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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Thursday, October 19, 2006

Members Present

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

ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey): Please be seated. A Member is rising on a point of privilege. What is your point of privilege, Mr. Ramsay?

Point Of Privilege

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today on a point of privilege. Yesterday in the House I clearly heard and saw the Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger, threaten me and members of my family. I feel that my privileges have been breached because all Members have the right to sit in this Legislature and carry out their duties free from threats, intimidation, obstruction or interference. The Minister's words and gestures, in my mind, constituted a threat to my wife and my brother's livelihood. He pointed his finger squarely in my direction like this and said quite clearly, "your wife, your brother" and gestured with his hand like that, Mr. Speaker. I find this breach extremely disturbing in the sense that my wife and my brother cannot defend themselves nor are they protected by parliamentary privilege.

In my 10 years in politics, Mr. Speaker, at both the municipal and territorial levels, I have never witnessed such a gross breach of conduct. The Minister, in his attempt to explain his remarks, at page 690 of the unedited Hansard stated: "However, my intention is not to threaten the Member. It's to make a point to reflect those facts. If I have caused him discomfort or caused him any unhappiness, then I would be very happy to withdraw that particular comment as it may be recorded in Hansard. My intention is not to drag his spouse into this, but just to point out that there is a clear connection."

Those very comments of the Minister constitute an unjust damaging of my good name and act as a further impediment to me in carrying out my duties as a Member, and they prevent me and any Member from speaking freely in this Chamber. I truly believe this is paramount to our privileges as Members, that we are able to state our views and those of our constituents free from intimidation and threat, Mr. Speaker. I await your ruling on this very important matter. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Ramsay has risen on a point of privilege, which is a very serious matter. I will, therefore, allow some debate on the point of privilege. To the point of privilege. The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday in this House, I made reference to two individuals. This was a conversation, as I sat in my chair, as Mr. Ramsay was talking. Those

comments were not on the record, but when he called the point of order I recognized, very clearly, that I had caused him some unhappiness, that I had spoken inappropriately to the point where he wanted to call a point of order.

I thought it would be incumbent upon me to do the right thing, which is stand up and acknowledge that, yes, there were comments made and that I was prepared to withdraw them. Those comments referenced two individuals. As a long-serving Member of this House, I should have been more aware that my comments were not only inappropriate, but potentially hurtful.

I recognized that fact when I stood up to withdraw them when the House broke. I also went up to find Mr. Ramsay and to personally apologize for those comments. In the heat of political battle, Mr. Speaker, and debate, we can sometimes be guilty of using words against those who cannot defend themselves. Mr. Ramsay has the right to stand and defend his family, and I believe Mr. Ramsay and I share deeply the belief that family is the most important aspect of our lives. I say that as a father and grandfather and a man who has been married for nearly 32 years.

I would once again like to apologize to Mr. Ramsay and his family for any distress my comments have caused and I, of course, deeply regret using a personal comment to address a political issue. Once again, I indicate I would, without reservation, withdraw those comments.

I would also like to assure my constituents that I will work harder than ever to ensure that your interests are represented and that, as a Cabinet member, they can be proud of my work ethic and my commitment to the people of the NWT. Mr. Speaker, I would ask that the Members of this House accept my apology offered with no qualification and unreservedly, and be very well assured that I am aware of the distress my comments have caused and I deeply regret that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. To the point of privilege. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Political life is something that we all enter into because we seek to do something for ourselves, for our communities, for our families, and it can be tremendously rewarding and satisfying when things go right. Good things in life and the satisfaction and the respect that can come from engaging in this does not come cheap. There is always a price to pay. We all walk a fine line every day, depending on the issues or the subjects or the problems that are before us, and we do what we think is right. Of course, that does not always work with everybody, so there are consequences to this kind of thing, to our own reputations, sometimes to our own sense of self-worth and self-respect. You know,

we are constantly asking ourselves did I do the right thing that day, that time, that moment.

Mr. Speaker, along with that goes a level of, I guess, risk and faith and trust and belief from those who are closest to us, our families, our colleagues, our friends in our communities and in our neighbourhoods. They, too, can sometimes be drawn into this because of their affiliations with us. They endure perceptions that may not be correct. They, I think, are sometimes under degrees of suspicion and sometimes exclusion from what they might otherwise enjoy in a community, because of their affiliations with us. We all know that, I think, when we get into this game, and our families should too.

But it is something that we have to be very vigilant, very mindful, that when in formal session and on the record in chambers like this, that connections or aspersions are made to families, that it is absolutely inappropriate. One of the things that I think this House, this Assembly, has been vigilant on is not to allow that to happen. And when it does, as it did yesterday, it is something that we need to bring out, we need to deal with, and set the standard that works not only for us, Mr. Speaker, but everybody in all elected fields of life in the Northwest Territories; municipal councils, band councils, these people also and their families take this same risk.

So I want to conclude, Mr. Speaker, by saying I, too, observed Mr. Miltenberger make these remarks and these gestures yesterday. I find it inappropriate, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. To the point of privilege. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I, too, observed the proceedings of yesterday and I was very gravely disturbed that the rights of another Member may be even threatened, or even perceived to be threatened, Mr. Speaker, and that's one of the foundations that I find of having the honour and privilege of working in our great Legislature, is that we're free to say and do what we can on behalf of all our constituents, and especially giving up our public life for those that we love and those that share their love with us, Mr. Speaker. They're giving up a lot for us to be up here doing what we have to do on a daily basis, and the last thing a Member needs is to be worried about them and their security.

So I observed that that happened, and I perceived it to happen, as well. And that's a big distinction here, as well, Mr. Speaker. I, too, cannot accept that kind of behaviour from any Member whatsoever. Mahsi cho.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. To the point of privilege. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to speak to this point of privilege in the House today. I've been here for a little bit longer than some of the Members on this side of the House and I think I've pretty well seen it all when it comes to different forms of intimidation, threats, I think since I've been here. I take it very seriously, because I think since I've been here I've had my business threatened, I've had my family threatened, I've been threatened. As a matter of fact, there was even an RCMP inquiry had to be made into a threat that was made, that somebody actually physically

wanted to harm me in my service and in my standing to represent my constituents in this House. That goes back a long ways and I have no intention of standing here and dredging up history; however, I think we have a responsibility to uphold a high standard of integrity and accountability in this government.

It's very unfortunate the events that happened yesterday. I also saw the gesture and I did hear the words. Mr. Miltenberger knows that certainly I think he is one of the hardest working Members on that side of the House and certainly makes a very, very valuable contribution. But having said that, I guess we're all human, we're all susceptible to making errors in judgment, saying things that we wished we hadn't said and doing things that we wished we hadn't done. But when we begin to compromise on the responses that we have when these sorts of things happen, I think we embark on a downward spiral and we lower the bar, and I think that is a dangerous thing for us to do.

It is not always easy for people outside of this Chamber to know all the nuances, and all the workings, and all the different things that go on in the exchanges in this House. Sometimes people say, well, you know, let's just talk about positive things, let's just be constructive. You know, sometimes we have to stop, correct the course, deal with a matter, and then move on.

So I wanted to stand and speak to this today to confirm that I did see the gesture. It was extremely unfortunate and I believe we have to have a very low tolerance for anything that is perceived to intimidate or obstruct Members in the performance of their duty on behalf of their constituents. It is an extremely honourable and high calling and it must be treated with the greatest of respect. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. To the point of privilege. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Legislative Assembly is highly regarded as a very respectful place with the people of my own region. They expect a high degree of integrity standards from me as an MLA representing my people. It's an institution that's revered by many people in my region; sometimes not so revered because of the way sometimes we come across in the media and how we say things or do things, or not quite understanding the process of the bureaucracy or the management of certain programs and services. Somewhat, Mr. Speaker, we have a role model. We're playing a role model for people in our communities. We are in a fishbowl, so to speak. Even though we don't want to be in it, we're still in a fishbowl. People make remarks, too. Some are good and some are really, like Mrs. Groenewegen said, are very hurtful. You know, when you walk down any street we're very under the microscope, I could say, and especially in this House here. So there is a lot of respect for Members. Even though we don't agree sometimes, we still agree to be respectful to the Member across you or sitting next to you. Sometimes we bite our tongue to say something, and sometimes we slip on this. That's part of being human. We're not a machine. We're part of being human. I said to my colleagues that any reference or threat to my family I will take it very seriously. As Mr. Miltenberger has said, he is a father and grandfather and he wants to say to Mr. Ramsay that

family is number one important in our life first. They are the ones that help us get to this position here.

