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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Wednesday, May 31, 2006

Members Present

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

ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good afternoon, colleagues. Welcome back to the House. Orders of the day. Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Bell.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 5-15(5): Community Justice

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to recognize the people who are working to deliver local justice services and reduce crime in the communities.

Justice committees work with elders and community leaders to develop innovative solutions to their justice issues, such as the diversion program. Diversion is for people who accept responsibility for the minor crimes they commit. They meet with the committee to talk about what happened. Then the committee makes a decision about how the person can make things better. Last year, there were more than 200 diversions.

Community justice committees also develop crime prevention activities. They're administering fine options programs, on-the-land activities and services for victims of crime. Several innovative projects have moved forward in the past year. The dog shelter in Nahanni Butte is teaching teenagers to care for animals. The cabin-building project in Whati brings youth together with elders, who are teaching them skills far beyond how to hammer a nail. A support group in Inuvik is helping girls find good role models and avoid violent situations.

We're seeing real results. In Deline, there have not been any youth in court for the past four years. The Yellowknife victim services workers were recently selected as the Outstanding Group of the Year, for their dedication to service at any time of the day or night. The Gameti policing project has just wrapped up, and Behchoko and Fort Simpson are both planning to deliver their own victim services programs.

Funding is now available to every community to hire a part-time justice coordinator. Additional special project funding is available to deliver programs. This money helps communities develop a justice system that meets their unique needs and provides them with a safer environment.

The support for community justice is encouraging. Communities are excited to deliver their own projects and to help residents live in safer neighbourhoods. This Assembly passed a motion last year to support and improve our programming. In response, the Department of

Justice is developing a strategic plan with local stakeholders and partners, including the RCMP. We'll help communities deliver better services, improve training programs, make good programs even better and communicate more effectively. This involves working with

partners from the community level all the way to the federal government. I am looking forward to presenting more details about this plan to Members next month. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Minister's Statement 6-15(5): Butthead Campaign 2006

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I am proud to announce that through the Don't be a Butthead campaign, many young people have made the commitment to be smoke free. I have personally written to over 3,000 children and youth from every community in the NWT, congratulating them on their pledge to remain smoke free. This campaign originated in 2004 as an initiative of the Department of Health and Social Services to educate youth across the North on the benefits of staying smoke free.

This year, youth and schools in the NWT got caught up in the smoke-free fervor by entering the Create the Smoke Free Future contest in either the junior or senior category. A total of 200 entries from 12 communities were received in four categories of words, music, video and visual arts.

As we celebrate World No Tobacco Day, I am proud to announce the winners of the Create the Smoke Free Future contest.

The winners in the junior class, grades 3 to 7, are: music category, Leah Bodnar McLeod, Tori Hendrick, Leon Simon and Melanie Rogers, Inuvik; written category, Tamara Grosco, Yellowknife; visual arts, Hannah MacLeod, Yellowknife; video, Carly Wilson, Yellowknife.

The winners in the senior class, grades 8 to 12, are: music category, Sonny Simpson, Wekweeti; written category, Heather Henderson-Powder, Tulita; visual arts, Russell Giroux, Detah; video, Max Rossouw, Brandon Bradbury, Griffin Wile and David Brinston, Yellowknife.

The junior winners will be receiving their choice of \$250 or a digital camera while the senior winners will have their entries produced professionally. I invite Members to view the winners' artwork in the Great Hall throughout the day. They are excellent creations and a testament of your youth's commitment to stay smoke free.

I hope that you will show your continued support of the campaign by congratulating students in your riding who have made a commitment. You can also encourage and recognize the people and schools in your community for their continued efforts in protecting our youth against the harmful impacts of tobacco use.

In addition to the successful Don't be a Butthead campaign, this Legislature recently passed and implemented legislation to create a smoke-free generation. The Tobacco Control Act represents an important part of this government's strategy to encourage healthy lifestyles for all northerners.

Educating our youth about the harms of smoking is a giant step towards helping them choose a healthy lifestyle. Let us work together to end the smoking epidemic that harms so many northerners every year. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Public Works and Services, Mr. Roland.

Minister's Statement 7-15(5): Wood Pellet Boiler System For The North Slave Correctional Centre

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, energy costs are a concern to all of us. The Department of Public Works and Services has an opportunity to test a cheaper alternative energy source this coming year at the North Slave Correctional Centre.

Public Works and Services and the Department of Justice recently received a proposal from a Yellowknife-based company, Arctic Green Energy, to provide a wood pellet boiler system at the North Slave Correctional Centre.

Providing heat for buildings using wood pellet boilers has been common practice in Europe for decades, with systems reliably heating numerous facilities such as hotels, office buildings and recreational facilities. Money is saved by using less expensive wood by-products, specifically crushed sawdust pellets. They also significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The North Slave Correctional Centre needs a boiler to provide backup heat. Capital of \$225,000 was approved for this boiler. Arctic Green Energy proposed to provide a wood pellet burning boiler system instead of installing a third oil-fired boiler. It would be the primary heating unit and would provide 50 percent of the heating requirements for the facility.

Arctic Green Energy will be responsible for the design, installation, operation and maintenance of the wood pellet system at no cost to the Government of the Northwest Territories, and for provision of the pellets. Arctic Green Energy would act as an energy service provider, billing the GNWT for heat supplied to the facility.

The system will include a storage unit to hold adequate wood pellets for one month's required output in winter conditions. This should enable the system to continue to operate during ferry and ice road closures.

We anticipate many benefits from the wood pellet system. For example:

- Capital savings of \$225,000 from the original third boiler project;
- Estimated \$50,000 annual savings in heating costs for the facility; and
- Estimated reduction in greenhouse gas emissions of 1,450 tonnes annually.

---Applause

The new wood pellet boiler system will be operational by November 1, 2006. After one year, the system's effectiveness will be evaluated. If it is efficient and reliable, we will consider this heating system for other major projects. If it is found not to meet our needs, the system will be removed and the deferred oil-fired boiler will be installed.

Public Works and Services, together with our GNWT client departments, is committed to reducing energy costs in

buildings for the benefit of all northerners. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On WCB Appeals Tribunal Rehearing For Ivan Valic

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the February session, I spoke of the ongoing difficulties of an injured worker, a 51-year-old man whose life has been shattered by a 19-year-long battle with the Workers' Compensation Board. Mr. Ivan Valic is one of some 40 injured workers that I know of, Mr. Speaker, who have experienced a never-ending appeals treadmill with the Workers' Compensation Board Appeals Tribunal system.

Mr. Valic is angry at the system. His oft repeated question is who is responsible? Who is accountable? Why doesn't the Minister do something? Why doesn't the Premier do something? Who is accountable? The accountability question is one that is not well answered or clearly defined. In an exhaustive ruling filed December 14th last year. Madam Justice Schuler of the NWT Supreme Court found that Mr. Valic was indeed discriminated against under section 15 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, because the board's policy on chronic pain syndrome fails to treat those injured workers on an equal footing with other workers.

Further, Justice Schuler concluded that through the board and the tribunal's dealings, there was denial of natural justice. Mr. Valic sought to have his case reheard by a fresh and independent appeals panel within 60 days. Justice Schuler granted Mr. Valic's appeal to a freshly constituted tribunal and the Minister is now seeking appointees to this tribunal which, I understand, closes today.

Mr. Speaker, Justice Schuler did not order the 60-day hearing deadline, but her ruling was clear in its intent to see Mr. Valic's rehearing completed in reasonable time. Mr. Speaker, it's been more than 160 days since Justice Schuler's decision; 100 days more than originally sought by Mr. Valic for the rehearing. The timing now clearly rests with the Minister to ensure that a freshly constituted appeals tribunal is in place. I will have questions for the Minister on this process at the appropriate time later today, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

Member's Statement On Barriers To Government Employment Experienced By Disabled Persons

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to discuss the issue of disability awareness. I listened quite closely to Minister Miltenberger's statement yesterday on the occasion of Disability Awareness Week. The theme, Mr. Speaker, this year is Living, Working and Educating Together - Include People with Disabilities.

Mr. Speaker I want to start by acknowledging the good work of organizations like the NWT Council of Persons

with Disabilities and EmployABILITY who provide such valuable services to many of our residents.

Noticeably absent from the Minister's statement yesterday was how the Government of the Northwest Territories plugs in and participates in including persons with disabilities in our own public service. In his ad that appeared in the local press this week recognizing Disability Awareness Week, he states, "I encourage everyone to be inclusive of individuals with disabilities and recognize the contributions they provide within our communities throughout the territory."

