reduce and consumption in a voluntary way from GHL holders and resident hunters. If aboriginal organizations are in agreement, we could establish hunting corridors, Mr. Speaker. We could look at ways to make it less easy to get these caribou. There are things like the ice roads where people can pull up on Gordon Lake and just shoot caribou, unlike in the old days when they used to have to skidoo out for them. Now they pull up a truck and shoot them at will.

Mr. Speaker, at this time, may I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement?

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The Member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Hawkins, please conclude your statement.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. If we had been more proactive than reactive, we could have started earlier to find gentler solutions to this problem. Maybe we could be reducing five tags down

to four. Mr. Speaker, just because two tags may be adequate for some hunters; it may not be adequate for all families, Mr. Speaker. So it seems clear to me we found a solution but yet we still don't know what the real problem is, so we are reacting.

We need to know what is happening before we put unfair and unreasonable restrictions on people. I have questions about the magic bullet theory, Mr. Speaker. What happens if a resident hunter is down to one tag, he shoots a caribou and it happens to shoot two caribou? Mr. Speaker, then we are creating a situation that is maybe not fair. The fact is that it keeps going back down to we don't know what the numbers are.

Mr. Speaker, we need to start opening the door to positive solutions to get down to the real facts, which is encouraging tags to come back instead of singling out some group to say, sorry, you can't shoot. I don't think we have solved anything by putting seven restrictions forward.

Mr. Speaker, in closing here, we maybe could start looking at using some of that \$8.7 million that we are going to use to continually study this issue and maybe we could put it into the cost of food in some of these communities and help come out with positive solutions. Nobody really knows the facts here. No one wants to see the caribou go the way the buffalo went. The fact is, nobody wants to see wasted meat out there. Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. I will have questions for the Minister of ENR later today. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Medical Escort Policies

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last night, I received word a constituent had a massive heart attack and was medevaced to Edmonton. Later on, I spoke with the wife and she was very upset she could not travel with her loved one on a medevac plane. Mr. Speaker, this decision was made by the medevac doctor. However, she did indicate that she would be travelling to Edmonton today to be with her loved one.

Mr. Speaker, incidents like this are always hard on family and friends. I would like to say that my thoughts are with them. In closing, Mr. Speaker, my prayers are with the family and friends, but, more importantly, I wish the individual a speedy recovery. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

Member's Statement On Recognition Of Arctic Winter Games Athletes And Organizers

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last day of session today, I wanted to take this opportunity to recognize all of the athletes, coaches and chaperones from my constituency but not only my constituency, right across the North who will be attending the Arctic Winter Games in Alaska this year. There are a number of AWG

participants. I think that is great that they have been chosen. I know they are going to do us proud. We are very proud of them, but we should extend congratulations. We are very proud of those who participated in all the regionals and territorials. Not everybody was successful and is going to have the chance to go this time, but they may the next time around. I am sure they had a wonderful time and a great experience.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important for us to recognize that sports is the focus and is the focal point of these games, but there is a very valuable cultural component and cultural exchange that is a lot of fun, Mr. Speaker, and I think is a great learning experience for many of the participants who are able to go. I was fortunate enough to participate in a couple of Arctic Winter Games, in Alaska and in the Northwest Territories, in 1988, 1990. Of course, my staff took pleasure in finding some old photos of my participation in those games. It wasn't pretty, Mr. Speaker. I can tell you that I was mostly hair in those days.

---Laughter

Obviously, that is not the case anymore. A lot of fun. A great time. Great memories. I still have many friends from across the North from those days. The other thing I would like to say, Mr. Speaker, is that there are a number of people involved who work with MACA and Sport North. For many of these people, it is not just a job, it is truly a pleasure. I think many of these folks would do the job for free. They've put in a lot of hard work and effort.

---Applause

Many of them volunteer. I want to send our thanks to those folks, as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Reports of standing and special committees. Returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Yakeleya.

ITEM 6: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize a very special person in my life and a big supporter. She is awesome. She is my spouse, Cheryl Bonnetrouge here.

---Applause

Mr. Speaker, I also want to recognize a huge delegation from Deline on this MACA training. I can see Christine and Jane Modeste. I think I see Greg Bayha. I can't see further. I am not as tall as I used to be.

---Laughter

I would like to recognize some good people from MACA who are also in this program here and the instructor Judith Knapp who is doing a wonderful job. I think Mrs. Beck is up there, too. I am just going to leave it at that. There are other people I recognize, but I am short. Mr. Michael Neyelle also from Deline. He just popped his head out there. I want to say I love you, babe.

---Laughter

---Applause

ACTING SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Yakeleya. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also would like to welcome everybody in the gallery, especially one of my constituents, Wilfred Simon who is one of our community wellness workers. He is also a very active volunteer in our community. He volunteers a lot of his time to making a lot of organizations successful in holding a lot of community events. I am really appreciative for that, and I am sure the community thanks him a lot, too. Thank you.

---Applause

ACTING SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Villeneuve. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to recognize Cecile Desjardins, chief of Behchoko's wife.

---Applause

I am glad to see the students here, Carol, and Judith Knapp. Welcome.

---Applause

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am honoured today to recognize my wife, Judy, up in the gallery...

---Applause

...and my sister-in-law, Debbie. Welcome.

---Applause

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to recognize Judith Knapp. She is a wonderful friend and a constituent. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for the Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a list here of people that are taking the governance course through MACA. I recognize a number of them from various communities across the North. There is a large delegation from Deline: Albertine Ayha, Greg Bahya, Jane Modeste-Goulet, Michael Neyelle, Christine Takazo, Charlotte Tetso, and Raymond Tutcho. From Wrigley, Gaylene Oskenekisses.

---Laughter

---Applause

Also from Fort McPherson, Leslie Blake.

---Applause

From Fort Resolution, Rabbit, Wilfred Simon.

---Applause

And someone that is close to Mr. Yakeleya's heart, originally from Fort Providence, Cheryl Bonnetrouge.

---Applause

From Fort Providence, formally from Inuvik, she moved to Fort Providence to be close to her Deh Cho darling, Rosemary Vandell, finance officer for the Fort Providence housing.

---Applause

And, of course, Cecile Desjardins. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

ACTING SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. McLeod. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to recognize a couple of constituents in the gallery. Mr. Les Blake from Fort McPherson and Debbie Greenland from Aklavik. I'd also like to welcome everyone else in the gallery.

---Applause

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize Gaylene Oskenekisses from Wrigley, as well, and welcome all her classmates. Mahsi.

---Applause

ACTING SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Menicoche. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think everybody's been recognized except for one person. I'd like to recognize a close friend, Ms. Janet Marshall, who is one of the instructors with the course.

---Applause

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. I'd also like to recognize a constituent of mine, Ms. Carol Beck, and welcome to anybody else who hasn't been recognized yet.

---Applause

Enjoy our proceedings this afternoon. Oral questions.

---Laughter

Oral questions. Mr. Menicoche.

ITEM 7: ORAL QUESTIONS**Question 498-15(4): Energy Conservation Initiative For Vehicles**

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to be first at the trough.

---Applause

AN HON. MEMBER: Make it worthwhile.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Just with respect to the article in the Yellowknifer on Wednesday, March 1st, with respect to gas guzzlers may pay more for registration. Which means that the larger vehicles, of which I have lots in my constituencies in the communities, we need those larger vehicles, they're saying that because people own larger vehicles that their cost of registration will be that much more. Is this true, Mr. Speaker?

ACTING SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Minister for Transportation, Mr. McLeod.

Return To Question 498-15(4): Energy Conservation Initiative For Vehicles

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the newspaper article referenced some initiatives that were taken by our Department of Transportation to look at reducing energy use. As part of the energy conservation action plan that was tabled in this House by our Premier, our intent with that initiative was to look at the concept of finding a way of rewarding people who used energy-efficient vehicles. It was not intended to look at increasing the cost of registration for vehicles that are of high consumption, but rather to look at what can be done to encourage use of vehicles that use less energy or less gas. It's something that we're looking at, or investigating, and have looked at other jurisdictions, but are moving away from this whole concept. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. McLeod. Supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

Supplementary To Question 498-15(4): Energy Conservation Initiative For Vehicles

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I was just wondering who sits on this committee because the last time I drove to Fort Simpson, there wasn't a plug-in half way where I could plug in my hybrid vehicle, Mr. Speaker.

---Laughter

So how far along has this plan progressed? I hope it's not something that's going to happen April 1st here. Mahsi.

ACTING SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. McLeod.

Further Return To Question 498-15(4): Energy Conservation Initiative For Vehicles

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I wasn't aware the Member had a hybrid vehicle that he could plug in.