So, Mr. Speaker, I ask that you consider the institution as a whole; the integrity is bigger than we are. It must be carried forward, and the institution must be upheld to a high degree of standards and integrity and respect for everyone. That's a real big word for us in our language; respect. Sometimes even I need to continue learning about the word respect. Sometimes I get told by my own people, and to put it back in the face of respect and sometimes I don't think it's the way they should be going, but my people, the ones who put me here, I have to listen to them and be respectful to their concerns and their thoughts, Mr. Speaker. That is the degree of leadership that we, as Members of the Legislative Assembly, need to carry out either in this House or in the other meetings that we tend to. I want to say that on the point here that you were speaking about is the word respect and feeling safe.

As Members on this side here, who are in the opposite of Cabinet, that we can talk freely, we can say what's in our heart, what's on our mind, without any type of perceived or any type of repercussion on our families, our communities, or in our role as a region. We have to talk on behalf of our people. It is not us personally, and that's what the elders said. You speak on our behalf, so do not be afraid to say what you have to say, you know? But sometimes the balance, and I don't quite know the balance. Is it me or is it my people sometimes speaking? Sometimes I may not come across very clear or in a way that the Ministers understand it, but I'm also learning, too. I'm grateful that they're respectful enough to answer some of my questions. Trying to figure out, well, this is what he's saying.

So I wanted to say that the House here, Mr. Speaker, that I have lots of respect for the Legislative Assembly and for the honourable Members and I think that we need to continue and show that to our people back in our communities that we represent. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. To the point of privilege. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think what happened yesterday is really important in regard to what happens in the Assembly here. I, too, did hear and see the Minister point to Members on this side, especially to a particular Member here, and I find that very disappointing and appalling. You know, we're all sitting here as Members to represent the people of our constituency and the NWT. I think it's only fair that whether you're sitting on this side of the House or sitting on the other side, that we have respect for all our Members and families. To hear a Member on the other side doing something like this, you know, I think to the people of the Northwest Territories, it shouldn't happen.

I respect my colleagues here. Like some of the Members said already, that, you know, I do represent the people of Nunakput and I also represent people in the Territories as a whole as we sit down in this Assembly.

So just having said that, Mr. Speaker, on the point of privilege, I think the Minister's comments that came out yesterday and the gestures shouldn't be tolerated in a place like this. So I'm very disappointed. It shouldn't be

tolerated and I think we should move on from there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. To the point of privilege. The honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today we're talking about the point of privilege that we're faced with of what happened yesterday. What happened yesterday is a very serious issue that we're faced with. We've all seen it. Some of us heard it, of what took part. Here we may have rules like gesture equals recording. We've seen it and we've heard it and it's uncalled for. As Cabinet Members, you know, there's accountability. We're accountable to the public, the general public at large, and also our constituents, 43,000 people living in the Northwest Territories. My fear is that if it happened yesterday, is it going to happen again tomorrow or today? We must prevent that from happening again. We have to show respect, from over there, across the table here. There's no need for this gesturing or passing notes, getting each other frustrated or mad, whatever it may be. But we have to hold on to our profession. How we deal with issues, we may be frustrated at times, mad, on dealing with certain issues. Especially Mr. Minister that has one of the biggest portfolios, we understand his situation, what he's going through but, at the same time, dealing with issues has to be at a professional level.

Family, again, comes first. I fear for my wife as a teacher. I fear for the kids in the community. I fear for those that are going to be nurses in the communities, lay dispensers, community health reps. They're not here to defend themselves. Even though it's remarks let's say to Mr. Ramsay from Kam Lake, are remarks to all of us sitting around this table. It's remarks to CHRs, lay dispensers in the communities.

So I take a real offence to this, that this came out. I'm very disappointed in this government that we're faced with. So I'd just like to show my disappointment and that we must show respect. As Norman Yakeleya indicated earlier, our elders have always showed us respect; respect for one another. So I'd just like to elaborate on the point of privilege that was put forward. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. To the point of privilege. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to add my comments to the point of privilege being raised by Mr. Ramsay. He stated some of the circumstances related to this yesterday when he raised a point of order and at the time we didn't have the records or more objective evidence as to exactly what happened. But I think listening to the comments being said today and also the statement that the Minister made yesterday, and the fact that we do have witnesses in Mrs. Groenewegen and Mr. Pokiak and some other Members, I think that there's enough statements on record that suggest that there is no question about what happened. Something did happen and what happened is a threat on the part of the Minister to the economic security and well-being of the family members.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to say that I believe that the Minister is very sincere in his regrets and apologies, and although I think some of my constituents might not agree,

because there's, in the Minister's job you can't make everybody happy. I'm sure there are many who feel that the Minister might not be, might not have done the greatest job, but I have to tell you, in watching his work day in and day out here I don't think there's any dispute that he's a hardest working Member and he's one of the better performing Ministers. So I don't think there is any question about his performance as a Minister. But I think he's also aware of the seriousness of the Members being threatened in this House for doing what we have been elected by the people to do.

Mr. Speaker, on many occasions as a Member here in my time of seven years, I have raised points of privilege on my right to be a Member and do my job and to have the freedom to speak. There is a long tradition in our parliamentary tradition to put mechanisms, laws and rules in place to protect that. There is a reason why the Members cannot be sued for things we do say in this Chamber. We have a wide room for privilege, so we do have the right to speak on behalf of constituents. There are consequences of us doing our job. We are threatened. I have been personally threatened by supporters of Ministers. My family members have been threatened. There is a daily intimidation going around because sometimes what we do here and the laws we make or the questions we ask could cost people jobs. I don't mean...Policies could affect people's businesses and people come and do express and sometimes we feel intimidated by doing things we are sent here to do.

It is a very unfortunate moment. I regret that this has happened. I don't know what happened yesterday. It was one of those moments in time, things that the Minister regrets and that the Minister should not have done, but when it comes to the freedom of Members to function fully, in order to speak for people who cannot speak for themselves, whether they are employees, businesses or people on the street, sometimes they are scared of coming and telling us what they want us to bring up. The last thing we need in the well-being of democracy that we value and the system of government we value, we have to be very careful when the right of Members to speak on these issues are in any way intimidated.

I am sure, Mr. Speaker, you will use your resources to look at the very well established precedence in this regard. I don't think there is a question about the facts of the case. I await your ruling on this, but I do have to say this is a very serious issue, very regrettable, and it is very unfortunate that it happened, but it is something that we do have to stand up and be accountable for. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. To the point of order. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we take great pains sometimes in refraining from speaking about some parts of the government because everybody, I am pretty sure on this side of the House and probably on that side, have someone they know working within the government. We feel that we can't ask questions or make comments on certain parts of the government for fear of something like what happened yesterday. You can talk about our ability or inability as Members and the way we present ourselves here, but I believe, Mr. Speaker, when you mention a person's family or you perceive to be making threats towards a person's family, you cross a fine line. I back Mr. Ramsay up 100 percent in bringing this

forward. Anybody who would like to protect their family wouldn't stand for anything like this.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think it's an unfortunate incident, but I can understand where my colleague is coming from and I commend him for it. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. To the point of privilege. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have to express my dismay at what happened yesterday here in the House. I know everything here spoke in this room is public and any gestures that are made in this House are made to the public also and not just to Members sitting here today. Just on that point, Mr. Speaker, if something like that takes place in this House, which is obviously not allowable, what kind of message is that going to send to the public when people that actually have concerns with government operations, government programs and the delivery of services, when they write a Minister a letter concerning a friend, relative or family member who is employed in that same department that they have concerns with, what kind of message is that going to send to them? They are going to say I don't want to write that letter because I have family members that are actually working there. Even though I don't like the service, I don't want to get them in trouble. That was shown to us here yesterday of people who are actually going to start thinking like that because they don't want to raise the concerns with anybody anymore, especially in this department, because of my family works there. They are employees and they have some kind of connection to that department. I think that will send a bad message out to the people of the NWT.