It would seem that Minister Miltenberger and his colleagues on Cabinet have much to learn about how inclusive and how accepting the Government of the Northwest Territories is when it comes to hiring persons with disabilities in our own public service. The old adage that one should lead by example certainly comes to mind and I am going to give Cabinet a clear and concise message today that when it comes to leadership in the inclusion of persons with disabilities, they have an incredibly abysmal record.

Disabled persons make up 13 percent of our population. Yet, as a group within the public service of the GNWT, they represent .4 percent. Yes, .4 percent. This from a government which continues to preach inclusion. The government should be ashamed of themselves. Let's look at the lead departments, Mr. Speaker. FMBS has a grand total of zero employees with a disability. The newly minted Human Resources department responsible for the government policy in the area of human resources has, surprise, surprise, zero employees with a disability. In all of the GNWT reports in the public service from 1996 to 2004, there is not one single, solitary sentence about the Government of the Northwest Territories' efforts to hire disabled persons. Perhaps the Minister responsible for the public service can flip through these reports and he can note that there is an absence of any text...

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

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

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In all GNWT reports on the public service from 1996 to 2004, there is not one single, solitary sentence about the governments' efforts to hire disabled persons. Perhaps the Minister responsible for the public service can look through these reports and he'll note that there is no text on efforts to hire disabled persons.

As the Human Resources department likes to display in any literature that I have read, they like to flaunt the affirmative action policy. Mr. Speaker, disabled individuals are second only to indigenous aboriginal persons in that policy. Mr. Speaker, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to realize that .4 percent representation of arguably the most disadvantaged community, and that is in terms of employment, income and education in the territory, that remember comprises 13 percent of our population, is completely unacceptable. The Government of the Northwest Territories has made hundreds of direct appointments in the past 10 years to many priority one individuals, yet research I have would indicate that only one -- that is one -- direct appointment to an individual that had a disability.

Mr. Speaker, I intend to hear from the Minister responsible for the public service today why disabled individuals continue to face barriers when trying to gain employment with this government. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On 22nd Annual NWT Track And Field Championships In Hay River

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to inform the Members that Hay River is proud to be hosting the 22nd Annual NWT Track and Field Championships. The organizers are expecting approximately 1,250 participants coming into town from 31 communities in the Northwest Territories. A huge part of the track and field success must be credited to the staff of the Hay River schools: Diamond Jenness Secondary School, Princess Alexander School and the Harry Camsell School. I would also like to recognize at this time the many residents of Hay River, the parents and coaches. These people come out every year to volunteer their time and their expertise at the meet and in the school working on various track activities.

Several local businesses offer time off to their employees and some volunteers take part of their vacation time to be able to work at this exciting event. The track and field committee enlists the services of approximately 350 volunteers each year to complete the planning process, fill the required stats keeper positions, operate food services for students and spectators, as well as covering for many other jobs involved in running the track meet. I would like to commend all of the people whose personal efforts make the track and field meet a success every year.

As an added feature this year, the 2007 Canada Games torch, on its journey across Canada, will be brought to Hay River tonight for the opening ceremonies of the track and field meet. Included with the runners from Enterprise that will be bringing the torch in will be our own Commissioner, Tony Whitford. The Hay River Running Club and the Commissioner will arrive at the arena carrying the 2007 Canada Games Torch that will light the track and field flame to begin the games. This evening, when the House adjourns, a large delegation of Ministers and Members will be attending with yourself, Mr. Speaker, and I, the track and field opening ceremonies. This is the largest delegation so far and I'm looking forward to the excitement that is generated when the teams from schools large and small enter the arena. The pride and emotion that is felt by the participants and by spectators alike is something to behold.

Again, Mr. Speaker, congratulations to Hay River, the organizers, the volunteers and, of course, the spectators that go out, rain or shine, to cheer them on, and the best of luck to everyone who participates this year in the 22nd Annual Track and Field Championships in Hay River. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Congratulations To College Graduates From Tu Nedhe

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd just like to commend and publicly congratulate some successful individuals from my constituency of Tu Nedhe on their recent academic achievements. I attended the Aurora College convocation ceremonies in Fort Smith on April 29th, 2006, to congratulate two individuals who graduated from college diploma programs and two that graduated from college certificate programs.

I'd like to send my congratulations out to Melanie McCallum of Deninu Kue, who received a management studies diploma, and congratulations to Lisa Beaulieu, also of Deninu Kue, who received her social work diploma.

I'd also like to congratulate Agatha Laboucan of Lutsel'k'e for completing and receiving her management studies certificate, and Lorna Catholique, also of Lutsel'k'e, in receiving her certificate in office administration.

Mr. Speaker, these individuals are definitely an inspiration to other community members who are considering furthering their educational needs. But the real icing on the cake, Mr. Speaker, is on May 18th, 2006, I along with the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, the Honourable Charles Dent; our Commissioner, Mr. Tony Whitford; and many community members of Deninu Kue gathered to celebrate the achievements of two more successful individuals of the Deninu Kue school's six Grade 12 graduation class. Again, I would like to congratulate Jodie Miersch and Kirstin Fabien for their achievements, and offer my encouragement and full support to continue on with your educational needs and to fulfill your lifelong goals, aspirations and dreams.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I'd look forward to seeing more of my constituents realizing their potential in any academic arena and I can say with confidence that I will see more success stories when I look into the future of our constituency of Tu Nedhe. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Compensation Policies For Elders Providing Services To Government

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. (Translation) Today's statement will be on elders. We have elders who work in the school sometimes. We have difficulty paying them. (Translation ends)

...consider a leader in maintaining and enhancing aboriginal language, culture and traditions. This wouldn't be possible without our elders; our Ph.D.'s when it comes to traditional knowledge and on-the-land programs, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, lately with the introduction of FMBS system to the Community Services Agency it has become more difficult to issue elder's pay for their casual work; pay that they deserve for their valuable contribution to the society. The TCSA used to have a system prior to August 4th, the effective date of the Tlicho Agreement, which allowed elders' pay to be issued within a day of their service, Mr. Speaker. Now elders have to wait up to six weeks to receive their paycheques and this is not acceptable, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to draw attention to this House to a clause within the Intergovernmental Services Agreement that addresses operating condition of the TCSA that was signed by Tlicho, GNWT and Government of Canada. The section 3.2(a) of the ISA states, territorial legislation shall settle the roles listed for the agency in appendices and any other powers, responsibilities and accountabilities of the agency, except, Mr. Speaker, those assigned or delegated to the agency by the Tlicho Government or the Government of Canada. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, this agreement makes it clear that the Tlicho Government wishes the TCSA to hire their own traditional elders for cultural enhancement and also development. The GNWT must respect the terms and conditions the Tlicho Government wishes to set.

The GNWT should not be imposing its own responsibilities and accountabilities on the TCSA for programs assigned by the Tlicho Government. In this case, the Tlicho Government wishes to hire their own elders, pay them immediately after the completion of services. The GNWT needs to work with the TCSA to make it possible for them to make immediate payments to elders. It is not acceptable to force elders to wait six weeks, Mr. Speaker, to receive their pay for well-respected services.

Mr. Speaker, we're losing elders as we speak in the schools. So I will have questions for the FMBS Minister at the appropriate time. Mahsi.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

Member's Statement On Permanent Nursing And Policing Services In Wrigley

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, mahsi cho. Mr. Speaker, there are only a few issues that most rural MLAs raise session after session and that is permanent nursing and policing in the communities. For some communities these issues can be approached individually or making it easier to pursue. For the community of Wrigley these services and commitments are very much connected. This government has indicated that until the police are stationed in Wrigley, Health and Social Services will not station a permanent nurse there. I find this response and approach to be unacceptable. Why is the community of Wrigley being treated different? The Deh Cho Health and Social Services Authority has already earmarked the necessary funding to station a nurse in Wrigley, so why delay, I ask.

There has been some speculation that a previous nurse felt intimidated and safety was an issue. If the Minister has made these very dramatic policy decisions based on this, why hasn't the ministry conducted a thorough evaluation of those circumstances? This also raises another pressing issue in the Nahendeh and all over the North; funding for safety and protection services through local RCMP presence.

During the previous session in February, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice responded to comments raised by my Nunakput colleague with a possible arrangement whereby a police officer could be stationed in a small community with another peace or enforcement officer. The communities have been requesting for years this type of innovation and flexibility with these interdepartmental services to maximize protective and medical services for small and remote communities. For Wrigley the list of excuses just gets longer, Mr. Speaker. No nurses unless

we get policing; no policing unless we get funding for not two, but 2.5 positions. Huge strain on anybody's resources, especially when all small communities simply ask for better health care and better policing from our government.