Mr. Speaker, we have taken the opportunity to review a number of initiatives across the government to see how we could incorporate better use of our facilities, our

vehicles, and ways we can save on energy. This is one of them. This is something we thought might be of use. We've looked at it. We've looked at what's happening in other jurisdictions. We're not satisfied it's going to work all that well, so we are moving away from it. So it's not going to happen April 1st. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

Supplementary To Question 498-15(4): Energy Conservation Initiative For Vehicles

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad to get that clarified because there are lots of misconceptions out there, especially, like I said, in the small communities who depend...Our hybrid vehicle is the four-by-four.

---Laughter

Just with that, is the government even looking at hybrids themselves before they start forcing other people to move to smaller vehicles? Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. McLeod.

Further Return To Question 498-15(4): Energy Conservation Initiative For Vehicles

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, yes, we are looking at ways we can do things better and more efficient. We're looking at trying to incorporate some hybrid vehicles. We do have plug-ins in the communities that allow us to use them. We're looking at smart programs, smart driving programs for our employees that will require them to shut off their vehicles rather than leaving them running. We're looking at putting remote heaters in some of our larger equipment so they don't have to idle for long periods of time. So there's a number of things we're doing. We're also trying to incorporate alternate energy systems for heat in some of our new buildings and we're looking at pellet stoves and all these types of initiatives. We're trying to do a number of things and this was one of them. We've, as I said earlier, moved away from it. It was not an attempt to increase the fees, as the paper has interpreted it, but was rather to target trying to reduce the fees for registration for people that are taking the initiative to buy or have vehicles that are energy efficient. Thank you.

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

Question 499-15(3): Emergency Power Supply For Community Airports

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

Mr. Speaker, the community I work with experienced firsthand the power outage in late January of this year, at which time there were no means of transportation in and out of the community, Mr. Speaker. The community airport does not have a backup generator. This is becoming a serious concern to the community members, Mr. Speaker. This puts the public at risk when the power goes out. No means of air transportation to and from the communities during these emergency crises. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister of Transportation, can the Minister

explain the emergency measures or plans to deal with these power outages in isolated community airports? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. McLeod.

Return To Question 499-15(3): Emergency Power Supply For Community Airports

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, in the case of the communities where they don't have emergency backup generators for their airports, we expect the communities to use the flare pots that are available. In the event that there is a power outage or an emergency, that is the process that's in place and that is acceptable for the federal legislation in the airports act. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. McLeod. Supplementary, Mr. Lafferty.

Supplementary To Question 499-15(3): Emergency Power Supply For Community Airports

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think we need to go beyond that. Emergency crises in the community need to be really seriously looked into. Where I'd like to ask the Minister, can the Minister explain why the communities of Wekweeti, Gameti, and Whati don't have any backup generators for their airports as part of their emergency measures during these power outages? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. McLeod.

Further Return To Question 499-15(3): Emergency Power Supply For Community Airports

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, federal legislation doesn't require us to have backup generators in each community. Navigation Canada moved away from providing backup generators some time ago. The acceptable process is to use flare pots, and the flare pots are available in each of the communities that the Member has referenced and that is the acceptable process. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. McLeod. Supplementary, Mr. Lafferty.

Supplementary To Question 499-15(3): Emergency Power Supply For Community Airports

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it has been brought to my attention, when I was visiting communities early February, that this became a bigger issue than what the Minister is outlining here. So I'd like to ask again, the Minister can commit to this House on the emergency plans, if his department can look into, he says there's federal legislation that we have to follow, but at the same time legislation can be amended, as well. Can the Minister commit in this House to look into emergency measures to deal with power outages in the communities that have identified to have a backup generator? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. McLeod.

Further Return To Question 499-15(3): Emergency Power Supply For Community Airports

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, each airport facility operates under federal legislation and is required to have an emergency plan. There are only four communities, I believe, that have backup generators and that's Yellowknife, Hay River, Inuvik, and Norman Wells. In the case of the smaller communities, the flare pots are the acceptable process and fall within the legislation that we are required to follow and that's what we use in the case of an emergency. We don't have a plan to put in emergency generators in any of these communities. In fact, the communities that had the emergency generators, in the case of Fort Smith, these were shut down and are being removed. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. McLeod. Final supplementary, Mr. Lafferty.

Supplementary To Question 499-15(3): Emergency Power Supply For Community Airports

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I understand where the department is going with this, but, at the same time, I think we need to take into consideration the communities' concerns, especially coming from the chiefs of each community. This is becoming a problem in the community. More of a challenge in the community through, during the power outage when there's an emergency crisis really there is no means of air transportation. But he's saying that there's a backup. I'd like to find out, he's saying that, the Minister is saying really there are no plans in place to deal with the federal legislation, but I'm asking the department if they're willing to investigate further to look into the emergency backup plan where Yellowknife, Hay River, Smith or different major communities do have them. I think we need to recognize isolated communities. We are the communities, as well. I think the Minister should really look into that. Mahsi.

ACTING SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. McLeod.

Further Return To Question 499-15(3): Emergency Power Supply For Community Airports

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, we are following the regulatory requirements under the Airports Act, the federal airports legislation. There is no requirement for this government to put in backup generators into the communities. We really don't have the resources to put in backup generators in the communities, in the airports, and we don't really have the resources to provide the maintenance and repairs this would all entail. So we don't have the investment that's required to do so. We have a plan that's acceptable to the federal government and that's the means that we are moving forward on this and providing emergency landing with flare pots. There is nothing wrong with that, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 500-15(4): Caribou Management Policies And Procedures

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Referring back to my Member's statement today, I will have questions for

the Minister of ENR. Mr. Speaker, specific to the groups of GHL, resident, commercial harvesters, and non-residents, can the Minister tell us today, by breaking out individual groups, how many caribou each individual group takes yearly? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister responsible for ENR, Mr. Miltenberger.

Return To Question 500-15(4): Caribou Management Policies And Procedures

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we can tell you how many tags are given to the outfitters, how many resident tags we issue, and in terms of the subsistence aboriginal harvest, we don't have any clear numbers. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Supplementary To Question 500-15(4): Caribou Management Policies And Procedures

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, I personally think that's a shame that we don't know solid numbers of what we're talking about. So, Mr. Speaker, referring back to my Member's statement, I had spoken about a couple of options before we implement this strategy. So I'll name them quickly. First, let's get the real numbers out before we react. Second, let's create a strategy to have unused tags returned to the department as in a deposit or return fee. Third, let's create a progressive step so people can get a third and fourth tag at an increased cost. Would the Minister consider these as reasonable steps to consider before we implement this strategy? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 500-15(4): Caribou Management Policies And Procedures

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have the caribou strategy, which is a longer-term document. We have the interim measures, which as well speaks to some immediate actions that we're going to take. We already have committed and we have the resources to do the counts of the animals this coming spring/summer. As well, we're going to look at wolf predation and we will gather again in the fall when the information is in and we will see what other options possibly have to be looked at, once we know the numbers and if they've been verified or they've changed. I indicated when we started this process that these interim measures are not a singular event, but this is a process we're engaging that's going to be evolving in the coming months. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Supplementary To Question 500-15(4): Caribou Management Policies And Procedures

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again the Minister has reaffirmed that we're implementing a strategy with...(inaudible)...nobody wants wasted meat, whether they're a GHL holder or they're a resident or a non-

resident. Nobody wants to make honest people do dishonest acts, in case we hit a cow instead of a bull. Mr. Speaker, what is the Minister going to do when the mistake factor happens when someone either shoots a cow by accident or they shoot two caribou when they only have one tag? What are we going to do about the honest factor? Thank you. Honest mistake factor, Mr. Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 500-15(4): Caribou Management Policies And Procedures

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We do, in fact, have numbers. We have enough information that under the precautionary principle, we are compelled and I believe are compelled to act and err on the side of caution and conservation, which is what we are doing. In this process and time of transition of course, Mr. Speaker, we are going to recognize there may be some start-up glitches and an occasional case of mistaken identity. This is an issue of working with the users and the stakeholders to sustain the herds and to educate all the people involved on the new processes and we intend to approach it that way. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 500-15(4): Caribou Management Policies And Procedures

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, I have to say caution should have started maybe five years ago because we have declining herds and the Minister's document basically tells me the last survey we had done on the caribou herd was in 2000 and some had not been surveyed for well over a decade. Mr. Speaker, we have two herds that have not even been surveyed, so we're still dealing with unknowns. So yet again we're acting without knowing the facts. So, Mr. Speaker, noting all my objections and noting the objections of fellow Members like Mr. Villeneuve, Mr. Speaker, the Minister is seeing all this opposition, so would he consider bringing these regulations back to MLAs and discuss these before they implement them in the back room sometime in the next couple months? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 500-15(4): Caribou Management Policies And Procedures

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we shared with the Members the nine pages of interim measures that laid out in great detail the consultation that we have undertaken with the co-management boards up and down the valley. We've met with the barren-land outfitters, the Metis from the South Slave, the Yellowknives, as many other people as we can. But we've been working very, very closely and we have done due diligence when it comes to consultation and we are going to continue to do that. There's been, for the most part, significant support and recognition that there is an issue and a problem and that we've taken the right

measured steps and we have a plan that's going to allow us to move forward. Thank you.