I know the ability for us to distance ourselves from issues that may seem too close to home is a trade in itself and it's a real privilege to be able to stand here and be able to walk on that fine line which allows us to bring issues that we discuss in our own living rooms with our own family members about how government operates. These issues are sometimes, nine times out of 10, overshadowed by the fact that we are a small territory. Every issue that we do raise, there is some connection; some connection that is not at arm's length for everybody. This government has been in operation for 40-plus years. We all know the dynamics of how the issues are brought forward and how they should be dealt with. I think that whole dynamic and all the things we have been working to achieve has been breached yesterday. It has kind of knocked us back into the dark ages of diplomacy and consensus government. Therefore, I can't help but offer my support to the Member that is bringing this point of privilege forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. To the point of privilege. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This situation reminds me of the old saying that you can pick your friends, but you can't pick your family. Mr. Speaker, the public picks us, our friends pick us, our families pick us to all come to this Assembly as a family and to work together. Like many things, events in real life, things happen that we regret. I can personally tell you that I regret seeing what happened yesterday. I can feel the concern that Mr. Ramsay has. You can hear it in his voice.

That said, I also feel the sincerity from the Minister of his regret, because he made it quite clear, without restriction and without any qualification, he truly withdrew his comments. I can see it. He is a good man and I can see that he truly meant his apology. I certainly hope that we can all work together beyond this point. I really felt that, so I want to acknowledge that.

I can personally tell you, Mr. Speaker, that sometimes when unfounded suggestions are played out, sometimes even in the public, it is really distressing on the family. Again, whether you are completely found innocent or unfounded of any suggestion, your family takes quite a thrashing regardless of how it's been drawn out and spit out. They are the backbone and they prop us up every day. Sometimes it's when you kiss your kids on the way out the door, you just can't wait to get home to see them again and you say I just can't believe I got through this day.

It's difficult standing here in the sense that it makes me think of how important my family is and how distressing it is, because they carry stress as much as we do, but again their hands are tied by the situation. It gives them no chance to help us defend our causes. I asked myself then, what happens when it's not my name being thrashed around by the public, either by the press or other Members? What happens if it was my family's name? I am going to have to stand with my Members today. I underscore that I honestly feel the Minister's apology. I don't think that should ever be forgotten that he does sincerely apologize, but unfortunate events have happened and we will have to see how the House proceeds. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. To the point of privilege. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would really like to sincerely thank my colleagues here on this side of the House for their courage and conviction to speak to this very important issue. Mr. Speaker, I look forward to your ruling on this important issue. Thank you. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The issue before the Chair right now is to determine whether a prima facie has occurred to a Member. That is an issue that I, as a Chair, and other Legislatures across the country, have taken very seriously. I think that every Member in this House should also take it very seriously. So in wanting to try to do the best decision I can on this and taking the importance on this and having heard the Members' views on it, I would like to review everything that has been said. So I will take the matter under advisement and come back with my ruling on the breach of privilege.

Speaker's Ruling

I will now rule on Mr. Ramsay's point of order. Yesterday, the Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay, rose on a point of order under Rule 23(i) with respect to remarks made by the Minister of Health and Social Services. The Member claimed that the Minister's remarks imputed motive.

The initial remarks made by the Minister were not heard by the Chair, nor were they recorded in unedited Hansard. Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms, 6th Edition, on page 143, states that: "Remarks which do not appear in the public record and are, therefore, private

conversations not heard by the Chair, do not invite the intervention of the Speaker, although Members have apologized for hurtful remarks uttered in such circumstances. The Minister, in an opportunity to speak to the point of order, did make reference to the alleged remarks and offered to withdraw the remarks if they offended the Member from Kam Lake.

Specifically on page 690 of the unedited Hansard, the Minister did state, and I quote: "However, my intention is not to threaten the Member, my intention is not to drag his spouse into this, but just to point out that there is a clear connection."

Had the Minister not made reference to those comments, I, as chair, would not have been able to find a point of order. I do, however, appreciate the input of all Members who offered their views when the opportunity arose. The Member for Kam Lake does, indeed, have a point of order. No Member should input false or hidden motive to another Member. I would like to remind Members that they are all honourable Members and I would ask that the Minister of Health and Social Services apologize to the Member and the House and withdraw the offending comments. I have heard the Minister do that, but I will, in a moment, give him the opportunity to do it again.

Further, I would like to remind all Members that they should refrain from naming family members and, for that matter, any members of the public who are unable to defend themselves in this House and are not protected by parliamentary privilege. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again, for the record, I would like to stand before this House and unreservedly and in an unqualified way withdraw comments. I apologize to the Member and this House for those comments and indicate that I am sorry for any distress that I have caused to him or his family. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Orders of the day. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Roland.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 32-15(5): Developing A Macroeconomic Policy Framework For The NWT

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When I presented my budget to this Assembly in February I spoke about a need to develop a broad macroeconomic policy for the NWT. Today I want to talk about how we will accomplish this.

We have all heard the statistics about the tremendous economic growth the NWT has experienced; 71 percent growth in gross domestic product since 1999, the highest employment rates in Canada and higher levels of income for workers. Much of this growth has come from investment in the construction of diamond mines and from exports of diamonds, with some growth associated with oil and gas exploration activities. Spin-offs from this growth have been experienced more strongly in the construction sector, manufacturing, and in the area of professional and technical services.

The labour market in the NWT is operating at close to full capacity. Higher incomes have resulted in increased

consumer spending. The NWT retail sector and even our population has grown since 1999, but at a slower rate than the economy as a whole.

Despite a healthy economy, the linkages between the key economic drivers and the rest of the economy are still not well established. The local impacts of economic activity in the NWT are lower than would be seen in other parts of Canada.

Economic activity in the NWT over the next decade is forecast to continue to be strong. Expansion of the diamond mining industry, the construction of the Mackenzie gas project, and other potential projects all contribute to a positive economic outlook.

As I stated in the February budget address, the Northwest Territories faces important questions as we proceed with economic development. What do we want the NWT to look like in five, 10 or 20 years? What does this mean in terms of the types of economic development we should encourage? Do some types of economic development provide a better return to NWT residents than others? How do we address labour force issues? What key strategies and actions are needed to meet our goals? What government expenditure and taxation policies will best help us achieve our objectives?

We know we need to make investments in our economy and in our people, but our resources are limited. We will need to make choices and set priorities. We need a policy framework that will help guide us in setting these priorities.

Over the next few months we will be seeking advice from northerners on what this framework should look like. These questions will be presented to NWT residents, aboriginal and community leaders, business leaders, and other organizations. Advice from recognized experts will be sought to complement the research and analysis of our own staff. Guidance from the Members of the Legislative Assembly will be an important element of these consultations. We will solicit views through public advertisements, by writing the key stakeholders and organizing a number of roundtable discussions. This process has begun. People will be receiving materials and information soon, and two roundtables are scheduled to take place in Yellowknife and Inuvik in November.

When I present the 2007 budget next February, the Assembly will be presented with a document that summarizes the consultation results and presents proposals for next steps. I plan to seek further advice after that before coming back with a final paper with answers to the questions posed earlier.

That, of course, will not be the end of the process; it is only the beginning. Over the coming years, as we need to make choices, those choices can be analyzed and examined to determine the net economic benefit to the NWT, and recommendations can be made in light of the priorities that NWT residents have identified.

Mr. Speaker, I have been told by people in southern Canada that the message they hear from the NWT on development is foggy. Do we want development? It is not clear to those who view us from a distance. The answer may be yes, we want development, but we want it to happen in a way that will provide long-term, sustainable benefits for the NWT. To ensure this occurs, we, as NWT residents, need to be clear about our goals and priorities

and what choices we are prepared to make to achieve them. A macroeconomic policy will help provide that clarity and direction. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bell.

Minister's Statement 33-15(5): October 15-21, 2006 Is Small Business Week

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is Small Business Week across Canada.