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

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and honourable colleagues. Will this government stop increasing our bureaucratic responses and start doing our best for our people? Will this government take their own ideas and follow through on them? Wrigley's needs are everybody's needs, Mr. Speaker: simple community-based health and policing services. Mahsi cho.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Infrastructure Needs Of Nunakput

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the riding of Nunakput is in dire need of granular material to address their infrastructure needs in my constituency. The access to gravel in most of my constituency can only be accessed during the winter. It may take at least six months to be able to access a quarry site because of different legislations. An example is Inuvialuit land administration.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Deputy Premier and the Minister of the NWT Housing Corporation announced that a total of \$100 million will be spent to construct 530 adequate and affordable housing units over the next three years. These units may be built as multi-plex or homeownership. Members on this side of the House appreciate the announcement, but because it will address some and not all of the housing shortage across the Northwest Territories. In order to prepare for these units there are a number of obstacles that need to be addressed immediately. By obstacles I am referring to lot availability, access road for dry waste, and construction of power lines for these units.

Mr. Speaker, communities without access to year-round ground material will be a challenge to actually receive these units as identified through the capital plan of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. If a community can address their infrastructure requirements to have these available lots and driveways to build these units, what will happen to these units? Will they be carried over to the next fiscal year or allocated somewhere else in the Northwest Territories?

Mr. Speaker, these are just some of the obstacles that NWT Housing Corporation and MACA need to address prior to the construction of the 530 units. These two departments need to immediately construct a plan to address the need for gravel materials for those communities without a year-round access to granular material.

Mr. Speaker, as I indicated earlier, the Beaufort-Delta community needs ample time to plan for the infrastructure needs and require the necessary funds to address these

needs. I encourage the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, MACA to immediately contact the appropriate municipal organizations in Nunakput to help them prepare for these infrastructure requirements. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Effects Of Cost Of Living Increases

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as advertised, I held a meeting with my constituents at Range Lake North School last night and, although the turnout was not large, it was a valuable and substantial opportunity for me to get an input from my constituents on a number of issues that are before us here in the House and also to hear from them about what's important to them.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that we spoke and listened about the new affordable housing initiative, the Yellowknife educational facilities plan, the Deh Cho Bridge project, and lots and lots about a whole issue surrounding WCB, a topic I will speak about later in the session, Mr. Speaker. But another permanent, prominent issue that was raised, which ties into many of the topics I've already mentioned, has to do with the cost of living and cost of doing business in the city.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of how important it is for the government to do all it can to help keep these costs and be mindful of that task in all decisions that it makes. Mr. Speaker, every bit of increase in fuel, power, labour costs, WCB rates and other forms of taxes, have a major impact on running of small businesses. Believe it or not, Mr. Speaker, even though Yellowknife is booming, a lot of national chains consider Yellowknife a very unstable market due to the high cost of doing business.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud to represent a riding that has so many businesses that enhance the quality of living for Yellowknifers and the NWT residents. Just this coming weekend I'll have the honour of partaking in the ribbon cutting of another new business, M & M Meats.

But, Mr. Speaker, I have to tell you that the overriding concern constituents had was with keeping Yellowknife's cost of doing business competitive to Alberta because that's who we compete with. Edmonton is who we are competing with and if we're going to continue to have the kind of businesses that we have, and if we're going to continue to have people move here and stay here, and overall to benefit those who have always been here, it is very important for the government to always be mindful about the accumulative effects of all the little costs and the taxes and all the measures that it takes that impacts on doing business for the North. So, Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to share that today. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Funding For Disability Programs And Services In The Sahtu Region

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my statement today has to deal with the announcement that Mr. Miltenberger announced yesterday in terms of

Disability Awareness Week. I'd like to say that I fully support the initiative that the Minister has taken this government in terms of creating awareness for people in the Northwest Territories during this week to June the 3rd, the theme for living, working, and staying together, including people with disabilities.

Mr. Speaker, this issue here is very close to my heart as my grandfather was disabled in a wheelchair. I'd like to ask this government here, in terms of when will this government look at the Sahtu region and consider funding sources for disability to help set up our region for people with disabilities? He did mention several communities and I was quite upset yesterday in terms of the communities of my region I work with. I know they've been asking me for funding to work with the disabilities and help people in this special need in their life and that this government does fail to recognize that. Maybe because we don't have a road or maybe because we don't have the connection to the rest of the Northwest Territories, as the other residents, we're left out of this here. So just shame on this government to recognize this and not include the people in the Sahtu. It's almost like the Sahtu people who are in the special fields should boycott the disability week and not have anything to do with this special whole week for people with disabilities. We're shut out the door on this and really that's caused a disability for our people in the region. There are some good people here who have disabilities and do the job and make a contribution to the community and we're not taking them into consideration. There are other communities who have it and there's also other communities that would, with healthy people, and this funding is for three years. We're shut out of this funding for three years by people. So why bother?

I certainly won't share the much enthusiasm with the Minister during this week in terms of the awareness week, so I wanted to say that. Thank you.

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

Member's Statement On Supporting Innovation In The NWT

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my job to challenge the government in order to encourage them to provide the highest quality of life for our people that we represent. Today I wish to speak about the lack of innovation by this government and the lack of encouragement it is offering our local northern innovators. The Association for the Study of Peak Oil points out that we are on the verge of a massive global oil shortage which will result in the skyrocketing oil prices some day soon. But thankfully, Mr. Speaker, the sky isn't falling today. Although imagine what that will do to a territory that is so dependent on fuels for heating and transportation. Mr. Speaker, our government should know that we are not prepared. We have not done enough to establish alternative energy sources to protect us. What are we doing about creating innovative energy programs? What are we doing to encourage innovation, period?

Mr. Speaker, innovation is a strong characteristic of northerners, and I think the ENR Minister would know that personally. Today I wish to mention about an innovative Yellowknifer who has gone above and beyond to take on new technology to establish smart and wise energy usage. This constituent is using geothermal technology to heat his house. He will be investing his own money in this project; he will be heating his home and his water using

heat from the earth. So now he'll be saying goodbye to 90 percent of his home heating oil bill, Mr. Speaker, and I'm sure he won't miss it one ounce. This constituent, as I do, believes that this government should be interested and seriously looking into types of technology so we can take care of our future and become real partners in our future together. The Department of ENR has offered him advice, Mr. Speaker, but not capital. I said advice; and in this constituent's words, it could be better described as a pat on the back. Even local non-profit agencies such as the Arctic Energy Alliance have had the foresight to help invest money in this project by helping this constituent on this great adventure.

Geothermal technology is already being used across Canada. It's not a new concept, so our government should be willing to get on board, even on a small scale. I'm very concerned about our future and most certainly where we're being driven because whoever's in the driver's seat needs to take off those blinders to see the signs and where we're going. This territory is an amazing place, Mr. Speaker, and it deserves...

Mr. Speaker, may I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement? Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. As I said just a moment ago, this territory is truly an amazing place and its residents deserve innovation from our government and definitely need a reward program that encourages innovation. Mr. Speaker, we need creative thinking and we need it now. I will continue to do my job by challenging the ENR Minister to look out for the best interests of our constituents and our people and to safeguard our future. So later today, Mr. Speaker, I will have thought-provoking questions, which I'm sure the Minister already knows we have a problem out there, and I'm hoping he'll have the courage to help deal with them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Membership On The Public Utilities Board

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, living in the Northwest Territories, we have always had to live with the high cost of living. That is just one of the prices we pay for being up here. Recently, Mr. Speaker, the Public Utilities Board approved a rider increase that has leadership and residents of the Beaufort-Delta very upset. That is putting it mildly. They didn't even contact the Town of Inuvik to see how the rate would affect their community. Does the board not do their research to see if there are other ways to save money and not always have to let the consumer pay? Were they not set up to protect the consumers much as rubberstamp everything that is put in front of them?