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

Question 501-15(4): WCB Chronic Pain Policy

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, my questions this afternoon are for Mr. Dent as the Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. Mr. Speaker, our Workers' Compensation Board spends dollars, significant dollars, and retains a substantial legal talent to apply and interpret the rules and implement the procedures that hit holes when considering the cases of injured workers who bring claims before it. But Mr. Speaker, one injured worker at least has had to endure significant procedural steps and a significantly long period of time in order to get, potentially, some resolve. The trouble is, Mr. Speaker, that he had to go to the Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories, not the Workers' Compensation Board's own, as I say, I think very well funded and very largely staffed legal and appeals tribunal. Mr. Speaker, why did this worker have to go all the way to the Supreme Court to hold the WCB accountable?

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 501-15(4): WCB Chronic Pain Policy

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it's worth noting that in 2001 this worker, through the worker's advisor, approached the governance council and asked that a ruling of the appeals tribunal be reviewed. The governance council at that time agreed that it needed to be reviewed and it was the governance council itself that directed the appeals tribunal to rehear the case, but the appeals tribunal felt that it wasn't appropriate for it to rehear the case and, based on that, it got bounced back. So the worker followed the process of going to the courts and having the court rule that the appeals tribunal should again hear the case. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary To Question 501-15(4): WCB Chronic Pain Policy

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, what actions will the governance council of the WCB take to address the shortcomings in its chronic pain policy, Mr. Speaker?

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 501-15(4): WCB Chronic Pain Policy

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the time this case was taken to the courts and the policy that applied to the case goes back to before there was a clear policy in place from the WCB. The WCB has, since the Martin case in the Atlantic provinces in 2004, adopted a policy around chronic pain. What they have done since adopting that policy is direct their council to approach the courts to ensure that that policy is in compliance with the

Charter and all court decisions. They have committed, at their most recent meeting, to revise the policy if anything is found wanting in it.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary To Question 501-15(4): WCB Chronic Pain Policy

MR. BRADEN: So, Mr. Speaker, the court is going to come up with rules regarding chronic pain and how it's applied, not our own governance council, our own potentially Legislative Assembly, our own stakeholders. Is this responsible governance to go back to the court to tell them, to ask them to set our policy? Mr. Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 501-15(4): WCB Chronic Pain Policy

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I didn't say that the courts were going to set the policy. I said that the governance council had set a policy in place and they were going to the courts to seek a reference to ensure that their policy is compliant with the Charter of Rights and is in compliance with previous rulings of other courts in Canada. I want to be perfectly clear that the WCB policy does allow for chronic pain sufferers to be allocated a pension, whether a temporary or partial pension or total disability pension. Those are all possible right now. What the WCB is doing, though, is making sure that the policy is entirely compliant with all the rules that would govern a policy of this sort in Canada.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Final supplementary, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary To Question 501-15(4): WCB Chronic Pain Policy

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, would the Minister or would the WCB, through the Minister, make available to this Assembly, and to the stakeholders, and the public, the draft or the proposed policy that it is going to submit to the courts to see indeed if the policy fits the needs of the stakeholders and not only the courts, Mr. Speaker?

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 501-15(4): WCB Chronic Pain Policy

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said earlier, this is not a draft policy at this point. It was adopted by the governance council in 2004 and I would point out that the governance council is made up of stakeholders from the people in the Northwest Territories. Business representatives, employer representatives, employee representatives make up the governance council. The answer to the direct question is, yes, I will make sure the Member and all Members get copies of the policy.

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

Question 502-15(4): WCB Assessment Rates For Quick Service Restaurants

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are to Mr. Dent and it's following up on my Member's statement. Mr. Speaker, we have a situation here where businesses like Tim Horton's, McDonald's, Quizno's, Pizza Hut and all those businesses that are in Yellowknife have seen the increase of WCB rates at maximum levels for four years in a row. That's more than double over four years. I have, in front of me, assessment rates for the last three years for all the other categories that WCB has, and no one has seen that kind of increase four years in a row. They have been doing everything they can to get the attention of the WCB Governance Council and the Minister. They have held meetings; they've had briefings; they've done everything they can to have them re-look at what can be done to improve this. I understand they're meeting as we speak and I am not at all confident that we are going to be able to achieve any resolution or any positive feedback or as the Minister can tell here today otherwise. So I'd like to know what steps he's prepared to take to work with the governance council and see if there could be any reprieve for this group, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The Honourable Charles Dent, Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board.

Return To Question 502-15(4): WCB Assessment Rates For Quick Service Restaurants

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First off I would like to point out that everybody in the Northwest Territories, every employer in the Territories has typically seen an increase over the past three or four years. Until 2003, because of good investments, the accident fund was what was called over funded. The governance council thought that in order to reduce their over funded position and to give some money back to employers, that they would offer subsidies. So up until 2003 there was a 35 percent discount. Mr. Speaker, that means that if your rates were \$1 per hundred that you were paying, after the discount, 65 cents per hundred. Between 2003 and 2006 that discount was taken off. It was reduced over time. That means that somebody's rate has gone from, or apparent rate, has gone from 65 cents a hundred to \$1 a hundred. If you look at it thinking that 65 cents is your starting point, you've seen a 54 percent increase in your rates.

So what has happened, that is something that is outside what is seen as or what has happened in terms of accident records to change rates. Over the same period of time, the accidents that have been seen in different categories have caused them to go up. Now, the board has a policy that changes of more than 25 percent will not be allowed. That's a policy decision. It's one that the board has instituted in order to make sure that sudden changes aren't seen. I'm advised that if they had actually allowed the rates to go to where they should be for this category, that they would be in excess of \$4 instead of at \$2.93 per hundred. So right now, the board has already made a policy decision to make sure that the amount is, or that this group is, protected from a rate increase.

I think that the governance council members are meeting with the quick service restaurants as we speak, I believe, and I have no doubt that the same question will be put to

them there. This is a policy decision that the governance council could take. They could take a position that a lesser amount of increase was allowed and I have no doubt that it is a question that they will consider. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 502-15(4): WCB Assessment Rates For Quick Service Restaurants

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As always, the Minister is burning up valuable question period time defending the status quo and not answering my question. Mr. Speaker, if he wishes, I'd be happy to go over the whole list. You know, I could do that just as well. My question is very simple, Mr. Speaker. Even with the subsidy, there are no categories that I have in front of me that have seen a 25 percent maximum increase four years in a row. These groups are stuck, and there's nobody telling them what they can do to get out. There's no way for them to get out of a different category. There's no explanation as how they can improve so they can graduate from that category. There's just no option. It's like, you have to pay and pay up. There's no means of appeal. The Minister knows already that that outcome is not positive, but I want to give him a chance to explain that. So I'd like to know, and I didn't get the confirmation with the governance council today, would the Minister direct the GC or talk to them to review the whole cross-subsidization process so that no other group could see maximum increases four years in a row? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 502-15(4): WCB Assessment Rates For Quick Service Restaurants

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly I will request the governance council to consider that situation or that position and ask that they, at their next meeting, consider it. Thanks.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 502-15(4): WCB Assessment Rates For Quick Service Restaurants

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, would the Minister ask the governance council to at least take a leadership role? I mean, if he's just going to ask the governance council and have the governance council come back and say, I could do that job just as well. You know? I could write a letter to the governance council and he could come back and say sorry, Ms. Lee, I considered your option and it ain't going to happen. So I'd like to know what he can do as the Minister of WCB responsible for the portfolio and who'd have to answer to if businesses go down, what's he prepared to do as a Minister to make some changes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 502-15(4): WCB Assessment Rates For Quick Service Restaurants