Every year for the past 27 years, the Business Development Bank of Canada has championed Small Business Week to pay tribute to the contribution that small and medium-sized businesses make to our economy.

Approximately 90 percent of businesses in the NWT are considered to be small businesses. These businesses are the foundation of our most vibrant sectors and have been key components in our emergence as a leader in resource exploration and development.

In the NWT, it is small business that provides the energy and innovation behind our increasingly competitive and prosperous northern business environment. Our tourism industry, for example, is a sector built almost entirely on the commitment, hard work and endurance of entrepreneurs and small business owners.

In celebration of Small Business Week, Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to have the honourable Member from Thebacha join me on Wednesday in showcasing a new videoconference facility now available at Canada Business NWT here in Yellowknife and also in Fort Smith. Together, my colleague and I were able to talk face to face with the general manager and representatives of the Thebacha Business Development Services in Fort Smith.

The technology we were demonstrating will allow Canada Business NWT to deliver an expanded menu of small business information, training, and services through the Alberta Business Link to our northern entrepreneurs. For business owners, particularly in Yellowknife and Fort Smith, it's a venue through which to network with southern counterparts and those interested in and dedicated to small business and its development. We're working to expand this service to several other NWT communities.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, through its support of the NWT Business Development and Investment Corporation and Canada Business NWT, is committed to supporting small business as the primary driver in the development and diversification of our rapidly growing northern economy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Minister's Statement 34-15(5): Foster Family Appreciation Week

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In recognition of National Foster Family Appreciation Week, October 15th to the 21st, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the contributions our foster families make in the lives of many children and families in the NWT.

For the past several years, over 400 foster families have provided a safe, caring home for over 600 of our most vulnerable children who require this service. Some of these foster families provide short-term care in emergency situations, while others have been providing a service to the same children for many years and thereby creating permanency and stability in the lives of those children.

I am pleased to report that the majority of foster homes in the Northwest Territories are either extended family or provisional homes that means that the foster families are known to the children and their families. It is our intention to continue to promote families helping families within their own communities.

Every day our foster parents provide safe and loving homes to help children and their families overcome hardships. Becoming a foster parent can be a sacrifice and an act of true selflessness. It is important to recognize that fostering involves the entire family and not just the parents. As such, I would like to say a special thank you to the children of our foster parents as they too open up their homes and hearts to other children in their community who require an alternate home during a period of crisis within their own family. The commitment and compassion shown by the foster parents and their families will not be forgotten, especially in the memories of the children they have touched.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to report that the Department of Health and Social Services, in consultation with key stakeholders, is currently reviewing foster care rates across the territory. We are currently finalizing recommendations that would allow for an equitable and standardized foster care rate system for all communities in the Northwest Territories.

Foster parent recruitment and retention continues to be a challenge in some communities. It is essential that our children be provided with services that they require while continuing to recognize the importance of family, community and culture in their lives. Our goal is to address these issues through continuing to provide support, to provide standardized training to all foster parents, and to adequately compensate foster families by recognizing regional cost of living differentials across the Northwest Territories.

This week, activities are happening all across this territory to recognize the contributions of foster families. Acknowledgement in local newspapers, radio stations, dinners and gifts of appreciation are some of the examples of how our regional authorities are demonstrating their appreciation to our foster families.

I would like to highlight that in one particular community, Aklavik, the community social services workers and community wellness workers hosted a community radio show with generous support from the community. The radio show was both informative and entertaining, with

local musicians giving of their time to recognize the important contribution of foster families in that community.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories, I wish to convey my appreciation to the foster families in the Northwest Territories for their continued dedication, commitment and compassion that they demonstrate in such practical ways to support the children, their families, their extended families and their communities. Thank you.

---Applause

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

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On Support For Residential School Survivors

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last year this Assembly was the first government in Canada to fully support May 26th each year as a National Day of Healing and Reconciliation for residential school survivors and impacted communities. Mr. Speaker, I was very proud of the honourable Members and this government to demonstrate to all of Canada and, more importantly, to the residential school survivors in the Northwest Territories, that we believe that the message was that we believe in them and we offer our support to them in their healing and their forgiveness.

Mr. Speaker, the devastating impact of living in one of those residential schools have profoundly impacted our family lives and destroyed our way of life in the northern communities, life for the Dene and the Metis and the non-aboriginal people. We even had the non-aboriginal people live with us. They were like brothers. But residential school had no discrimination. It impacted everybody in that institution.

Mr. Speaker, only now we are truly beginning to see the serious injustice that happened to the nation of people and the price that was paid for being taken away or forced to attend these residential schools.

Mr. Speaker, it is said that we, as aboriginal people, are a patient people, we're an understanding nation of communities and that we are survivors to whatever comes our way. We seem to adapt to changes, be they in the education system, learning a whole different way of life, just to make a living. Mr. Speaker, we are reminded that we are the fastest nation in the healing movement to get away from the abuses of the residential school. Given that only in the late 1950s that we as a nation of people were allowed to vote in this great democratic society called Canada, that's just over 40 years, and were still considered wards of the state under the Indian Act of 1876. Childlike characters, as we were once referred to.

Mr. Speaker, what does this have to do with the residential school? It speaks to the very core of who we are now and who we are as we were characterized by other people. Mr. Speaker, our people are healing from very painful, shameful, and hurting parts of our lives, and the toughest part is that you have to live each day, to reconcile with people in institutions that supported and implemented the residential school policy.

Mr. Speaker, we are once again faced with the various attitudes...

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Yakeleya, your time for Member's statement is expired.

MR. YAKELEYA: 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. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, honourable colleagues. ...faced with various attitudes by people that want to keep our hearts buried and so in suffering, Mr. Speaker, I am proud of this government to fully support May 26th as the national healing and reconciliation day. I am one of the residential school survivors. Hundreds of them are in the Sahtu region and I will not go back to the dark places of don't talk, don't feel, don't trust. We need to free our people, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Territorial Dementia Centre Funding

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In Mr. Roland's fiscal update yesterday to the people of the Northwest Territories, there were two potentially positive announcements that could have a positive impact and a serious effect on our capital infrastructure in the Northwest Territories. The first was the \$18 million increase in the operating surplus for the last fiscal year, and the second was the commitment by the federal government to respond to a request to remove the \$300 million debt limit by the end of this year.

Mr. Speaker, two things arise out of this. The first one is, I'm definitely concerned that we may be overtaxing our citizens in an unnecessary way to have such a large surplus. The next one is, well, now that we have the money, what are our plans to do with it, this un-projected windfall?

The reason I raise this, Mr. Speaker, is there's a capital infrastructure project in Yellowknife that definitely needs serious attention from this government, Mr. Speaker. Of course, if anyone hasn't figured this out yet, I'm talking about the territorial dementia centre to be built here in Yellowknife in partnership with the Yellowknife Association of Concerned Citizens for Seniors. This would be a great godsend to the people of the Northwest Territories and Yellowknife that are struggling to care for their loved ones with these types of diseases.

Our present hospital and long-term care facilities do not have the equipment to deal with the demands that have arisen because of these problems. Advanced dementia in the hospitals and the costs associated with them are a difficult course that we follow and it's difficult to pay for those and treat folks in a proper and fair way.

Mr. Speaker, what I'm really saying is, we need a dedicated dementia facility today and we have heard yesterday that we have, potentially, the funds to do this. Mr. Speaker, we need this facility because our residents with these advanced cases of dementia need to be cared for in an environment appropriate to their specific medical needs and we cannot treat these folks in the manner that we are.

I know the government has to make tough choices, Mr. Speaker, and sometimes we have to advance projects over others, but now we have possibly identified a source to get this project moving. So I believe, as many of my colleagues do, that this was positive news yesterday. So let's do something positive with it. We have a territorial dementia facility plan. We have a group that wants to work in partnership with the Department of Health and Social Services, or Government of the Northwest Territories, in a positive way to do constructive things for our citizens.