Mr. Speaker, two of the five board members no longer live in the NWT, so how can we expect them to look after the best interests of the NWT from down south? I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that if board members leave the NWT, then they give up their positions that can be filled by people still living here. I am not questioning anybody's

qualifications or abilities, Mr. Speaker. The point that I am trying to make is that board positions that were created to regulate the utility cost of the NWT should be filled by residents of the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Members' statements. Returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me pleasure to recognize in the gallery a group of provincial and territorial directors from the early childhood education and care from across Canada ranging from Newfoundland to British Columbia, to the Yukon and Nunavut. With them are some of their northern hosts from the Early Childhood Program in Education, Culture and Employment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. I would like to welcome everyone in the gallery today. If we missed anybody, it is certainly a pleasure to have an audience in here, so welcome and I hope you are enjoying the proceedings. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 8-15(5): Sentencing Terms For Persons With Addictions

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Justice, the Honourable Brendan Bell. Mr. Bell gave a Minister's statement today talking about community justice and some of the pilot projects and some of the innovative things that are being done on the community justice front in our communities. I have to agree that it would appear that we are gaining good results from some of these things. I would like to commend the Minister and his department for that. However, Mr. Speaker, recently, a situation has been drawn to my attention. I believe it has been drawn to the Minister's attention as well, where our local courts are being called upon to sentence people who are known to be addicted to crack cocaine. Sometimes these individuals, rather than go to jail, are being given conditional sentences. They are being placed under house arrest.

I would like to ask the Minister if he does not see a gap in that type of scenario where somebody who the courts know is addicted to drugs is sentenced to house arrest and with no other, and obviously instructed to abstain, but with no other resource to back them up at the community level; no other program, counselling, or any direction provided to them and no resource available. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 8-15(5): Sentencing Terms For Persons With Addictions

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, it is very difficult for me to comment on actual sentencing because that is under the purview of the courts, but I would agree that we need to have support and resources in our communities

for those who need treatment. There is a lot of discussion currently around the use of conditional sentencing. I know the Members are all aware of the federal proposal to hold conditional sentencing and use it only for less serious crimes and not allow it in situations where violent crimes have been committed, sex crimes, crimes against children. It is certainly something that I support that we not use conditional sentences in those cases. But in terms of the latitude that the courts and judges have now, that is not something that we are obviously involved in. But I would say that, as a government, we have a responsibility to ensure that there are community resources to deal with addictions. We are certainly working on a number of initiatives. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 8-15(5): Sentencing Terms For Persons With Addictions

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think that the Minister and everyone in this room or Chamber know that the community resources are not there to deal with drug addictions in many cases and particularly in the smaller communities. To sentence people to house arrest who are drug addicted seems like a bit of a recipe for disaster or for failure for those individuals. I would like to ask the Minister if he has room in the jails for these people. If we don't have the resources to provide counselling and help for these people who are drug addicted, does he have room in his jails for them today? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 8-15(5): Sentencing Terms For Persons With Addictions

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, obviously, it is not our hope or intention that we set people up to fail and somehow they end up back in our court system and back into our jails. We do need to do a comprehensive job as a government, making sure there are treatment options. We need to work in our corrections system to make sure that those who are in our facilities have access to these supports. I think we do a number of things that are very good. Are there needs and are there gaps? Yes, there are, Mr. Speaker. I would certainly acknowledge that. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 8-15(5): Sentencing Terms For Persons With Addictions

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, this is my final question. I wonder if the Minister would commit to working with the Minister of Health and Social Services to do a cost-benefit analysis on providing those resources in the communities to deal with those folks who are in court as a result of drug addictions to see which is the more economic and humane route for this government to provide the resources to support those people in their efforts to get away from those addictions, or to look at the cost of where they are ultimately going to end up and that is in jail. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 8-15(5): Sentencing Terms For Persons With Addictions

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, I am certainly willing to sit down with the Minister of Health, but I think we all recognize and acknowledge and take the Member's point. We certainly provide people a disservice if we do not provide them with the treatment and help they need. Obviously, there are personal choices to be made here. But we also have to live up to our end of the bargain, which is to make sure there are resources available, Mr. Speaker. It is a last resort to lock people up. We are certainly not trying to do that. We are not trying to unnecessarily lock people up when there are other options. I think that and will commit that, as a government, we will continue to work on treatment options. I know the Minister of Health has a personal interest in ensuring that we do that, as does our entire government. So we will continue on that course. I will have discussions with him and certainly invite discussion with committee as I know the Minister of Health would as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

Question 9-15(5): NWT Recycle Program Policies

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My question here today is for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources just relating to our recycling program which rolled out last year. I know that the program has been receiving good reviews and good public participation. That is a good direction that everybody in the North has taken seriously. My concern is with the smaller community depots, Mr. Speaker, that rely on the larger deposit centres in the urban areas to drop off all their recyclable materials. There seems to be some discrepancy on how these materials are refunded and paid for. In the smaller communities, the small depots are paying per unit on the cans and the bottles and the containers that they are taking in and they are bringing them to the larger centres. The larger centres are telling them that they are basing them on the weight that they are bringing in. There is some discrepancy on the refunding and the receiving of the money that they have dish out in collecting the recyclables. I am just wondering what the policy is of the government on the recycling. Is it based on the number of cans or bottles, or by the weight? Can the Minister just answer that first? Thanks.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. The honourable Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. Miltenberger.

Return To Question 9-15(5): NWT Recycle Program Policies

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the cash in your trash is based on a price per container. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 9-15(5): NWT Recycle Program Policies

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the cash for your trash is based on the per unit, what is the government doing to ensure that when there is a discrepancy between the large centres and the smaller centres that are transporting all of these materials to their depot, that they are communicated that the government

policy is on a per unit basis and not on a per weight? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 9-15(5): NWT Recycle Program Policies

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now that I have been made aware of this discrepancy as the Member has indicated, then we will be following up today and tomorrow to ensure that the proper facts are communicated to all of the participants in this program. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 9-15(5): NWT Recycle Program Policies

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is good to know that the Minister will be sending out some kind of a memo to all of the main operators. Is there any avenue in our appeal mechanism that the government would have? Is there an office that these small depot operators can call when there is a dispute and that they can get some mitigation to resolve it? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 9-15(5): NWT Recycle Program Policies

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would recommend that, if there are questions in any particular community, they contact the local ENR officer or the local regional office. They should be able to hopefully resolve the issues and clarify any misunderstandings. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 9-15(5): NWT Recycle Program Policies

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is just for the Minister's information. I am sure he is well aware that a lot of these small centres don't have Renewable Resource officers. They don't have ENR officers. When they do phone the ENR office in Yellowknife, Hay River, the South Slave, North Slave, or the Inuvik office from these remote communities, these calls usually go unanswered, then these people just give up. I know of a few small community depots that are just shutting down because they are not getting any feedback from the government. They are not getting any support in trying to mitigate these disputes that they are having with the larger operators. The larger operators are definitely not taking up their small community concerns to the government because there is a dispute in place. How can people get some positive feedback from the government in saying, yes, we can look into it and we will check into your concern? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 9-15(5): NWT Recycle Program Policies

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the Member would provide me with the detail of the information that he has talked about in the

communities and contractors that he is referring to, I will ensure that they are followed up with and that we can clarify circumstances and make sure that they have the support they need. We can hopefully resolve this issue and maintain and continue the recycling program. Thank you.

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

Question 10-15(5): Compensation Policies For Elders Providing Services To Government

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. (Translation) My previous statement regarding payment to elders, I would like to ask a question. Can they make some kind of arrangement with community services with the new government? There is a lot of concern regarding this from the elders. (Translation ends)

...trip worth for many years negotiating an agreement because they knew that it was self-government. We could do a better job of serving our people than the GNWT or DIAND. We did not go to all this trouble only to have GNWT bureaucracy imposed on us. This is a question to the Minister of the Financial Management Board Secretariat. In light of this government's position on the value of traditional knowledge as passed by my elders, will the Minister commit to making whatever policy changes or arrangements that are necessary to allow the Tlicho Community Services Agency to pay elders for their services within a day? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat, Mr. Roland.