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I certainly hope that we don't see these businesses go down. I enjoy being able to access the services and products that they provide as much as anybody else. Mr. Speaker, just as insurance on a car is a cost of doing business, so is insurance for your employees. I've probably put \$60,000 or \$70,000 more into the pockets of insurance companies than I've ever claimed back for my car and I think that we're going to have to recognize that there are costs to doing business. I'd be happy to, as I said, direct the governance council to consider this. I think all of the stakeholders have to be involved in considering an approach that the Member is suggesting, because it is a zero sum game. It takes X number of dollars to operate the WCB and look after the injured workers and so if one group is paying less, another group has to pay more. So I would be happy to ensure that this issue is considered, but I think we're going to have to involve more of the stakeholders. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Final supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 502-15(4): WCB Assessment Rates For Quick Service Restaurants

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is what's most frustrating about this exercise that's been going on for a very long time, because I don't believe that the Minister and the governance council, from all of my meetings, that they really understand the QSR has a different problem than the rest of them. I am not interested in Minister talking about what his experience is like as a regular insurance payer because that tells me he does not recognize the unique circumstances under which this group finds themselves in, and they need attention, and they need careful review, and that has not been done, Mr. Speaker. So, in fact, I don't know if I can do anything more. So I would like to ask the Minister, I understand this is something he could do directly, there is a vacancy on the board and I think we should get a direct input from this group so that they could have a different perspective, small businesses that's not there. So I'd like to know if the Minister would consider appointing members from QSR into the boards. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 502-15(4): WCB Assessment Rates For Quick Service Restaurants

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I had received an e-mail message from one of those groups suggesting that very thing. It is certainly something that could be considered. Typically the past practice of this in our government has been that pan-territorial organizations are consulted, but that doesn't mean that other nominees can't be considered. So, yes, I guess we could consider any nominee that comes in from the business community. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Question 503-15(4): Appointment Of Regional Superintendents

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Premier. With the appointment of the regional superintendents of the Executive, how much autonomy will the Sahtu region now have to conduct its own affairs? Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

Return To Question 503-15(4): Appointment Of Regional Superintendents

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Where the programs have been transferred to the Sahtu region, then they will have the same autonomy as any other region. An example is with the Housing Corporation; transfers have not been completed in other departments. Transportation, for example. We would have to make that at some point in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

Supplementary To Question 503-15(4): Appointment Of Regional Superintendents

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That begs the next question. When will we see full transportation authority or services program into the Sahtu and other departments like the Department of Justice in terms of those type of responsibilities coming to the Sahtu region? The Premier has said in the near future; however, I'm looking for more specific timelines to that question. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister Handley.

Further Return To Question 503-15(4): Appointment Of Regional Superintendents

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I heard someone say when you get the billion dollars.

---Laughter

Mr. Speaker, we would need to have justification for a superintendent, and staff, and office space, and so one to move departments. In some cases there isn't the workload right now. You know, if we're successful in getting infrastructure money for a highway through the Sahtu, then it may at that time be justified, but right now I don't think there's the workload. The same applies I believe with Justice. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

Supplementary To Question 503-15(4): Appointment Of Regional Superintendents

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think we're going to be waiting for a long time in the Sahtu in terms of types of superintendents we're going to have in our region. So anyhow, that's for another day. I wanted to ask the Premier, will the regional superintendents of the Executive be able to override the deputy ministers in

providing directions to other departmental superintendents? Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Premier.

Further Return To Question 503-15(4): Appointment Of Regional Superintendents

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, the Executive superintendents in the regions will not be dictators or some kind of autonomous rulers in there. They're going to have to live by the guidelines, the directions, the legislation and the Minister's direction the same as all employees. So they won't be able to overrule the whole system. No, Mr. Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr Premier. Final supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

Supplementary To Question 503-15(4): Appointment Of Regional Superintendents

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't think I was suggesting that the regional superintendents be dictators. I think we have enough in Yellowknife here to dictate to how the regions are going to run.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Ohhh.

MR. YAKELEYA: We certainly want to take the jobs out of Yellowknife here. So I want to ask the Premier, again, how will the department programs be coordinating the territorial agendas and also with the regional agendas in terms of having these regional superintendents situated in our regions? Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Premier.

Further Return To Question 503-15(4): Appointment Of Regional Superintendents

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, the regional superintendents of the Executive will report directly to the deputy minister of the Executive or the secretary to Cabinet. That person reports to me. The executive directors will give us regular reports on the activities in the region and that will include any description of any difficulties they're running into. They will certainly have the authority to call together all of the regional superintendents or any one superintendent if they feel there is an issue and report on that. Mr. Speaker, if there are difficulties or problems or crisis happening, then it will be brought to my attention very quickly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Premier. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Pokiak.

Question 504-15(4): Medical Escort Policies

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated in my Member's statement today, a constituent had a massive heart attack yesterday and was medevaced to Edmonton and the wife was very upset because she couldn't jump on the charter. My question is to the Minister of Health and Social Services, the Honourable Michael Miltenberger. Just what is the department's policy for family members to jump on the medevac charters? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. The honourable Mr. Miltenberger.

Return To Question 504-15(4): Medical Escort Policies

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a medical call and it sometimes will depend, I'm not familiar with the circumstances that the Member has raised in the House here, but depending on the type of plane and who is on it and if it is of a special plane that has a team of specialists on board versus just a regular charter. So there's a number of factors to consider, but it's initially a medical call. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Supplementary, Mr. Pokiak.

Supplementary To Question 504-15(4): Medical Escort Policies

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this time I was told that the attending physician made that call that she couldn't jump on the charter when I found out yesterday. Mr. Speaker, given the nature of a patient's condition, I would like to ask the Minister why wasn't the wife allowed to jump on the charter because of the patient's condition? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Minister Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 504-15(4): Medical Escort Policies

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not familiar with the particulars of the case, but as we raise these questions in the House, my staff up in the office is making notes and will be following up on the particulars so that I can address those issues with the Member. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Supplementary, Mr. Pokiak. No. Oral questions. The honourable Member from Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

Question 505-15(4): Medical Ground Transportation Services

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for the past few days I've been speaking on the travel with medical travel and I've paid particular interest to the case of a lady from Inuvik who had experienced some difficulty while being transported in a taxi. My intent, Mr. Speaker, is not to blame anybody. It's to see if we can find the problem and find solutions. That's why I've been questioning Mr. Miltenberger. Providing on-the-ground transportation should be an essential service. It should not be a business and a lot of people give him business then they will tend to cut a few corners so they can make a buck and you can't blame them. So I would like to ask the Minister if the department does regular reviews on the provision of ground transportation services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Miltenberger.

Return To Question 505-15(4): Medical Ground Transportation Services

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, there's three components to the issue of transportation. There's the issue that comes up with highway rescue, there's the issue of ambulance services and then there's the issue of ground transportation within communities for non-emergency or routine access. In some cases, like in Inuvik, there is a contract with the health centre with a private businessman. In Yellowknife, Stanton has a contract for the ground transportation with a local taxi outfit and it's a routine pick-up and delivery for non-emergent care and that's within the purview and mandate of the authorities, or, in this case, Stanton. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

Supplementary To Question 505-15(4): Medical Ground Transportation Services

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to the Minister for that. When I speak of on-the-ground transportation I'm usually referring to all of them because they all, as far as I'm concerned, are linked. So there's 147 new positions going into the government and there's 98 of them in Yellowknife alone. Would we not be able to allocate two of those 98 positions whose only function will be to pick up medical patients? Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 505-15(4): Medical Ground Transportation Services

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What we are doing is we're doing a comprehensive review, as I have indicated in this House, on the whole issue of ambulance services, and that document is going to Cabinet here in the next few weeks then at which point we'll be looking for feedback from the Members. We're interested in trying to look at rationalizing and improving the service and better coordinating it to deal with issues like liabilities, standards, training, so that as northerners we have a common sense and understanding of what can be expected in communities in this particular area. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

Supplementary To Question 505-15(4): Medical Ground Transportation Services

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I stated when I opened my questioning, that I wasn't looking for anyone to blame, I was just looking for some answers so we can come up with some type of solution. In speaking to the family members of the lady that had the trouble, you know, they're also looking for answers. So I'd like to ask the Minister, has he asked for an inquiry or an internal investigation into the incident to be sure that further incidents like this don't happen again? Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 505-15(4): Medical Ground Transportation Services

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've had discussions with the deputy about the need to backtrack on a step-by-step basis on this whole incident so that we can have that assurance, we can review what transpired, when, the times, and ensure that if there's things did not work accordingly, then we make the necessary adjustments. So, yes, I've had discussions with the deputy and asked that that work be done. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Oral questions. The honourable Member from Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

Question 506-15(4): Hook Lake Bison Management Program

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources just for public record on what the bison recovery management plan that this government intends to follow through on. Maybe the Minister could just provide this House with information on the results, I guess, of the last meeting that we had this afternoon with some community members on how the Hook Lake bison recovery project is going to be handled over the next few months. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Villeneuve. Minister Miltenberger.