So, Mr. Speaker, in closing, I will have questions for the Health and Social Services Minister later today to expect some decisive action about ways we can help solve these problems. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Fort Liard Housing Conditions

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to address the limited availability of housing in Fort Liard. Many of our 27 small communities experience these problems. Fort Liard's situation is critical and requires immediate attention by this government. Time after time I have stood before this House and requested action to address the housing crisis in Fort Liard, Mr. Speaker, and very little has been done. For the past two years there has been only two houses built there and no one is living in them because of deficiency issues. This year alone we have five scheduled homes. These are replacement homes. It doesn't add to the community; it merely moves eight people out of a mouldy home into a new one without mould.

My leadership have been telling me that they have heard ideas and commitments from territorial and federal governments time and time again with no real action. We must not allow this cycle and circle of political merry-go-round to go on any longer. A new North has arrived, said the Prime Minister. Now let's complement this with new and decisive actions.

The availability of housing and the unsafe housing conditions, such as indoor mould, affects the community's ability to even recruit and retain professional staff, Mr. Speaker. How can we expect teachers and professionals and their families to live in motels for months at a time and still teach effectively, or, more importantly, to stay in our communities?

In the Nahendeh community of Fort Liard, the housing condition is at a critical point and we, as an Assembly and as a government, must take leadership and address these issues. Today we must take care of these needs, Mr. Speaker, not tomorrow. Mahsi cho.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Social Housing Rent Payment Processes

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I'm going to outline the convoluted process that our constituents who live in social housing must go through when attempting to pay their rent. These are the actual experiences of one of my able-bodied constituents in Hay River and does not take into account the additional struggles that are faced by the elderly, handicapped, or those who do not live close to the downtown core.

Mr. Speaker, first you have to go to Northland Utilities and pay your power bill, as proof must be submitted at the time your rent is calculated. Then you have to walk over to the ECE office with your pay stubs and have your rent calculated. Unfortunately, the employee who calculates the rent is not always there, so it can take up to two weeks to have your rent calculated. The ECE office is then supposed to fax the rent calculation over to the housing office in a timely fashion. But this does not always happen. However, Mr. Speaker, my constituent did tell me that the housing authority is at least very timely in sending you reminder letters that your rent is due on the first of every month and when you cannot get your rent calculated by ECE, when you figure that the information may have been sent or when you have confirmed the receipt by telephone, you can then walk down the street a couple of blocks to the housing office and if you're lucky the information has arrived from ECE and they can tell you how much your rent is going to be that month. Unfortunately, since the housing office doesn't accept cheques or have a debit machine, a person must then be prepared to pay cash on the spot, get a money order, or make a trip to the bank. If ECE hasn't managed to get the required information to the housing association, the only way that you can stay out of arrears with housing is to pay what you paid the previous month and do an adjustment later when the rent calculation information finally arrives from ECE.

Mr. Speaker, this is a monthly source of aggravation to our constituents in social housing. I realize that there are growing pains associated with the transfer of any program, but if a program does not work in the second largest community in the Northwest Territories, I cannot imagine what is going on in the rest of the Territories and in the small communities.

Clearly, Mr. Speaker, there is a need to streamline the process and make it more user friendly. For example, just installing debit machines in the housing authority offices would make it somewhat easier for the clients. Having the ECE office attended on a regular basis would make it easier for the clients.

Since my constituent's case...I don't know what that means, but anyway. The bottleneck appears to be with ECE and I will have questions for that Minister at the appropriate time today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Team NWT Soccer (Under 19 Boys) International Victories

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's truly an honour to acknowledge and recognize the NWT soccer records set by under 19 boys soccer team. For the first time ever, Team NWT won gold medal at major international outdoor soccer tournament, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

Team NWT, 2 to 1, won over Team B.C. We have two previous bronze medals. Also, the first ever in NWT soccer history at major international outdoor soccer tournament in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, in 1993. Most goals ever scored by Team NWT at major international outdoor soccer tournament, 22 goals in total. Mr. Speaker, most goals ever scored by Team NWT in one game at major international outdoor soccer tournament, 17 goals in total. First ever shut-out earned at major international outdoor soccer tournament, Donovan Bishop earned one zero-shut-out to win against Team Manitoba, Mr. Speaker. First time ever Team NWT beat Team B.C., two to one. First time ever Team NWT beat Team Alberta, 17 to 1, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

Most goals ever scored by a single player in a single game, record set by two players, Marvin Migwi and Tyrone Fish. Each scored five goals apiece against Team Alberta.

---Applause

Youngest player ever on Team NWT to score one or more goals at major international outdoor soccer tournament. Tyler Sage scored two goals against Team Alberta. First goal ever scored by Team NWT against Team B.C. First goal ever scored by Team NWT against Team Alberta. Youngest team ever to represent Team NWT at a major international outdoor soccer tournament; three-quarters of the team was between the ages of 14 and 17 years of age playing in the under 19 age category, Mr. Speaker. Youngest goalkeeper ever to play for Team NWT at a major international outdoor soccer tournament, David Junior Wedzin was only a fresh 15 years old when he played against Team Alberta, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, congratulations Team NWT. You have proven yet again another success story to cherish and share. Mahsi.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Elders' Facility In Fort Resolution

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Today I just want to talk about the great elders' facility in Deninu Kue. Currently, there are no elders living in the main building that is designed to accommodate up to four residents or elders. The community is well aware that this facility is

not a long-term care facility, but they do support the options proposed in the review of the memorandum of understanding and the possibility of the reprofiling of a facility to better meet the needs of the community.

Mr. Speaker, the issues brought to the Minister's attention about the proposed uses of the facility are not issues that are specifically related to the need to have the facility full of seniors at all times, but these concerns are just about the management and the authority, or lack thereof, of the community organizations respecting the use of the building. One of the main concerns is the fact that the Housing Corporation that owns the great elders' main building or the facility in Fort Resolution has more say than any other community organization when it comes to what the allowable uses of the facility are and could be. I don't think that the Housing Corporation consults with the Deninu Kue First Nations or Fort Resolution's Metis Nation, the Deninu Community Council or any residents when receiving requests from these organizations and residents alike on possible uses or even temporary ones.

The requests such as having wakes for deceased residents and elders and their relatives held within the main building or perhaps providing temporary shelter to victims of domestic abuse within the community. Also, temporary residents for possibly the homeless or some seniors who are still living at home but are waiting for emergency home repairs. These are just some of the ideas that always seem to fall on deaf ears, Mr. Speaker, when they are brought to the proper authorities to seek permission and gain access to the building, which, in turn, always results in residents becoming frustrated with protocol and with the lack of compassion shown by this government and its officials toward community requests to use the main facility, which is usually empty, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the next Health and Social Services...

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

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to conclude my Member's statement. Thank you.

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

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker and colleagues. Mr. Speaker, the next Health and Social Services Authority board meeting will be held in Fort Resolution this Monday on October 23rd. I encourage the Minister to direct board members to provide some assurances that it is working to address these matters and provide timelines, deadlines and recommendations from the two reports that have been drafted since March 2006 that hopefully will address and rectify problems in this area. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Recruitment Process For The RCMP Access Program

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for the past two and a half years, I have been talking about the RCMP presence in Sachs Harbour, but today I would like to go through a little different process.

Last night, on CBC North, there was an interview with Corporal Violet Pokiak of "G" Division of Yellowknife here regarding the recruitment of people for RCMP programming in Halifax. I understand Corporal Pokiak will be travelling to all the communities in the Northwest Territories over the next four years, trying to recruit people in the Northwest Territories. I think, on behalf of the RCMP, that is a good process out there that they are working towards. I hope that during the travels of Corporal Pokiak, that she will be able to draw all the young people into the communities and look at the workshop that she's having. I hope that at some certain point they will be able to encourage all the young people that we do need the RCMP aboriginal people in the Northwest Territories and I hope they can take advantage of this process.

Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to recognize that the RCMP and "G" Division are doing a good job in trying to recruit people in the Northwest Territories to go south to try the RCMP Access Program. I wish them very well in their endeavours to recruit these young people. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On GNWT Employees' Overtime Issues

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, over the last few months, the GNWT introduced a policy where across the board, with very few exceptions, the GNWT employees cannot bank any more than 75 hours of overtime. Not only that, once an employee has reached that in any fiscal year, they cannot refill it again. Mr. Speaker, this means that most of your overtime, above and beyond that, is paid out in cash. This is a problem, Mr. Speaker, because, believe it or not, money is not everything to our people. They want to have the choice of being able to take the time off instead of getting cash, but the shortage of workers sometimes does not make it possible, Mr. Speaker. For all the positions in the GNWT that are required to perform clawback and travel duty, the bulk of which are in the health care field, this policy has been detrimental to the morale of these employees, Mr. Speaker. The fact that some sections of the Stanton Territorial Hospital, for example, are allowed to bank more than this is a problem as well.