Return To Question 10-15(5): Compensation Policies For Elders Providing Services To Government

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the issue has arisen as a result of the payroll systems being amalgamated where we would use one system of pay. Previously, boards and agencies outside our system or who had their own systems would cut off-cycle cheques. Since being requested to be incorporated in our payroll system, this issue has arisen. We have been working together with Education, trying to come up with another form of off-cycle cheques being issued. Part of the problem is that we need to try to shorten that timeline. Right now, they have fallen into the casual payroll system. To try to shorten that timeline, we would need the information from the Tlicho group or agency in advance of who would be paid, how many days they would be working and then we might be able to try to do something. So we are working on an avenue to try to bring that closer together. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 10-15(5): Compensation Policies For Elders Providing Services To Government

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in my previous Member's statement, the Tlicho Community Services Agency is in a unique position. We are a new government since August 4th of last year. So we are different from any organizations here in the North and also throughout Canada. My next question leads on to...Can the Minister please clarify how he can continue to impose four to six-week delays on payments to the elders from the Tlicho Community Services Agency despite the

clear wishes of the Tlicho Government that is consistent with the spirit and the letter of the Tlicho Agreement that was signed by three parties in the government service agreement, and, Mr. Speaker, in particular, section 3.2(a)? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 10-15(5): Compensation Policies For Elders Providing Services To Government

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the problem arises when we have an individual or, in this case, elders who would come to work for a school board or an agency and they would only come as and when, once every few weeks, once a month or maybe even less than that, depending on what information they were going to provide. That is a difficult portion because our systems right now, as we run our payroll system, do not adequately address that. That is an issue. We have been trying to work with Education around this area to accommodate the request. Part of the problem, as we work our system and try to be more accountable with how we pay individuals, is that if somebody comes in and works for half a day and not a full day, then we have to go back and try to recover that. It makes it very difficult. So they are trying to work on an issue of getting some advance notice of who would be coming in and what time they would come in, and then we could try to work around that issue. We are going to try to work and reduce the amount of time. I am not sure if we can get it right down to a one-day turnaround as was done in the past. We are working to try to reduce the time from less than six weeks. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 10-15(5): Compensation Policies For Elders Providing Services To Government

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am just wondering if the Minister or his department has looked into a contractual basis where they hire an elder on an as-needed basis and they can be paid within the next few days, as opposed to waiting four to six weeks. Can the Minister advise this House if they have looked at the option? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 10-15(5): Compensation Policies For Elders Providing Services To Government

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when we start branching into the area of contracts, that brings a whole new set of rules on its own. Part of the issue is that we had to go down this path of going onto one payroll system is that departments, boards and agencies had too many different systems out there causing a lot of grief for those that would get payroll and then have some changes that needed to be made. We had to go back after the fact. I think there is an opportunity here. If we can work out an arrangement with the Tlicho agency on the timing of when individuals come in, if we had advance notice of when individuals come in, who they are, and how long they would be there for, we could then be prepared to try to accommodate that and shorten the time frame to possibly a week or less. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 10-15(5): Compensation Policies For Elders Providing Services To Government

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my final question to the Minister is, I am just wondering if the Minister can meet with the Tlicho Community Services Agency and come up with a possible solution to this whole ordeal, possibly setting up a petty cash agreement where we hire elders on an as-needed basis so we have petty cash on hand. We hire elders at times here and there for cultural events. So I am just wondering if the Minister can meet with the Tlicho Community Services Agency and set up a system where we can pay elders possibly out of a petty cash fund that could be available to them. Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 10-15(5): Compensation Policies For Elders Providing Services To Government

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are a number of issues that would come up just sitting here thinking about it. So instead of getting into that detail in this forum and possibly making some errors in the response, what I would suggest is that I know there's been ongoing discussions and we've had some meetings in the past, I will direct people from within our payroll systems to meet with the agency and try to come up with something that's appropriate. Part of it could be, as I said, simply a matter of knowing in advance who is going to be working for what time period and that would help reduce that amount of waiting. Thank you.

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

Question 11-15(5): Support For Innovation In The NWT

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe we have a real problem here and I think the ENR Minister can solve it by doing something today. My optimism tells me he's got the leadership and wherewithal, so let's settle it today by making a clear statement by supporting innovative programs out there. Mr. Speaker, we have real problems so we need real solutions. So where is the policy to support innovative programs for energy saving conservation investments in our Northwest Territories and in our people? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 11-15(5): Support For Innovation In The NWT

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we provide substantive funding, along with other departments, to the Arctic Energy Alliance, who is our working arm in terms of energy conservation. This government, as well, has set up its own Energy Conservation Program to support initiatives, retrofitting, looking at new technologies and innovative ways to save energy. We've also combined, partnered up that money with money from the federal government. In this case, there has been assistance provided to the individual in question, money and technical support that is helping advance the work that he's doing. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 11-15(5): Support For Innovation In The NWT

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think the Minister hot potatoed that right over to the Arctic Energy Alliance. Maybe I am wasting my time asking ENR questions and I should march down to Arctic Energy Alliance about their support. But, Mr. Speaker, this is about a lack of policy. This is about a lack of programs. This is about the lack of attention about who's in the driver's seat about this problem because if the ENR Minister isn't willing to do anything about this, I'm going to ask him who will. So, Mr. Speaker, where is the policy to set up support programs so local folks, the everyday average Joe, can get out there and say I'm going to put energy technology into my house and I'm going to tap into a support program from this government? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 11-15(5): Support For Innovation In The NWT

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, very clearly the leadership lies with the seven Members comprising of Cabinet, with myself and Mr. Bell who are tasked with bringing forward first the discussion on the White Paper on the Energy Strategy and we've committed to bringing forward the formal Energy Strategy by this coming fall, which will address that and many other issues and provide a framework, provide the direction and the policy base for us to move forward into this, as the Member has indicated, very important area. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 11-15(5): Support For Innovation In The NWT

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now we're starting to drill down to real answers and real responses. Thank you, Minister. Okay, so the fact is we're now talking about an energy strategy. So recognizing the feds are cutting some of these energy dollars that go out to help real people and now that we're down to the fact that we need the Energy and Natural Resources Minister to set up programs and policies, where are our policies to help these average people who are building houses who want to tap into energy smart technology? Where is the policy? Are we playing Where's Waldo here? Where is the policy? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 11-15(5): Support For Innovation In The NWT

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just laid out to the Member what the plan is. We've met with committee; a presentation has been done; we're going to be releasing the White Paper on the Energy Strategy. We're going to follow that up with a more formal document. In the meantime, there's existing programs available through the Arctic Energy Alliance, some through the federal government, there's been some technical support and those programs are currently on the books and operational pending the outcome of the

discussions and feedback and consultation with the White Paper and the more formal actual document that's going to be brought forward this fall. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 11-15(5): Support For Innovation In The NWT

MR. HAWKINS: We're still missing the results of the policy, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we're still talking about the Energy Strategy. We're talking about hot potatoeing it. Where is the leadership from this government that says energy policy, the policy that says we'll do things smart, we're setting up programs? We're talking about a strategy, we're throwing it away and saying go to the Arctic Energy Alliance, we're saying we're marrying many things, but yet at the end of the day where is the policy that says this government will set up programs to help the average Northwest Territories citizen? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 11-15(5): Support For Innovation In The NWT

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chairman, there's been at least two...Sorry, Mr. Speaker. There's been at least two briefings that I can recollect in recent weeks and months where we've laid out in considerable detail all the work that's being done across government to look at energy conservation, alleviating the high cost of living, the impact of rising energy costs, what we're doing as a government to make government more efficient, what we're doing as a government to work with the communities and the individuals and businesses to assist them to make the necessary steps on the energy conservation side. That is all there. It's been presented to committee. I can share it with the Member if he is having trouble locating that information and would be happy to do that. It would take up a lot of extra paper and a lot of extra energy, but we're prepared to invest that because it is a big issue keeping the Member informed. Thank you.

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

Question 12-15(5): WCB Appeals Tribunal Rehearing For Ivan Valic

MR. BRADEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My questions this afternoon are for Mr. Dent, the Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board of the NWT and Nunavut, and it relates to the efforts by an injured worker to have his appeal heard before a freshly constituted board. Mr. Speaker, it's rare that an injured worker's appeal makes its way all the way to the Supreme Court. The onus is almost always on the worker to shoulder the expense, and the time, and the burden, and the energy that's required to get it this way, and I think it's to Mr. Valic's credit that he has persisted over the years to challenge and win these judgments. Now he is still a long, long way from actually receiving any tangible result. He still actually has, for instance, to get a favourable decision from this new tribunal and that is what I want to focus on, Mr. Speaker. So the question that I have now, 19 years after his accident, five years after he started action to appeal decisions and now six months after a Supreme Court ruling, Mr. Valic still waits to be heard. Why has it taken

so long to assemble the fresh panel of tribunal adjudicators to rehear Mr. Valic's case, Mr. Speaker?

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

Return To Question 12-15(5): WCB Appeals Tribunal Rehearing For Ivan Valic

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The reason is because Mr. Valic and his solicitor have determined that the public interest representative on the panel, the appeals tribunal right now, who would be available to hear the case is not suitable. Their argument is that she was involved in the case. I have been assured by her that she has never even read the file, but they have decided that they wanted a new person. So in order to achieve that, we've had to advertise for additional members of the appeals tribunal. That's been done and, as the Member noted in his statement today, it is the closing day for applications. I will review those applications very quickly and move to have somebody appointed as quickly as possible. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 12-15(5): WCB Appeals Tribunal Rehearing For Ivan Valic

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the answer, but it is quite consistent with the kind of responses we've had from the WCB on such a range of issues. There is never any issue of whether or not there may be some fault or some lack of consideration or process at the WCB. The ability of the WCB to put a fresh panel forward is really what's at question here. So we're now coming up to six months, Mr. Speaker, for this process to grind its way along. Now I'm hopeful that qualified tribunal members will come forward from this latest process, but I anticipate that there's going to be training and orientation required. So when may Mr. Valic expect to actually have his day before this fresh appeal tribunal, Mr. Speaker?