Return To Question 506-15(4): Hook Lake Bison Management Program

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would say that we had a good meeting at lunch with the chief and the Metis president and some councillors and the Member himself. We've agreed to a number of steps. We had a good meeting where we came to an agreement. It's a difficult, sensitive issue. There's a letter being drafted that I'm going to sign off that's going to be given to the chief and the Metis president so that they can, when they return home tonight to their communities, they can let the people know in fact what has transpired. At this point, Mr. Speaker, without making this more complicated than necessary, the chief and Metis president or the Member hasn't seen the letter yet, which will reflect the meetings, and the people in the community of Resolution have not, as well, had a chance to hear anything from their leaders. So while I would like to be as open on this issue as possible, I'm sensitive to the fact that I wouldn't want the people in the community to find information out in the House maybe before the leadership has had a chance to carry that message home. If the Member is of the opinion that we should pursue that question, then I would be happy to share some of that detail. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Supplementary, Mr. Villeneuve.

Supplementary To Question 506-15(4): Hook Lake Bison Management Program

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I realize the sensitivity of the whole issue is reliant on what the reaction of the community is going to be once they

receive that letter and the notice of what the government intends on doing, but I think it's in the public interest. You know, I don't think it's any big secret that we should contain or retain any information that I think that the public is entitled to, including residents of Deninu Kue, whether it's heard here in this House or later tonight at a meeting with their chiefs and the president of the Metis. I think if they did hear it through this House, that they can go to the meeting tonight with some idea of basically what the letter is going to contain and, hopefully, maybe present some ideas and suggestions as to how the community should react. Would the Minister be able to provide that information? Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Villeneuve. Minister Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 506-15(4): Hook Lake Bison Management Program

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Then with that understanding and feedback from the Member, I would be happy to inform the House that at the meeting at lunch we agreed that firstly that the project to depopulate the herd would continue and it's still under quarantine and considered infected, and in fact they found another infected animal yesterday, I believe. We've committed to meet again on the 23rd in Yellowknife with the Metis president and the chief and the Member to talk about the issue of what may be appropriate for compensation. We've agreed with the community that we would negotiate with the band and the Metis, for the band and the Metis and the community to do the rehabilitation of the site that's required, and that we are going to proceed with the process of moving a number of the animals down to a facility and a home where they will be slaughtered and tested, and the meat that is deemed to be healthy and clean will be put for sale and we will look at returning those proceeds to the community. I believe that, in a nutshell, Mr. Speaker, is highlights of the key points that we agreed to. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Miltenberger. Supplementary, Mr. Villeneuve.

Supplementary To Question 506-15(4): Hook Lake Bison Management Program

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister for that information. Just with regards to the proceeds of the sales of the good meat that's going to be going down to Lacombe, could the Minister provide some information on any assurances that the proceeds will actually go back to the community and not get gobbled up by the department, or the administration, or the bureaucracy? What kind of reassurances or guarantees can he provide the community in saying that they will get all the proceeds from the sale of the meat? Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Villeneuve. Minister Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 506-15(4): Hook Lake Bison Management Program

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That commitment was made to the leadership at lunch today. I've indicated here in this House on the record that that is the case and that particular commitment will as well be included in the letter that I will be signing off

and giving to the chief and the Metis president for them to take back to the community tonight. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Final supplementary, Mr. Villeneuve.

Supplementary To Question 506-15(4): Hook Lake Bison Management Program

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just with regards to the depopulation of the herd in general. I know some of the leadership have expressed some dismay in the way the practices are being carried out, the depopulation practices, and they're saying it's disrespectful and should not be done in the way that it has been done in the past. Can the Minister maybe inform this House the current practices that the department is exercising in the depopulation are going to be more respectful and just basically more respectful for the animal itself and for the community members? Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Villeneuve. Minister Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 506-15(4): Hook Lake Bison Management Program

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it was agreed that we would continue with the process and it was agreed, as well, that, as the Member indicated, there was one area that was of concern and that is if an animal has been found to be diseased it was agreed that there would be a specific site now used where the bodies of the animals would be taken to and burnt as per the requirements under the legislation and policy. So that was agreed to and it was recognized that we wanted to provide that certainty so that the community was aware and we all had the same basic understanding of how that particular part of the process would work. In regards to the rest of the project, we will continue to be very careful and respectful in our dealings with the community as we have been to date. That one area was identified and we agreed how to rectify that at lunch today. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. The honourable Member from Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Question 507-15(4): Caribou Management Policies And Procedures

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to continue to ask questions to the Minister of ENR regarding the caribou problem as I see it. In the Minister's own words, we don't know the exact numbers out there, but I propose positive suggestions out there, such as issuing a third and fourth tag to potential hunters who want these. So would the Minister consider those ideas and come back with a response? It's a positive suggestion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister Miltenberger.

Return To Question 507-15(4): Caribou Management Policies And Procedures

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I thank the Member for his interest, but not at this time. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Supplementary To Question 507-15(4): Caribou Management Policies And Procedures

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, that was a horrible response, Mr. Speaker. You know, his little wishy washy responses, Mr. Speaker, are quite offensive to hunters out there who are resident hunters, Mr. Speaker. We need to be very clear. Earlier he said, well, you know, we have a learning curve. So he never even answered the question of what happens in an honest mistake. What if a hunter, a resident hunter shoots a cow instead? I need a clear response what the Minister is going to do and instruct his enforcement staff when that case happens, because it will happen.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 507-15(4): Caribou Management Policies And Procedures

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I listen very carefully to all the Members' questions and I try to respond in a clear decisive way. He asked some questions, I did answer them. He may not like the answers, but that's different than not answering the question and I believe I've been very clear. If in this process we're going to be cognizant that there are some new guidelines coming into place, some new measures and there may be a learning curve and some time to make sure that everybody is up to speed and aware of the circumstances, and we're going to have that in mind as we implement the interim measures. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Supplementary To Question 507-15(4): Caribou Management Policies And Procedures

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At least the Minister is consistent. I didn't get an answer on that. So if a hunter goes out there, shoots a cow, what happens to this guy? Does he lose his truck, does he lose his gun, does he go to jail for two years? What happens if an honest mistake is made and an honest hunter is faced with the choice of hiding the meat or ignoring it? What happens? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 507-15(4): Caribou Management Policies And Procedures

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we'll ensure that the meat does not go to waste and, as I indicated, the officers will be very sensitive to the fact that we've changed the rules of hunting game here and we will work with that perspective in mind. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Final supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Supplementary To Question 507-15(4): Caribou Management Policies And Procedures

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, I appreciate the passion that the Minister comes forward, but I mean an enforcement officer, are you telling me he has to make a judgment call? Why don't we create a \$100 tag directed just in case a cow is shot, therefore, a member of our public isn't burdened with that type of risk of a judgment call and they pay \$100 tag, which seems reasonable, because if the accident happens they shoot one, at least they're covered? So what are we going to do to protect the accident that could happen? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 507-15(4): Caribou Management Policies And Procedures

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We believe we have laid out a reasonable approach. We're going to work to implement it, lay out all the detail that we will transmit to the public and to the Members and that's the approach that we're going to take. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Oral questions. The honourable Member from Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Question 508-15(4): Financial Support For Adult Basic Education Students

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for Mr. Dent as the Minister for Education, Culture and Employment. It's a bit of a follow-up, Mr. Speaker, from an item that we discussed here in this Assembly last fall regarding the status of people who enter the adult basic education course, but who, in a lot of cases, Mr. Speaker, find themselves without the supports, without the cash flow to be able to continue in ABE and thus seem to end up back in that cycle of poverty and not being able to get ahead. When we discussed this in the fall, the Minister committed to looking at what could be done and I wanted to see if since then the department has looked into what we can do, Mr. Speaker, to improve supports for adult basic education students in the NWT.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 508-15(4): Financial Support For Adult Basic Education Students

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member and I had some discussion about this last fall and I would agree with the Member that there is a gap in our policies right now wherein living allowances are not provided for people who are looking at adult basic education, adults who may want to upgrade. I believe my commitment at the time was through the next business planning cycle that I would attempt to see if we could not approve the supports. Mr. Speaker, that business planning cycle starts for the government in June and I would hope that by that time I would be able to advance this proposal and see if we have the money in order to move forward with some better supports. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary To Question 508-15(4): Financial Support For Adult Basic Education Students

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, we seem to have a couple of options here. A number of the clients who try to get into this kind of program are on income support and there is really no provision for them to cover the extra expenses that they might incur. Meanwhile, we obviously do not allow ABE instruction on the same basis for funding as regular student financial assistance. Has the department been able to look at whether or not we can change our minds about SFA and help enrol these people on that same basis and help them get further ahead, Mr. Speaker?