Mr. Speaker, I have been receiving correspondence from the workers who say they feel that they work so hard and they do many hours of overtime and are on call, some by choice and some not by choice. These extra hours of work are necessary because there is a shortage of allied health care workers everywhere and the patients deserve access to health care services in the Territories 24/7. It is our public right, they say. But as a result of these restrictions, they feel penalized for providing the quality care northern patients deserve. The loss of the ability to refill their

overtime banked means they have lost their freedom to choose when and how their time in lieu is taken. Until the GNWT takes responsibility of this serious retention and recruitment issue and provides the money necessary to fill those vacant intermediate positions in hospitals and in all health care offices and facilities in the territory, Mr. Speaker, this seriously affects the health care services in the North. I would like to take this moment to ask the government to revisit this issue and scrap this policy that is demoralizing all of the health care workers who are working tirelessly because of the shortage of labour and the importance of the health care services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Member's Statement On Premier's Comments Regarding Residential School Survivors

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just recently my colleagues were making a statement on residential schools. I would also like to make a statement, Mr. Speaker, to that effect.

Growing up in Inuvik, I was one of the town boys. There were the town boys and the hostel boys. I grew up beside these boys. I went to school with them, but I didn't realize, Mr. Speaker, the conditions that these boys had to live in. Lately, with all the research that I have been doing and questions I have been asking, I had a chance to reflect on the conditions that they put up with. I have a whole new admiration, Mr. Speaker, for the many boys who went to residential school and the way they are doing today.

I hear them talking about the term survivor and that's a real appropriate term because, Mr. Speaker, I believe that's what they are. They are survivors. To hear comments being made questioning some of that has upset me that much more. It's hard to imagine the frustration that a lot of these survivors felt when they heard the comments coming from the Premier to the media. Have these people not suffered enough, Mr. Speaker, without having the head of the government make such comments and open old wounds?

When I heard this, Mr. Speaker, I have to ask myself a question; a very serious question. Have I not done enough to hold the Premier accountable for his remarks? Have I not done enough to show my support for these survivors and hold the Premier accountable for these remarks? Mr. Speaker, in speaking to a lot of them, some of them wish they were town boys, so they could go home at the end of the day, but that was impossible. To this day, Mr. Speaker, all they wanted was to be believed. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Regulatory Problems Within Mineral, Oil And Gas Exploration Industry

MR. BRADEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. In the area of development and regulatory matters, the Northwest Territories does not have a great score card in the industry of mineral and oil and gas exploration, Mr. Chair.

We often hear the statistic quoted that Alberta, on an annual basis, processes hundreds of applications for exploration of natural resources and, yet, a number of approvals here in the Northwest Territories, basically you can count them on a couple of hands.

The major deficiency that's been identified, a chronic deficiency, has been the lack of capacity in the regulatory boards established under the Mackenzie Valley Resources Act. Getting appointments to this board has been a chronic problem for our government, Mr. Speaker. We have allocated, as the GNWT, a number of seats on these boards and we have had some difficulty of late getting the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs, who has the duty to appoint, to listen to our nominations. We have had refusal by the Minister of Northern Affairs to accept our appointments and now, with at least one of these vacancies running up 10 months, it certainly is easy to understand why the resource exploration and development industry sees the Northwest Territories as not a very attractive place to do business. At the real front end, we can't even process the paperwork. Getting the nominees on this board and having our voice at this critical decision-making point is an essential part of the way we do business. Mr. Speaker, I think we are being denied that opportunity by a Minister in Ottawa who's got some other agenda other than our best interests, which he has a duty to represent, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Acknowledging Department And Employee Concerns

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have been a Member of this House for almost three years and I continue to enjoy the opportunity and privilege to stand in this Legislature and represent the constituents of the riding of Kam Lake, the city of Yellowknife and this territory. I take my job and this position very seriously.

Yesterday during question period, while my colleague Ms. Lee was questioning the Minister of Health and Social Services and this was in response to an off the record comment I had made that the Minister of Health and Social Services should perhaps ask his colleague Mr. Dent about what happens when you just solely listen to your top level bureaucrats in your department and you shouldn't perhaps accept for fact everything that your deputy minister or CEO may tell you.

Mr. Speaker, I have a message for the Premier and his Cabinet. Maybe they should all go for a tour of the various departments that they represent and are responsible for every once in awhile just to touch base with the employees who are there on the ground doing the front-line work, and discuss with them and meet them to see what their concerns are and make an effort to address them.

As a Regular Member, I take great pride in the fact that employees from all areas of our government's operation can call me and get me to address their concerns. Mr. Speaker, they should be allowed to continue to do just that. Mr. Speaker, I will stand up and continue to fight for their issues. Our employees should not feel scared or

intimidated to come forward because of reprisals of senior managers. Why is this such a touchy subject for this government? Are they afraid that they might be taken to task for something or might actually have to do something? It's a problem, Mr. Speaker. I believe what this government needs is some whistleblower legislation and the sooner, the better. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Members' statements. Reports of standing and special committees. Returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

ITEM 6: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize my constituent Peter Huskey that's in the audience. There is another constituent, Francis Washie, who was here also. I would like to welcome them to the gallery. Mahsi.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize one of my constituents. It was an oversight yesterday, Arlene Hache. I didn't recognize her yesterday.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. If we have missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to the Legislative Assembly. It's always nice to have an audience. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

ITEM 7: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 133-15(5): Territorial Dementia Facility Centre Funding

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My Member's statement today, as well as on many other occasions, I speak about the need to ensure that we have a territorial dementia centre built sooner rather than later. Mr. Speaker, it is a serious concern that I have that there may not be funding in this upcoming capital budget plan for our next budget fiscal year. Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Health and Social Services is, what is the current status of the territorial dementia centre facility that is supposed to be a partnership between the Yellowknife Association of Concerned Citizens for Seniors and his department? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 133-15(5): Territorial Dementia Facility Centre Funding

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I met with YACCS a couple of weeks ago and indicated to them that the dementia facility is not in the '07-08 capital plan. It is on our list should

there be any new money that comes available, along with a number of other projects. We continue to do the work. There was \$1 million allocated to the dementia facility planning last year. That money has not been fully expended. In fact, it's only been partially expended. So we are continuing to look at that. We have been in contact with YACCS. We are going to be much more actively involved to work with YACCS in terms of the scope of the project. We will keep the need clearly identified and make sure it stays on our business plan request for the coming year. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 133-15(5): Territorial Dementia Facility Centre Funding

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know the Minister was in the House yesterday when our Finance Minister gave his statistical update. Mr. Speaker, I know he must have heard the Finance Minister say we had \$18 million higher than our original projection. So what is the Minister doing about putting this dementia centre up on the priority list? What is he doing to knock down, kick down at whatever, get that door off to speak to that Finance Minister to make this project a real go? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 133-15(5): Territorial Dementia Facility Centre Funding

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have been going through the business planning process, the capital planning process. The Minister of Finance gave a statement in the House about the fiscal update. He indicated that there is a requirement to have a certain amount of surplus to be able to fund our capital infrastructure. The money that was in the budget, the money was fully subscribed to. We have a much longer list of projects than we have resources. It is on our list should new money come available, but at this time there has been no money added to the capital budget and that is the reality as far as I know. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 133-15(5): Territorial Dementia Facility Centre Funding

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to hear the Minister's list of priorities, because I am not sure we have another need out there that demands such a high priority as our dementia facility. We need to be treating people in a proper facility suited to this specific need. Will the Minister tell me today, where are his priorities on this facility in comparison to any other priorities? Is it the top priority of his department to get this dementia facility built in a timely way in the city of Yellowknife? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 133-15(5): Territorial Dementia Facility Centre Funding

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to point out to the Member that this is not just a list of health projects, but there is a government-wide list of a whole host of projects that are important, not only to Yellowknife but to communities all around the Northwest Territories. Our decision is to focus on Stanton, as we have indicated to committee, as well as a potential to move on to the consolidated clinic.