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

Further Return To Question 12-15(5): WCB Appeals Tribunal Rehearing For Ivan Valic

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It had been the hope of the appeals tribunal that they could have heard this case much more quickly, and it was the opinion of the tribunal and their legal counsel that they could put together a freshly constituted appeals tribunal to hear this case right away when the decision was made to hear it. However, since Mr. Valic and his counsel have rejected one of the members, we are working with all due haste to try and put one together. I can't say exactly when that hearing will be able to be held, but I can assure the Member that the appeals tribunal will work with Mr. Valic's counsel to try and schedule as soon as mutually possible, as soon as a mutually acceptable date can be found. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 12-15(5): WCB Appeals Tribunal Rehearing For Ivan Valic

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, to the ruling delivered on December 14th last year by Justice Schuler of the NWT Supreme Court, there were two significant areas here in which the WCB were found at fault. One related to the denial of natural justice to this injured worker and the

other to a violation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. These are significant pieces of law and policy and administration. Significant, Mr. Speaker. I would like to know what steps are being taken by the WCB to hold to account those officers who allowed these positions to be taken and persisted in endorsing them and actually drove this worker all the way to the Supreme Court to actually have it found that these positions were unjust. How are those officers being held to account, Mr. Speaker?

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

Further Return To Question 12-15(5): WCB Appeals Tribunal Rehearing For Ivan Valic

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think it's important to note that the WCB recognizes chronic pain syndrome as a compensable injury. There was some difference of opinion as to whether or not it fits in the disability tables, but the issue is one of whether or not compensation is being paid. The WCB says, or will accept chronic pain as a compensable injury. Each case is dealt with on an individual basis and it doesn't fit into a standard table as some of the other injuries do; for instance, the loss of a thumb or the loss of a foot in which there is a standard sort of response. Each case is being examined on its own and sometimes the pension could be allowed. In fact, a pension is often allowed and treatment is typically provided. So there has not been any individual wrongdoing here in these cases. This is a situation where the judge was not satisfied with the manner in which the appeals tribunal and the Workers' Compensation Board handled the case and has directed that it be looked at again, and that is exactly what both the WCB and the AT will do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Your final supplementary, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary To Question 12-15(5): WCB Appeals Tribunal Rehearing For Ivan Valic

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not a lawyer and I'm not going to attempt to turn the Chamber into a courtroom, but the point was the decisions and the policy and the practice undertaken by the WCB as it relates to Mr. Valic were a violation of the Charter. It found that the way in which it treated Mr. Valic and others who have come forward with chronic pain syndrome was different than the way they were treated from workers with other conventional kinds of injuries, if you will, Mr. Speaker. So that is the point where the WCB was found at fault. That was the point that the officers and the people or the experts of the WCB we rely on, who injured workers rely on to get fair hearings and fair decisions were let down. So this is not some trivial area of misinterpretation. This is a serious, a very serious impact on these workers. What is being done to hold the officers of the WCB to account for this type of action, Mr. Speaker?

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

Further Return To Question 12-15(5): WCB Appeals Tribunal Rehearing For Ivan Valic

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The judge did not say that anybody wilfully did something that was not acceptable. The judge said that she found that they had made the wrong decision and that, in her opinion, it needed to be re-examined. So this is not a situation, if you care to look at the judgment, that there was any indication that an individual was found to have done anything wrong. So, Mr. Speaker, in terms of who is going to be held to account, the WCB has had the ruling

of the court, it's looked at it, the Governance Council has agreed not to appeal the case, the appeals tribunal is prepared to rehear the case as soon as a freshly constituted panel can be put in place and, as the judge said, it might not be realistic to expect it to happen within 60 days and that has proven to be the case. But the appeals tribunal is moving as quickly as possible to deal with the issues. The Governance Council has also taken the opportunity to, or taken the occasion to review its policy on chronic pain. They have undertaken that review and will finalize that review at their next formal meeting and we'll have, I suspect, a new policy in place. But I think it's important to understand that with or without that policy, chronic pain is seen as a compensable injury and each case is looked at on an individual basis. Thank you.

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

Question 13-15(5): Barriers To Government Employment Experienced By Persons With Disabilities

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister responsible for Human Resources, the Honourable Floyd Roland, and I do hope that the rest of Cabinet is paying close attention to the questions that I have today. Two numbers to keep in mind, Mr. Minister, as I outlined in my Member's statement earlier, 13 percent of our population suffers from a disability of some kind and only .4 percent of our current workforce is comprised of persons with disabilities. Mr. Minister, this only confirms that any existing measures to increase these numbers are woefully inadequate and it doesn't seem to bother the GNWT that this is the case, because it is blatantly obvious to me that over the past 10 years these numbers haven't gone anywhere, but stayed stagnant. It doesn't appear that the Government of the Northwest Territories is willing to do anything about it. The Government of the Northwest Territories' policy states that the government is committed to a competent public service that is representative of the population it serves. Also it states that the government should be a role model for affirmative action in the Northwest Territories. Since the government has practically no representation of the disabled community within its own public service, I'd like to ask the Minister what he is willing to do to correct the gross under representation of this community of people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat, Mr. Roland.

Return To Question 13-15(5): Barriers To Government Employment Experienced By Persons With Disabilities

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member is correct in his quoting of the numbers of the amount of people who have counted themselves as disabled when they've applied for positions or have positions within the Government of the Northwest Territories. The numbers, in fact, since our tracking from 1991, are very similar throughout the years. They haven't changed much. Part of the issue, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that when somebody applies for a position within the government, they have to identify if in fact they are disabled or not and some people who are working within the government have not identified themselves as

disabled. The issue around the affirmative action policy, much of the focus of that policy is around aboriginal people in the Northwest Territories being hired in positions. What we're looking at doing is working on an employment equity policy to take over what the affirmative action policy has been identified to do and work on from that benefit to try to ensure that people who apply for positions within the Government of the Northwest Territories that identify whether they are an affirmative action candidate or a disabled candidate would receive the priority that they're entitled to. Thank you

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

Supplementary To Question 13-15(5): Barriers To Government Employment Experienced By Persons With Disabilities

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm just wondering and the Minister has made it abundantly clear how useless the current affirmative action and where we place disabled persons in that four-tiered approach to affirmative action as a priority two, how useless it is to persons with disabilities in trying to gain employment with the government and for him to stand up and say that they don't self identify, I think that's just taking the first escape route that he can see as to why the government hasn't come up with some other policy or some other means to increase the number of disabled persons that are ready, willing, and able to work for the Government of the Northwest Territories. I'd like to ask the Minister how he can defend the fact that hundreds of direct appointments are made by this government, the last government, to priority one candidates under the affirmative action policy, but only one was ever made in the last number of years -- you can go back five or six years -- only one was ever made to a person with a disability. I'd like the Minister to say how he can defend those types of numbers in this House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 13-15(5): 13-15(5): Barriers To Government Employment Experienced By Persons With Disabilities

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the fact is, as a representative government, I can't defend what previous governments did or did not do. The fact is that when Ministers bring forward a request for direct appointment, it's tied to some of our other initiatives. For example, when we talk about graduates from our Nursing Program, our Social Work Program, as well as some of the teachers, and as well the internship program that we have of people who've gone to school, receive some training in their area and have worked within the department for a year or so, we've used that tool as an avenue of ensuring that we get qualified people in those positions.