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Minister Dent.

Further Return To Question 508-15(4): Financial Support For Adult Basic Education Students

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In order to do that, it would take legislative change because the SFA Act stipulates that support is only provided to post-secondary students through that program. Just in terms of the overall changes to our regulations of policies and the legislation, I think that would be too time consuming. I'm trying to move forward with something that would respond more quickly to what I see as an important need that we should address.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary To Question 508-15(4): Financial Support For Adult Basic Education Students

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, I'd certainly support something that's more timely. If there's a way of enabling our system to be more responsive, we invest already quite heavily in enabling organizations like the Native Women's Association to deliver ABE, but it seems now with our society, our economy working the way it is, we've got to do some more to enable the students to actually participate in this. So would the Minister be able to bring something forward, perhaps as early as this spring, that would enable even a pilot project to get underway and see if we can find a better way to do this, Mr. Speaker?

---Applause

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 508-15(4): Financial Support For Adult Basic Education Students

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have the funds identified in the budget that we've just passed in order to do a special project like that, but I'm certainly prepared to advance this. I agree with the Member that it's an area that needs to be dealt with and I am looking to try and deal with it through the business planning process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Final supplementary. Oral questions. The honourable Member from Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

Question 509-15(4): Accessibility For Disabled Persons In The Nahendeh

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm amazed that the government is broke already; we just gave them a billion dollars.

---Laughter

My question is for the Minister of Public Works and Services. Earlier this week, members of my community got together with respect to accessibility for disabled. I was just wondering if there was an assessment done on all the facilities that government owns and leases in the Nahendeh riding with respect to accessibility access. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Roland.

Return To Question 509-15(4): Accessibility For Disabled Persons In The Nahendeh

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of an issue that has caused us to go out and look at all the facilities that we're involved in. If there is an issue that's come about, I will gladly have my department take a look at that. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

Supplementary To Question 509-15(4): Accessibility For Disabled Persons In The Nahendeh

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a bit of an issue. Communities like Trout Lake have a ramp for the disabled, but it's like gravel so it's quite a lot of work to get somebody up a gravel ramp. Those are issues to look at. As well, there is a building that we actually lease in Fort Simpson where stairs are the only way to get up to the second floor and that's just not acceptable in this day and age. So those are the types of issues that I bring to the Minister's attention. Will he conduct an assessment of all the buildings we do have there? Mahsi.

ACTING SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 509-15(4): Accessibility For Disabled Persons In The Nahendeh

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we do, when we are into new leases or building new infrastructure, the new requirements for access by disabled is incorporated and put in there. For the older leases we have, at times we would have to look at when we renew the lease to have some modifications brought in. As I stated, we will have the department look at this and see what options there might be available. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Time for oral questions has expired; however, I will allow the Member to conclude his supplementary questions. Mr. Menicoche.

Supplementary To Question 509-15(4): Accessibility For Disabled Persons In The Nahendeh

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Good Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just one more time, will the Minister conduct an assessment? He said he would bring it to the attention of

his officials, but I was just looking to see that he will conduct an assessment soon. I am sure there are some leases coming up here shortly as well. Mahsi.

ACTING SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 509-15(4): Accessibility For Disabled Persons In The Nahendeh

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I will have the Department of Public Works work with our infrastructure to have a look around and work with other departments to see what is out there and the facilities we lease and what requirement it might take to bring those up to code. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Written questions. Returns to written questions. Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 9: RETURNS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Return To Written Question 28-15(4): Exemptions For Land Lease Only Policies

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, I am in receipt of Return to Written Question 28-15(4) asked by Mr. Villeneuve on February 14, 2006, to the Honourable Michael McLeod, Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, regarding exemptions for land lease only policies.

Mr. Villeneuve asked what discussions or consultations took place with the parties affected by this decision to make an exemption to the policy, and whether there was any opportunity for the parties to allow all parties to have input and discussion.

Mr. Speaker, the Member's questions are in the context of the announcement I made on February 7, 2006, respecting the allocation of certain parcels of Commissioner's land to the City of Yellowknife, in fee-simple title.

The decision to transfer the lands was made only after extensive consultation, both formal and informal, was undertaken.

All applications for access to Commissioner's land in unsettled land claim areas are subject to the land lease only policy. Under the policy, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs consults with a wide range of stakeholders, including community governments, regulatory authorities, other government departments and aboriginal organizations. Stakeholders are provided with 30 days in which to submit comments or to make any objections known respecting a proposed disposition of Commissioner's land.

In addition, the Akaitcho Process Interim Measures Agreement spells out further consultation requirements before any disposition of Commissioner's land can occur in the Akaitcho area.

The City of Yellowknife's application was subject to consultation under both these formal processes.

Secondly, the Member asked whether all parties had the opportunity to provide input, and whether any formal agreement was reached. Finally, the Member asked why discussions on this transfer were rushed.

In addition to formal consultation, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, in cooperation with the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, made sustained and substantive efforts to consult with the Yellowknives Dene First Nation at the staff and political leaders' level, in an effort to find solutions that would accommodate the needs of all parties. These discussions began in April 2005, after the city first applied for the transfer of a large parcel of land. At that time, at the request of the Yellowknives Dene First Nation chiefs, all decisions on land transfers were delayed until September, in order to allow time for the identification of Akaitcho land interests to proceed. In September, I again delayed decisions on land transfers, at the request of the Akaitcho Dene First Nation, until January.

Mr. Speaker, by the end of January 2006, the Akaitcho Dene First Nation had still not completed their land identification exercise. I offered to brief the Akaitcho Dene First Nation chiefs on the land allocation I was considering for the city, but they declined my offer. I then used the best and most current information available to me to make land allocation decisions that were designed to ease the city's immediate land pressures. At the same time, the Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs and I announced a two-year freeze on the disposition of lands where the Akaitcho have identified an interest, in order to support the completion of Akaitcho Process interim land withdrawal negotiations.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Return To Written Question 29-15(4): Passport Acquisitions For Arctic Winter Games

Mr. Speaker, I am in receipt of Return to Written Question 29-15(4) asked by Ms. Lee on February 15, 2006, to the Honourable Michael McLeod, Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, regarding passport acquisitions for the 2006 Arctic Winter Games.

Ms. Lee had asked for information on the number of athletes, by sport, who did not meet the January 6, 2006, deadline for passports but would still be allowed to go to the Arctic Winter Games with other documentation.

Mr. Speaker, just to clarify, there was no January 6th deadline set by the Sport North Federation for passports. Sport North required athletes to provide proof that passport applications had been submitted before participating in the trials in early January.

Earlier this month, Sport North learned that some passport applications were being returned due to insufficient information, and that Passport Canada could not guarantee that applications returned could be processed in time.

For athletes and officials in this situation, Sport North advised that the U.S. Office of Homeland Security guidelines state that, while a passport is the document of choice, Canadians crossing the border should travel with a birth certificate and government-issued identification.

As of February 27, 2006, 85 percent of Team NWT does have a passport, and another eight percent have other acceptable identification. On that date, there were still 20 athletes and two mission staff who did not have a passport or other approved identification.

Of those athletes, six are scheduled to participate in Arctic sports, one in badminton, one in snowshoe biathlon, five in Dene games, three in hockey, two in soccer, and two in volleyball.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Petitions. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Tabling of documents. Minister Miltenberger.

ITEM 12: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 108-15(4): Framework For Action 2005-2008 Status Report To December 31, 2005

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled Framework for Action 2005-2008 Status Report to December 31, 2005. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Tabling of documents. Minister McLeod.

Tabled Document 109-15(4): Corridors For Canada II: Building On Our Success

Tabled Document 110-15(4): Connecting Canada: Coast To Coast To Coast

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Minister, I wish to table the following documents entitled Corridors for Canada II: Building on our Success, and Connecting Canada: Coast to Coast to Coast. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister McLeod. Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. Motions. Mr. Lafferty.

ITEM 15: MOTIONS

Motion 16-15(4): Recognizing The Value Of Elders' Knowledge, Carried

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. (English not provided)...Mr. Speaker, recognizing the value of elders' knowledge, I would like to talk on the motion.