The dementia facility clearly is on our to-do list but, for the funding that was available for this year, the focus is on those two particular projects in Yellowknife. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 133-15(5): Territorial Dementia Facility Centre Funding

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I say this with respect both to the Minister and other departments, but I don't really care about other departments when I talk about the Health Minister. I want to hear about the Health Minister's priorities. I know other Ministers will be kicking on the Finance Minister's door if they heard there was one single dollar available for any of their projects or programs. I would like to hear from the Minister. With respect to other departments, like I say, I don't care about that. I want to hear about the facility for the dementia centre. What is he doing to kick down that door to say I heard there is some loose money out there somewhere in a surplus, let's do something with it that will have real needs. So what is the Minister doing? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 133-15(5): Territorial Dementia Facility Centre Funding

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not aware of any loose change within the context of our entire fiscal circumstance. I have outlined to the Member the process and where the facility stands. There is also many other critical projects out there. The dementia facility has just come into the capital plan this year. It's now on there and we will continue to move it forward in the coming business planning cycle. Thank you.

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

Question 134-15(5): Appointments To Mackenzie Valley Land And Water Board

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions this afternoon are for the Premier and this is in relation to the appointment of GNWT representatives to the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board...I'm sorry, the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board, a position that has been vacant now for some 10 months.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier was, I recall, quoted in a recent media interview as saying that while the initial nominee of

our government has been rejected by Minister Prentice of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, that our government should really undertake to give him a few more selections. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to ask the Premier in this regard, just what is the discretion of the Minister of Northern Affairs to reject our nominee?

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

Return To Question 134-15(5): Appointments To Mackenzie Valley Land And Water Board

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Because this is a federal board, the federal Minister has the final decision on any of the members. We simply put forward nominations; he can choose to reject them if he chooses. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 134-15(5): Appointments To Mackenzie Valley Land And Water Board

MR. BRADEN: You know, Mr. Speaker, when these boards were created, and we are going back about 10 years now, the NWT fought for a degree of representation and autonomy so that we knew that our voices were indeed going to be heard, along with those of many First Nations who also have designated spots on those boards. Just why is it that we are not pressing the Minister to accept our nominee so that we can be assured that our position is being heard as clearly as possible and not subject to the whims or biases that a federal Minister might want to have, Mr. Speaker?

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

Further Return To Question 134-15(5): Appointments To Mackenzie Valley Land And Water Board

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I can assure Members that we have been pressing the Minister for several months now and, as I say, it is the Minister's discretion, the final decision, I should say, on our nominations as well as nominations from other parties including aboriginal organizations. So he has that final say. Mr. Speaker, in order to resolve this, we recognize the need to have someone and have that position filled. In order to move ahead with this, we have agreed with the federal Minister to give him more names. If he can't make a decision based on the names we have provided, we will give him more names. Recently, the Minister responsible, the Minister of ENR, had sent a letter out asking for nominations from Members and others. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 134-15(5): Appointments To Mackenzie Valley Land And Water Board

MR. BRADEN: Indeed, Mr. Speaker, I have that call letter in my hand right now and it's certainly something I am going to give a lot of attention to. We went through this process earlier this year. We came up, I believe, with a good name, one that had my confidence. I wanted to ask the Premier if he got any reason from the Minister of Northern Affairs for the rejection. What are the criteria that

the federal Minister wants to put on our nominee, Mr. Speaker?

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

Further Return To Question 134-15(5): Appointments To Mackenzie Valley Land And Water Board

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, no, I have not gotten any reason why the Minister will not select the one individual we provided. The Minister did say, though, that if we give him one name, the answer is yes or no. He appealed to me, can you give me more than one name so I can choose. In order to get this position filled, I have agreed to. Yes, we will give you more names, if that is what you wish, Minister. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 134-15(5): Appointments To Mackenzie Valley Land And Water Board

MR. BRADEN: Here we go again, Mr. Speaker, still under Ottawa's thumb trying to get anywhere at all with resource revenue sharing and devolution. It's tough enough that we can't even secure our own independence with one of 20 people on a board. We are not even able to get that far with Ottawa. Will the Premier, indeed, once consultation is through, put forward a name that we know we have confidence in and insist that the Minister of Northern Affairs take that as the true and full voice for the NWT, Mr. Speaker?

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

Further Return To Question 134-15(5): Appointments To Mackenzie Valley Land And Water Board

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, the work of this board is very important. It's very important that we have representation on it. In order to fill that position and get on with the important work the board has, I have agreed with the Minister that we will provide him with more than one name. If he feels he doesn't want to just rubberstamp the one name we give him, we will give him more names. Mr. Speaker, I appeal to all the Members of this House to think about other names that we could put forward to get this board fully represented and on with its important work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 135-15(5): Social Housing Rent Calculations

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. I sense he's been feeling left out lately.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aw.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: In my Member's statement, I outlined the run around that our constituents must go through in attempting to pay their rent for social housing. Mr. Speaker, we want them to pay their rent, but the number of hoops that we are putting them through I think would be a discouragement to anybody paying their rent. Can the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment

inform this Assembly what he intends to do to reduce the apparent bottleneck in income support offices and speed up the transmittal of rental calculation information to local housing authorities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 135-15(5): Social Housing Rent Calculations

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mrs. Groenewegen is right. As we have seen this program move from one department to another, the subsidy program has definitely shown us or caused us some problems with that transition. We have formed a working group that involves everybody right from my deputy minister to the head of the Housing Corporation and regional staff to try to deal with issues like the one that the Member brings forward. As we heard about them, we try to address them on a case-by-case basis. I am not sure if the Member's constituent needs to come into the office every month. In this transition, some of our ECE offices have been looking at all the clients to see whether or not they might be put on a bi-monthly or tri-monthly system of coming in. That is certainly one thing we could do to try to ease the situation. I would certainly appreciate the opportunity to see if we can't work with the Member and her constituent to address these circumstances. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 135-15(5): Social Housing Rent Calculations

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In this day of modern information technology, has the Minister given any consideration to a shared computer information system that would allow the ECE office to transmit the rent calculation information to the housing authority in a more timely manner, somehow that they could both access the same source of information? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 135-15(5): Social Housing Rent Calculations

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will certainly challenge my department with that suggestion. If it would speed up the process, then I think it's something we should take a look at.

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

Supplementary To Question 135-15(5): Social Housing Rent Calculations

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell me whether all income support workers in the NWT are now trained to do rent calculations, and how are communities without permanent income support workers, how is the rent being calculated in those communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Two questions there. The Minister may answer one or both. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 135-15(5): Social Housing Rent Calculations

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Because of turnover, I can't say that today every single employee has complete training. We may have some new employees who may not have completed training, but there is regular and ongoing training. There was a training session for income support workers just last week, and we do ensure that our supervisors work with new people to provide training in the regions where necessary. I believe that all of our employees are up to date. We work to ensure that happens. In most communities where we do not have a full-time or part-time worker, the service is provided by visits that workers may make to the community, and through the provision of 1-800 services. We're also trying to work very closely with the local housing authorities and are discussing whether or not we could work with one of their offices to perhaps deliver the programs in those communities. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 135-15(5): Social Housing Rent Calculations

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, I think that people are very interested in being timely in paying their rent. They don't want to have a bad record of rent payment, but I think we are making it somewhat difficult for them and I will certainly look forward to any report of streamlining or enhancing the system that would help this group of tenants in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. I don't know if I heard a question there, but, Mr. Dent, you may have heard a question.

Further Return To Question 135-15(5): Social Housing Rent Calculations

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As part of the Income Security Program, we are, in fact, trying to streamline all of our processes for delivering subsidy services to our citizens. I have committed to reporting to the Standing Committee on Social Programs as we work through that process. I'd be happy to commit to delivering the same information in this House.