Mr. Speaker, the Member is using the allocation of disabled people in the sense of the percentage of disabled people across the North at 13 percent and using that in comparison with how many people are employed within the Government of the Northwest Territories. We don't have a key number here on how many disabled people have applied for government positions. Yes, the number is not good and, as well as in a number of areas within our affirmative action policy, and we are going to work to put in something that is, as I mentioned earlier, put together a

package that we want to bring to Members about the employment equity policy. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 13-15(5): Barriers To Government Employment Experienced By Persons With Disabilities

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, let's just talk about this government then. Let's talk about this government and its practice of direct appointments to people under the affirmative action policy. It doesn't include very many disabled persons that I'm aware of; maybe one, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the Minister if indeed he can provide any targets or any type of scenario that would see an increase to the number of disabled persons -- and I've got a couple of constituents, Mr. Speaker, that have faced nothing but barriers when it comes to employment with the Government of the Northwest Territories -- and I'd like him to stand up and tell me what he's going to do to improve this for people with disabilities here in the Northwest Territories trying to gain employment with their own government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 13-15(5): Barriers To Government Employment Experienced By Persons With Disabilities

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, one of the things we have to look at as a government when we put out for positions to have filled by residents of the Northwest Territories is the type of function and other parameters we have to work within in having people be successful in applications when they apply for that position. We can't just set targets and say there's a 20 percent requirement here, let's fill it with persons with a disability, or that are from a different part of the territory, or aboriginal descent, 1922-ers or whatever we call, as well. The fact is, first and foremost, as we put out positions that are to be filled to do jobs for this government is we have to look at the role of that job and take in the affirmative action policy as it sits. I've already stated we are working on a paper, an employment equity policy that hopefully will address concerns around affirmative action hiring in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 13-15(5): Barriers To Government Employment Experienced By Persons With Disabilities

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I take issue with what the Minister has to say because if you use his rationale, you know, it's completely backwards here because I know this government tries to get a workforce that's representative of the population that it serves. Direct appointments are made under the affirmative action policy to P1 candidates. It happens all the time and this government does it. I've seen it happen. But yet when it comes to persons with disabilities, direct appointments are nowhere to be found, Mr. Speaker, absolutely nowhere to be found. I'd like to ask the Minister, will he look at some proactive approaches to increasing the number of persons with disabilities that are able to gain employment with this government? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 13-15(5): Barriers To Government Employment Experienced By Persons With Disabilities

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as a government we're always willing to look at suggestions of possibilities here and I would hope that when we bring forward the employment equity policy here for discussion with Members, that we will have a good dialogue on what options are out there and opportunities that we can improve on our hiring practices as a government. So, yes, we're willing to look and sit down and discuss what options we might be able to implement as we move forward.

The other issue is, just for the record, Mr. Speaker, when we use direct appointments as a way of putting people into positions within the Government of the Northwest Territories, it is not under the affirmative action. We use the affirmative action as some of the criteria. Questions are asked if it does fit with that program and how it would apply. Thank you.

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

Question 14-15(5): Impact Of Fiscal Policy On Small Businesses

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today rises out of the Member's statement, which I admit had a number of issues. But one of the points that I was trying to raise was with respect to the government's responsibility to do all that he can to pay attention to the cumulative effects of all the things that add up -- the high fuel costs, the high labour costs, the high taxes, the WCB rates, and such -- that hinders the businesses from operating businesses in the North. Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you that the northern businesses are up to the challenge. They are aware that things are more expensive, that businesses are more expensive to run, but they also want to let the government know that there is something that the government can do. One of the things that the government should pay attention to is the tax on small businesses. I must have raised this issue before because I happen to coincidentally get a letter from the Minister this morning stating that our taxes for small businesses are on par with the Canadian average, but the comparison should be made really with our closest neighbour who is our competitor. So I'd just like to ask the Minister whether, in his department, when he's looking at fiscal policies and impact of the government policies on small businesses, whether he makes the comparison with our closest neighbour. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister responsible for Financial Management Board Secretariat, Mr. Roland.

Return To Question 14-15(5): Impact Of Fiscal Policy On Small Businesses

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the area of finance, every year when we prepare our business plans we look at our options, all our tax rates, whether in fact the requirement for spending by this Assembly drives up the requirement for more cash, we would look at revenue opportunities as well as our competitive situation in the sense of possibly reducing our tax situation. The small business rate we have in the Northwest Territories, in fact, when we look at other jurisdictions and we do a comparison, is one of the lowest in Canada. Alberta government is in fact lower than us, yes, but at the same time we have to look at all the

avenues we have and impacts of making further changes. But we do a comparison with other jurisdictions. In fact, as a result of the federal government's announcement of increasing their threshold for small business companies that qualify under small business, that has an impact on us, as well, and will help northern small businesses. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 14-15(5): Impact Of Fiscal Policy On Small Businesses

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Further to that I'm going to have to be very careful to make sure that I'm clear with my question here. The follow-up to that, Mr. Speaker, is that I know that the Minister is aware, and I understand that the income level that small businesses will be eligible for this low tax rate will go up from \$300,000 to \$400,000, which is a good thing, but not too many businesses in the North make that much. What is also important is to raise the tax rate for those who are making first \$300,000 and I'd like to know whether or not...The government has suggested reducing small tax rate in exchange for getting rid of BIP. One of the questions raised yesterday was, why should we make some businesses suffer in order for us to get something that other, even big corporations, the government may change its big corporation taxes to be on par with the rest of the jurisdictions. So I'd just like to ask the Minister if he could understand my question because I'm trying to do what I can to explain, but this is a pretty dry area. So I'd like to know if the Minister will make a commitment to review this to see what we can do to help small businesses who are going to be undergoing a lot of cost risers over the next number of months. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 14-15(5): Impact Of Fiscal Policy On Small Businesses

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Should I just say yes, I understood the question and go from there? The fact is, yes, we do recognize the impacts of the high cost of living on the Northwest Territories small businesses. That is why there has been a steady trend since the 1990s when the small business tax rate was in fact in the area of 10 percent and the last reduction I believe happened in 2003 when we reduced it from five to four percent. With the changes in the federal government, there will be an impact to this government's revenues because of the amount of tax applied to the small business. The threshold has increased, as the Member has stated. We keep that in mind whenever we start our business plan process, when we weigh the avenue of either trying to raise more income for our budget process or tell departments that there's less money to spend. So it is something that we have to wrestle with on every cycle we go through in business plan. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Short supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 14-15(5): Impact Of Fiscal Policy On Small Businesses

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I stated already, Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding for a lot of small businesses they may, it's not how much revenue you get, it's, you know, after you take out the expenses from revenue, and for a lot of businesses if they make \$300,000, anywhere near that, they're doing really good.

But a lot of people don't make it that high. I think that's why the government needs to look at reducing those tax rates up to \$300,000. Could I ask a specific question to the Minister? Could the Minister provide us with how much small business income tax this government has collected over the last five years and what the outcome was as a result of changing the tax rates from five to four percent, as it is now? Could I get the commitment from the Minister on that? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 14-15(5): Impact Of Fiscal Policy On Small Businesses

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the way our tax system works, all corporations in the Northwest Territories are eligible for the small business tax rate up to \$300,000. In this case, now up to \$400,000. So we'd have to provide information on all corporations in the Northwest Territories, not just those that had less income and only qualified for the small tax rate. We could maybe sit down with the Member and try to get more specific to what questions or answers she'd like to see in that area instead of providing a whole slew of information that might not be too useful. I'll gladly sit down with the Member and go through that. Our competitive tax rate, when we look at it, we are on par with most other jurisdictions; In fact, lower. There's only two jurisdictions lower than ourselves, that being Alberta as well as, I believe, New Brunswick. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 14-15(5): Impact Of Fiscal Policy On Small Businesses

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think there's a lot to be gained by having exchanges here as well as in private offices. Mr. Speaker, could I get the Minister to provide me with the information as to how much it would cost the government to change the income tax rate for small businesses up to \$300,000 -- I'm not going \$400,000 -- just up to \$300,000 to match the Alberta rate? I think we have serious problems in Yellowknife being a big, major centre. Even though the economy is booming, we're not seeing a lot of people staying here. A lot of people are moving; we can't be competitive with northern Alberta, our closest competitor. So I'd like to ask the Minister to give me a figure on how much it would cost the government to reduce their rate to match the Alberta rate because, you know, the government...

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you for your question, Ms. Lee. Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 14-15(5): Impact Of Fiscal Policy On Small Businesses

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we'll get those numbers. Right now my understanding from the estimates I have is the Alberta government's small business tax rate is three percent. We're at four percent. So we'll provide that information.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Pokiak.

Question 15-15(5): Infrastructure Needs Of Nunakput

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of NWT Housing Corporation. We are in year one of a three-year plan to accommodate or build, construct 530 units, whether they're multi-plex or homeownership, across the Northwest Territories. Today I

spoke in my Member's statement about the need for gravel in communities without year-round access for a source of ground material. I'd like to ask the Honourable David Krutko, the Minister of NWT Housing Corporation, can the Minister tell me whether access and stockpiling of granular material for the construction of building lots is part of the Affordable Housing Strategy? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. The honourable Minister of Housing Corporation, Mr. Krutko.