WHEREAS elders have the highly valued and respected role of passing on the stories, traditions and knowledge of our culture to younger generations;

AND WHEREAS many elders are considered by their people to be experts in traditional knowledge to at least the same extent that individuals with PhD degrees are considered to be experts in their fields;

AND WHEREAS the GNWT and industry have recognized elders' traditional knowledge and expertise by calling on them for advice about the land and animals;

AND WHEREAS elders are frequently called upon by schools, learning centres and government-sponsored conferences and workshops to share their traditional knowledge and are often expected to do so without any payment or for a nominal fee;

AND WHEREAS the payments elders do receive, small as they are, are often clawed back from their pensions so that they effectively receive no compensation at all for their expertise and services;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Sahtu, that the government establish standards for paying elders for their traditional knowledge comparable to fees paid to other expert consultants;

AND FURTHER, that the government implement measures to ensure that payments to elders are not clawed back from their pensions. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Lafferty. The motion is in order. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I think this motion we are talking about has been long outstanding, especially in the small, isolated communities where we heavily depend on elders' knowledge and wisdom. We, as a territorial government, need to recognize that there are essential needs and services that are required to do the day-to-day activities in the communities. When we visited the communities throughout the pre-budget consultation process and also our Social Programs tour of the communities, we've heard over and over during our public consultation or on the side conversation where elders are sometimes paid \$100 compared to a consultant fee that is upwards of \$1,000. There is a huge difference there, Mr. Speaker. I think we need to comprise. We are not saying pay the elders \$1,000 a day, but we are saying be equal to what the consultants are getting paid for their expertise. We recognize elders as a PhD when it comes to traditional knowledge and sharing their wisdom, their bush skills. That's what they recognize.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly hope that this government will take this into consideration as a motion that's been put forward. This will satisfy a lot of elders. A lot of elders are reaching 70, 80 or 90 years of age and we still utilize their service to the full extent in the communities. The government programs and services have fully utilized these services, as well. It's time that we recognize their services as experts in their field of expertise. This is why we are presenting this motion to this House, so it's recognized and we should be paying equal or similar to what the consultants are being paid, Mr. Speaker. This will truly serve the service that they provide to us. It will be a bit more available. We are going to have more elders getting more involved in sharing their wisdom and knowledge to proceed even further in the cultural programs, language enhancement programs. What we are doing now will be further enhanced. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

ACTING SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Lafferty. To the motion. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to thank the honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty, for putting this motion on the floor here. I wanted to support this motion. I am very glad to second it. This motion speaks to the very valued essence of our people and honouring our elders in this manner. It would be equivalent to a PhD professor or someone who has a master's degree in the western concept of education. The elders are the reason why we are here today, Mr. Speaker. It's the elders who guide us in our communities. They may not be in front of our political arenas and they may have been pushed aside over the period of time, but it's really them we receive guidance from.

When I ran as an MLA, it was the elders who guided me in this process. It was them who gave a lot of wisdom to me. Sometimes I take it and sometimes I don't take it. I know what happens when I don't take it. I fall and I hurt pretty badly. It's the elders who have kept me on this path and they will continue to do so and it's about time that we recognize them for the true capacity.

Elders will watch this House and they will watch what kind of support we are going to give them in terms of bringing them up to a status where we look at teachers or anybody who comes into our communities with PhDs and we say they have all the answers, but we don't really give that to our elders. We don't pay them and if we do, we claw them back. It's the system that hurts them. It's something that needs to be corrected.

I certainly hope that this government takes a serious look at how we can bring the elders up to a statue that we were once revving for. Mr. Speaker, I am going to support this motion whole heartedly knowing it's out there, and now it's up to the government to decide what they are going to do with it. It's our grandparents and parents who are the ones we are speaking about. They are the ones we need to consider. This motion is long overdue, as said in the past, and I feel very good about seconding this motion. Thank you.

---Applause

ACTING SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Yakeleya. To the motion. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With respect to the motion, I, too, see that as a gap. As a Member with many small communities and many elders in the communities, having their knowledge valued is something that is of great importance. As well, many of the elders I represent are not wealthy elders. They don't have huge RRSP stockpiles on which to draw upon. Often the only income they have is what they get from the federal government and what they get from the territorial government. Often they are used at meetings for consultation. We bring them to meetings. We pay them a limited amount of money, but that gets added to their income, so it affects their ability to draw on income support programs that we do have, like the fuel subsidy. It's all income tested.

Yet, we are paying how much to the elders and providing them income when we use their services, but the motion speaks about are we really giving them the value. Then you get some pimply guy from the university and we are paying him \$1,000 or \$1,200 a day for his advice. It's just not right. The people from the land are experts. So we have to recognize them. Just speaking back to my first point, there must be a way to assist them from not getting clawed back. It's up to Members on this side to point out the gaps and inconsistencies, and it's governments' responsibilities to find or see if there is a way to assist them without getting clawed back or just not count it in their income when we want to assist them with some income support programs that we offer.

I will be voting in favour of this motion, Mr. Speaker. I support it wholeheartedly. It's a motion whose time has come. Mahsi cho.

---Applause

ACTING SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Menicoche. To the motion. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to speak in support of this motion. I want people to know truly that, as the Member for Monfwi has said, this is about fair treatment. This is about respect for the elders. This is about showing that we care about their valued work and we do not believe this motion...This motion says we do not believe that their work should be undervalued. It should be appreciated for what they do. This will not break this government to take this into consideration and I certainly hope that this government is listening and I certainly hope the Premier will allow Members of Cabinet to have a free vote on this issue, so we can show that our elders are supported. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

ACTING SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

---Applause

ACTING SPEAKER: Motions. Mr. Menicoche. Motion 17, Performance Audit of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

Motion 17-15(4): Performance Audit Of The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, Carried

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS Members of this and previous assemblies have expressed concerns about the extent and quality of reporting by the NWT Housing Corporation to the Legislative Assembly and the resulting impact on the ability of committees to perform their oversight function;

AND WHEREAS Members and the Auditor General of Canada have expressed concerns with certain business activities and decisions of the NWT Housing Corporation;

AND WHEREAS there is a critical need for adequate, accessible and affordable housing in NWT communities;

AND WHEREAS Members are not confident that the NWT Housing Corporation is making the most effective use of its resources to address the need for adequate, accessible and affordable housing;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, that the Legislative Assembly request the Auditor General of Canada to undertake a performance audit of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation and report thereon to the Legislative assembly;

AND FURTHER, that the performance audit examine the corporation's organizational structure, activities, practices, attitudes, philosophy, decision-making processes, internal performance measures and procedures to ascertain the corporation's planning and management capacity and effectiveness;

AND FURTHERMORE, that the audit examine the adequacy and appropriateness of the corporation's governance model and accountability relationship to the Legislative Assembly and its committees and, in particular, the quality and relevance of the business plans, main estimates and other documents put before the Legislative Assembly and its committees;

AND FURTHERMORE, that the Auditor General examine such additional factors as she, in her opinion, feels are relevant;

AND FURTHERMORE, that all employees and officials actively cooperate with the Auditor General in providing all appropriate documents, records, papers and information;

AND FURTHERMORE, that the Assembly request the Auditor General to complete this audit as expeditiously as possible.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Menicoche. To the motion. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier, I mentioned that the time has come for a certain motion put forward by one of the Members and here's another motion whose time has come.

It took 30 years for us to have a review of the NWT Housing Corporation. I often speak that the Housing Corporation Act of 1978 is very old. It comes from a distant colonial past that we are doing this for you, your own good. In fact, some of our policies, Mr. Speaker, still do that, like the EDAP and mortgage assistance policies. Well, we'll lend you the money, but we will still build it for you and you will have to pay us. That's kind of ridiculous. That's not what people in my constituency or throughout the North want anymore, Mr. Speaker. If it's their money, then they should feel free to do what they want and build the quality construction that they want and need. This is one of the ways that we have to release those ties there, Mr. Speaker. The Housing Corporation Minister is just going to have to let go of our people and let them be free with regard to the programming.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Free!

---Laughter

MR. MENICOCHÉ: In fact, in all of our policies and guidelines, of the key words missing is quality construction. We are making it adequate. We are making it accessible and affordable, but the biggest single concern that is brought to my attention time and time again is quality; quality in construction and, indeed, quality in providing the services and programming that the people have. Often, they get frustrated with the multi-layered bureaucracies that even the one department has.

Mr. Speaker, some of the functions that were there before are no longer there anymore. Once, in the act, it called for a creation of a board of directors, but those are gone now. So that is one function of accountability that is gone. It is not there anymore. The Minister has the ultimate authority in his entire department. Single-handedly, he is making decisions. That is something that is gone, as well. That is from the old colonial days when we, indeed, had a Commissioner that, through his goodness and his will,

things happened. Now, that is gone again. I continue to reiterate that.

Overall, the corporation does need an overhaul. Many of its original functions are no longer with it, like providing social housing. We just, in fact, transferred that responsibility over to ECE, but yet we are still functioning as a social housing unit, so that, too, has to be reviewed there, Mr. Speaker. I think the biggest thing is that, throughout the North, people are saying let's overhaul the Housing Corporation. I know that the corporation is extending every effort to do that, as well. Here, having it done by an external source, the Auditor General's office, is just another way of getting outside eyes looking in and seeing how things can be done a lot better. That is all people want, is to make sure they have an accountable organization taking care of them. They have a responsible organization and a relevant organization, Mr. Speaker. With that, I will conclude my statement in just saying that I look forward to this Auditor General's report and a revamping of the Housing Corporation. Mahsi cho.

---Applause

ACTING SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Menicoche. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

ACTING SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

---Applause

ACTING SPEAKER: First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Committee Report 8-15(4), with Mr. Pokiak in the chair.

ITEM 18: CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Committee wishes to consider Committee Report 8-15(4).

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you. We will take a little short break for about 15 minutes.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Good afternoon. We will reconvene Committee of the Whole. Right now, we are reviewing Committee Report 8-15(4). I would like to ask the deputy chair of AOC to speak to the report.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am going to briefly outline the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight comments. We tabled Committee Report 8-15(4) on February 24th and it has to do with the Auditor General's overview of March 21, 2002 to 2003.

In brief, Mr. Chairman, the Auditor General's report on other matters consisted of several areas, but specifically it touched on areas of the NWT Housing Corporation with shipment of housing to Alaska. Committee members were concerned about that. It also consisted of diamond loan guarantees, consolidated budgets, Mr. Chairman. I will now conclude by saying that committee members may have individual comments. I will move two motions once general comments have been received. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. We will go into general comments on the report. General comments. Mr. Hawkins.

Committee Motion 32-15(2): Recommendation That The Executive Council Table A Comprehensive Response To Committee Report 8-15(4), Carried

MR. HAWKINS: I move that this committee recommends that the Executive Council table a comprehensive response to this report within 120 days in accordance with Rule 93(5) of the rules of the Legislative Assembly.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The motion is being handed out right now. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Question is being called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

---Applause

Mr. Hawkins.

Committee Motion 33-15(4): Recommendation That The GNWT Prepare Consolidated Budgets Beginning With The 2008-2009 Budget Cycle, Carried

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that this committee recommends that the GNWT compare consolidated budgets beginning with the 2008-09 budget cycle. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Question is being called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

---Applause

Thank you. Does committee agree that consideration of Committee Report 8-15(4) is concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you. What is the wish of committee? Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: I move that we report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): The motion is in order. It's not debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you. I would like to have the report of Committee of the Whole. Mr. Pokiak.

ITEM 19: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Committee Report 8-15(4) and would like to report progress with two motions being adopted. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. A seconder to the motion? Mr. Krutko.

---Applause

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you. Motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

ACTING SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Third reading of bills. Minister Roland

ITEM 20: THIRD READING OF BILLS

Bill 19: Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2005-2006

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that Bill 19, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2005-2006, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Roland. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

ACTING SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 19 has had third reading. Third reading of bills. Minister Roland.

Bill 16: Tobacco Control Act

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Frame Lake, that Bill 16, Tobacco Control Act, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

ACTING SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 16 has had third reading.

---Applause

Before we move on to prorogation, I would like to note that Members and committees of the House still have a very busy schedule ahead of them to attend to in the coming months and in the run-up to the start of the Fifth Session of this Assembly in May. May you show sound judgement in your deliberations on behalf of all northerners. I would like to take this opportunity to send our heartfelt thoughts and prayers to the Speaker of the House, Mr. Delorey, and the Deputy Speaker, Mrs. Groenewegen, as they deal with difficult personal matters.

To everyone here today, I wish you safe travels home to your families. I would also like to acknowledge our Pages and their contributions during this sitting. Students from Diamond Jenness School in Hay River; Chief Jimmy Bruneau School in Behchoko; Chief Sunrise Education Centre on the Hay River Reserve; Thomas Simpson School in Fort Simpson; and, Mildred Hall and William McDonald schools here in Yellowknife. All served honourably as Pages during the past month. Pages carry out the important role in the operation of this Assembly and we greatly appreciate their efforts. I would like to particularly thank two of my constituents, David Brinston and Taylor Irvine for their hard work during this session. It was a pleasure to have you in the House.

---Applause

Our thanks also go out to the hard-working staff of the Legislative Assembly and the GNWT, whose efforts are greatly appreciated by those of us who depend on them. At this time, I would like to offer my thanks and best wishes to a number of Assembly staff who will be moving on to new challenges prior to our next sitting: Cheryl Voytilla; Andrew Stewart; Darha Philpot; and, Moses Hernandez have served this House and all Members with great dedication and skill. On behalf of all Members, I want to wish Cheryl, Andrew, Darha and Moses the very best in their new challenges.

---Applause

Whether they are personal or professional, our contractors who prepare Hansard and prepare our audio visual, catering, security and janitorial services are also to be acknowledged for the vital services they provide. Thank you to all. You have done an outstanding job and we appreciate your hard work a great deal.

---Applause

I would like to thank honourable Members for abiding by the rules of this House during my short, but enjoyable, term as Speaker.

---Laughter

Although the circumstances leading up to my temporary appointment are truly regrettable, I was honoured to serve as your Speaker. I would like to invite all Members to the Speaker's portrait gallery at the rise of the House today to witness the official unveiling of Speaker Whitford's portrait.

Mr. Clerk, will you ascertain if His Honour, the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, is prepared to

enter the House to give assent to bills and prorogue the Fourth Session of the 15th Legislative Assembly.

ITEM 21: PROROGATION

COMMISSIONER OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (Hon. Tony Whitford):

Monsieur le president, monsieur le premier ministre, messieurs les deputes, Mesdames et messieurs, et amis. It is my privilege and pleasure to be back among you all again. It brings back some fond memories sitting in this chair. It certainly looks different this side of the TV. I watch you everyday.

Since we were last together, the Year of the Veteran has come to a close. It was an important year, recognizing the selfless and courageous contribution veterans have made to our country. I was involved in the celebration of our veterans, culminating in a number of special events that took place in November last year. Once again, I ask all northerners to reflect with gratitude, upon the difference the actions of our veterans have made to our lives. We enjoy many freedoms today because of their bravery and we thank them sincerely.

It has been one of my goals since taking office to visit as many Northwest Territories communities as possible, to talk to residents and participate in those events and ceremonies that are dear to them. I am pleased to report I have now visited 11 of our communities...

---Applause

...having added the communities of Trout Lake and Gameti to the list most recently. I would like to thank the residents of both places for their warm welcome and hospitality during my visits. It was a pleasure to meet with you all. I look forward to travelling to more communities in the months to come.

Sadly, an individual who has made a difference in our lives is now no longer with us. I speak of former Tlicho Chief Alexis Arrowmaker. Chief Arrowmaker was a respected elder and a committed advocate of the pursuit of a traditional lifestyle. In fact, Wekweeti began as a community in the 1960s when Chief Arrowmaker brought several families to live there to preserve their traditional lifestyles and values. Chief Arrowmaker's wisdom and guidance was often sought by his people and others, particularly when the people of the Tlicho were negotiating their self-government agreement. It was a time of great pride and joy to him when the agreement was finally signed last summer. We offer our condolences to Chief Arrowmaker's family, friends and to the people he served so diligently for many years. He will be sadly missed.

Assent To Bills

Now, as Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, I am pleased to assent to the following bills:

- Bill 12, An Act to Amend the Territorial Court Act
- Bill 13, An Act to Amend the Financial Administration Act
- Bill 14, Public Airports Act
- Bill 15, Court Security Act
- Bill 16, Tobacco Control Act

- Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Public Colleges Act
- Bill 18, Appropriation Act, 2006-2007
- Bill 19, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2005-2006
- Bill 20, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, No. 2

In closing, I would like to wish our athletes the very best of luck as they head to the Arctic Winter Games in Kenai, Alaska. I will be travelling to the games myself and look forward to cheering you all on as you proudly represent the Northwest Territories.

Prior to proroguing this Fourth Session of the 15th Legislative Assembly, I would like to advise you that the Fifth Session of the 15th Legislative Assembly will convene on Tuesday, May 30, 2006, at 1:30 p.m.

As Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, I hereby prorogue the Fourth Session of the 15th Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories. Members, I hope you all have a safe and enjoyable break as you travel home to be with your families.

Bon voyage, bon chance, thank you, merci, mahsi cho.

---Applause

---PROROGATION