Return To Question 15-15(5): Infrastructure Needs Of Nunakput

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, Mr. Speaker, we are working with Municipal and Community Affairs. We have a planning team in place to look at what lots are available, what granular materials are there, and what has to be delivered. So we are working that into our transitional plan. For this year we have put out tenders, but most of those tenders that have been put are on the basis we do have lands available in those communities. Again, through the transitional plan that we're working on with MACA, we will be able to have a better idea what lands are available and what granular materials we're going to need over the next couple of years. We are working with the communities such as Tuktoyaktuk and we will have to identify those ground reserves and have to get them brought into the community over the winter road or make sure it's hauled during the winter season. So we are building that into the transitional plan to be able to deliver the housing that's going to be needed over the next three years. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Supplementary, Mr. Pokiak.

Supplementary To Question 15-15(5): Infrastructure Needs Of Nunakput

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My next question for the Minister is, like I said earlier, we're probably going to get 180-plus coming this year. I'm just wondering, those communities without lot development are in, if they can't find suitable lands, say, with claimant groups, what will happen to those units? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Mr. Krutko.

Further Return To Question 15-15(5): Infrastructure Needs Of Nunakput

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, we are hoping to meet the plan that is laid out, but in some situations where we either can't get the lots or the adequate gravel resources to put on these lots to build on, we will possibly carry that project over to the following year or identify a community where the materials could go. So we are going to be able to have a better handle on it once we complete the transitional plan that we're working with MACA on. We're working with communities. At that point, we will be able to bring that forward. So once the plan is prepared and ready to go, I'm hoping to have that ready to bring back to committee and to Members of this House. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Supplementary, Mr. Pokiak.

Supplementary To Question 15-15(5): Infrastructure Needs Of Nunakput

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister on whether, like I said, we're on year one of construction of units, so I'm just

wondering, can the Minister indicate to me whether, say in Tuktoyaktuk that the gravel that they need to build these units is available right now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Mr. Krutko.

Further Return To Question 15-15(5): Infrastructure Needs Of Nunakput

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe the situation in Tuk this year we are going to be able to deliver the program because the units are going into Tuk. I believe we have one supported-lease program, which is a single-dwelling house, but the other unit is an eight-plex unit. But we are going to build that on existing property that's owned by the Housing Corporation and basically move the units that are presently condemned or not being used. So we will build on an existing site already in Tuk. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

Question 16-15(5): Membership On The Public Utilities Board

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of the Public Utilities Board, Mr. McLeod. I'd like to ask the Minister if there's any residency requirements to sit on the Public Utilities Board according to the act? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister responsible for Public Utilities Board, Mr. McLeod.

Return To Question 16-15(5): Membership On The Public Utilities Board

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, first of all I guess I should point out that all our members that are on the Public Utilities Board, we have five members, all initially were appointed when they were all members of the Northwest Territories, they were all residents of the Northwest Territories. We have now, I believe, two members that no longer reside in the Northwest Territories, but we have the other three people who are from the Northwest Territories. Two recent appointments; one from the Mackenzie Delta and, more recently, one from Fort Smith. Mr. Speaker, I don't believe there is a residency required for appointment to the Public Utilities Board; however, we certainly want our members on the board to be residents from the Northwest Territories. In the case where we have now two members who reside out of the Territories, we decided that it would warrant their stay on the board because of their experience. They spent a lot of time on this board. One member was appointed in 1989 when he was a resident of Inuvik and so is the other member who no longer lives in the Northwest Territories. Both were members from Inuvik. They have a wealth of experience. We needed the people to stay on to ensure that we have a smooth transition because we have three new members as of late. So we wanted them to work together and have a smooth transition. Over the next while, the current chairperson has indicated to me that he would like to step down and look at retirement. We are looking at a time frame to accommodate that and to groom somebody up to the position where we can look at someone filling that position.

I would also like to point out that five of these positions that are there are all part-time positions. I will leave it at that, Mr. Chairman.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister McLeod. Supplementary, Mr. Robert McLeod.

Supplementary To Question 16-15(5): Membership On The Public Utilities Board

MR. MCLEOD: That was a long way to say no. Mr. Speaker, initially they did live in the Northwest Territories, but they no longer live in the Northwest Territories. The point I am trying to make is people who live in the Northwest Territories should be the people who are sitting on this board. So I would like to ask the Minister if he would introduce an amendment to the act that requires members of the board to be current residents of the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Yes! Yes!

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, the...

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Speaker!

Further Return To Question 16-15(5): Membership On The Public Utilities Board

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry. The positions on this board are all part-time positions. We have one staff person that supports this board. The nature of the work is very technical, very time consuming. We need people who have the abilities to be able to analyze the applications that come forward, to know the act and they have to be very well versed of what is required in their duties. In this case, we have two people who are currently residing out of the Northwest Territories; however, they have a lot of experience. They spent many years on the board. They know how the board functions. They have indicated that we will work with the two new members. I have to point out, Mr. Speaker, that we did appoint two new members to the board in the last 10 months and they require some assistance while working through the transition period.

We will review. It's a difficult request that is being placed forward. At times, people move, retire and change where they live. We have to be able to accommodate that without leaving a void if somebody has to resign because they no longer reside in the Territories, but we will consider that. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister McLeod. Time for question period has expired. However, I am going to allow the Member to finish his supplementary questions, but I think I would like to draw attention to Members on both sides of the House that time has expired and two Members have not asked questions yet. So please respect the rules regarding short supplementaries, both questions and answers. Robert McLeod, supplementary.

Supplementary To Question 16-15(5): Membership On The Public Utilities Board

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Minister's answer. I believe that expertise could also be found in the Northwest Territories amongst its current residents. Do we go down south and go to one of the legislative assemblies down there and look for two new Ministers? I don't think so. I would like to ask the Minister if...There was no notice given to the residents that this

increase was coming. March 29th they were told as of April 1st that they would be getting an increase from 1.33 cents to 5.14. Now, for an increase that large should have been, a hearing should be held. I am wondering why there was only two days' notice and does the Minister review these decisions that are made? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. You are stepping into a different area of questioning here. I will allow the Minister to respond. Minister McLeod.

Further Return To Question 16-15(5): Membership On The Public Utilities Board

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I agree that we, in the sense that there are people who have experience in the Northwest Territories and the expertise to sit on the board, we don't do that when we appoint our Members or Ministers. Certainly we look for what their credentials are and that's the same as what we do when we look for new Members for the Public Utilities Board. The board was set up by the Public Utilities Act to serve as the expert and independent adjudicator for the rate setting process. It was also set up so that it would be at arm's length from this government. There is an application process. There is an appeal process that can be followed. I don't believe there was an appeal filed. Also, in the last while and since 1996, we have moved away from the formal hearing process to what we refer to as a hearing process where we have sent information out through the mail and through public notices, rather than being there in person.

Yes, the final decisions that are made all come through my office as the Minister responsible. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister McLeod. Time for oral questions has expired. Written questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

ITEM 7: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Written Question 1-15(5): Services In The Sahtu For Persons With Disabilities

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Social Services.

- 1) What is the number of people with disabilities in the Sahtu region?
- 2) What services are in place to serve the people with disabilities?
- 3) How are people with disabilities in the Sahtu qualified to meet once a year? Who can provide them with funding to set up a Sahtu disabilities committee?
- 4) What other departments with the government support people with disabilities in the Sahtu?
- 5) What or who is leading the final decision on the funding on the Community Outreach Program?

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Written questions. Returns to written questions. Replies to opening address. Petitions. Reports of standing and special committees. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 2-15(5): Demolition - Dene K'onia Facility, Hay River

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table three documents this afternoon. The first is a letter from myself to Ministers Miltenberger and Roland regarding the demolition of the Dene K'onia facility in Hay River.

Tabled Document 3-15(5): Dene K'onia Facility, Hay River

The second is a reply to that letter dated May 26th from the honourable Minister of Health and Social Services.

Tabled Document 4-15(5): Magnitude Of The Problem: Key Facts In The NWT

The third, Mr. Speaker, is a fact sheet on the magnitude of the problem of mental illness in the Northwest Territories, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. Motions. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters. Report of Committee of the Whole. Third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Orders of the day for Thursday, June 1, 2006, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
5. Returns to Oral Questions
6. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Opening Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motion
15. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
17. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 1, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2005-2006
 - Bill 2, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2006-2007
 - Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act
 - Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act
 - Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Territorial Parks Act
18. Second Reading of Bills
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

20. Report of Committee of the Whole

21. Third Reading of Bills

22. Orders of the Day

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

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 15:20 p.m.