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

Question 136-15(5): Measures To Address Youth Crime In Inuvik

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I made a statement on the youth crime in Inuvik, and my questions today would be for the Minister of Justice, Mr. Bell. I'd like to ask the Minister if there's anything that we can do as a government to have consequences for youth and/or their parents for criminal offences. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 136-15(5): Measures To Address Youth Crime In Inuvik

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, thank you. I know that this is of particular concern right now in the Inuvik region. I know that the Member and Member Roland also attended a community meeting that was, I believe, hosted by the mayor to have some discussion and talk to the RCMP about what they are doing and what the community justice folks are doing in the community. I think there is some good programming. I think it is going to take certainly the community to come together to work on this issue, but they need tools and they need help. I think that's where we need to come in, Mr. Speaker.

I can tell you, just back from my discussions with my provincial colleagues and the federal Ministers, this is something that a number of jurisdictions have raised, as well. We do have to find a way, there has to be a mechanism in our young offender legislation to allow us to deal with the situations where offenders are incorrigible and do need to be incarcerated. It's not the majority, but we do need a mechanism for this, Mr. Speaker. So I can tell you it is a national priority and we are talking about some reworking of the young offender legislation to accomplish this. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 136-15(5): Measures To Address Youth Crime In Inuvik

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There's a lot of light sentencing going on with the Youth Criminal Justice Act, and the sentencing is hoping to give these youth a chance and another chance and another chance, and it obviously seems not to be working. I'd like to ask the Minister if we have the authority to introduce legislation that may supersede this act and set our own policies. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 136-15(5): Measures To Address Youth Crime In Inuvik

HON. BRENDAN BELL: No, Mr. Speaker, we don't. We can't introduce legislation that would override this federal legislation. But let me talk about a couple of things nationally. There's a Manitoba proposal; there's an advanced number of principles they'd like to see adhered to in the Youth Criminal Justice Act. They would like to see and recognize that deterrents should be, and can be, a valid youth sentencing principle. It really isn't today, and this change could be made. We could also talk more about permitting repeat young offenders to be detained in custody. Another thing, Mr. Speaker, we could do is to limit the presumption of entitlement to bail. I think we could all recognize we have to demonstrate that people aren't a threat to society before they should be allowed out on bail, not the other way around, Mr. Speaker. So we have talked about some reverse onus provisions for bail, where it relates to young offenders who we're having a very difficult time with. So there are a number of things underway, but, no, we can't come up with legislation that

would override the Youth Criminal Justice Act. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 136-15(5): Measures To Address Youth Crime In Inuvik

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know I'm all for rehabilitation. I think the offenders are going to have to want it, and it seems like recently there's been a whole new philosophical approach to crime prevention and rehabilitation for young people. I'd like to ask the Minister, has this approach worked? Have there been less crimes committed because of this approach, or are we in worse shape? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 136-15(5): Measures To Address Youth Crime In Inuvik

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, it's a very difficult question. It's hard to know, in terms of cause and effect, what exactly has happened. It is something that criminologists study and something that we've looked at as a department. When we changed from the old young offenders legislation to the new YCJA, the Youth Criminal Justice Act, obviously the philosophy did change. It's less about custodial sentences. I think the idea is right. We may have swung too far, though, Mr. Speaker, and I think that's what we're seeking to address now. Programming is important, but there are cases where we need to ensure that public safety is upheld and we're going to need to make sure that there are custodial sentences. Thank you.

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

Question 137-15(5): Funding For Public Library In Behchoko

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to stress the vital need for a public library in Behchoko. As we know, the public library plays a vital role in the communities. Learning and enhancing reading skills and opening minds to new ideas are all positive effects that the libraries can provide. My question is to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Can the Minister tell me what funding he can make available for a public library in the community of Behchoko? Mahsi.

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

Return To Question 137-15(5): Funding For Public Library In Behchoko

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The department has no capital funds in its budget for any libraries in the Northwest Territories. Having said that, I've offered previously to meet with the Member and representatives from Behchoko to see if there's anything that we can, perhaps, look at in a joint proposal. But at this point, this government doesn't have any money for any library for capital expenditure. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 137-15(5): Funding For Public Library In Behchoko

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm curious on the funding for these libraries across the Northwest Territories, whether it be Yellowknife, Hay River or the Fort Smith Area; the public libraries. The Minister just indicated that there's no funding from the GNWT as a contribution to these libraries. I'd like to know where this funding is coming from to support these libraries because it's under education. Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 137-15(5): Funding For Public Library In Behchoko

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For instance, the library in the city of Yellowknife was built by the City of Yellowknife and it's run and operated by the City of Yellowknife. So what has happened in those communities that have libraries, the communities themselves have generally been responsible for providing them.

Last year, ECE helped six communities expand the services that they deliver through their school libraries to open them to the public. Where we can find ways to assist communities to do that, when we have the funds we're prepared to jump in. But when it comes to building a brand new library, this government is hard pressed to deliver its current capital program and we haven't been able to expand any of our capital programming to build new libraries.

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

Supplementary To Question 137-15(5): Funding For Public Library In Behchoko

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Minister's willingness to sit down with the Tlicho Community Services Agency or the community government of Behchoko. He outlined the six communities that receive funding on special projects. It would be great to have Behchoko as the seventh community, possibly for next year as a project. So when could the Minister meet with the Behchoko community government or Tlicho Community Services Agency on establishing a public library in Behchoko as a partnership? Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 137-15(5): Funding For Public Library In Behchoko

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd be happy to meet with the Member and see if we can find a mutually convenient time in the very near future.

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

Question 138-15(5): Support For Residential School Survivors

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my statement this afternoon I talked about the residential school support and residential school in the Northwest Territories and of the impacts. I'd like to talk more about the issue with the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, in terms of what type of support his department or the Government of the Northwest Territories is doing in terms of supporting the people who are dealing with the residential school issues, whether it be on a national front, or territorial level, or just through the ADR process. Can the Minister advise the people as to the type of support he's giving the former students of residential school? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 138-15(5): Support For Residential School Survivors

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the Members are aware, the Government of the Northwest Territories is working to make sure that we coordinate support services for residential school survivors. What we're hoping to do is provide a government-wide support system for emotional support, for financial counselling, for helping claimants fill out forms, if necessary. We want to be ready to respond to family violence, including elder financial abuse, and ensure that we're offering victim services. ECE has been assigned the lead and, at this point, a coordinating group has been formed which includes Education, Culture and Employment, Justice and Housing and Social Services. From that support group, we will be looking to branch out, to bring in other agencies, and develop an action plan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 138-15(5): Support For Residential School Survivors

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think the residential school survivors in the Northwest Territories will be very happy to hear what the Minister has to say in terms of support. Again, this government, slow it may be, however, it's doing the right thing for our people in the communities. We are giving the support to the survivors. I would ask the Minister, would he look at more specific areas in terms of helping the survivors, because there are generations of survivors, in terms of the education system, in terms of curriculum, and informing our school children, our children, that this is part of our history? So how is this going to be in the history in terms of our school now in terms of the real truth coming out for residential school experiences in the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 138-15(5): Support For Residential School Survivors

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not positive, but I do believe that the issue of residential schools is dealt with in our curriculum in the Northwest

Territories. I'll have to undertake to provide the Member with more details in writing as soon as I can. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 138-15(5): Support For Residential School Survivors

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister provide Members across the House here, because they all have survivors in their own communities, in terms of an action plan, a coordinated plan, so they can give the people back home in their communities that this is what the government's doing, this is what we expect to see by February or next January in terms of what type of support and who they can call within the Northwest Territories, say the government is taking the lead role in terms of supporting our people in this issue because this is not going to go away as we think it's going to. So I'll ask the Minister that. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 138-15(5): Support For Residential School Survivors

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're hoping to bring in the federal government, RCMP, survivors' groups, to put together an interagency group that can develop the sort of action plan that the Member is talking about. I'd be very happy to, on a regular basis, make sure that all Members are kept up to date on the activities of this coordinating agency.

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

Supplementary To Question 138-15(5): Support For Residential School Survivors

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment if he would consider passing along with his other Ministers in terms of setting up a specific unit, maybe using existing resources to set up a specific unit within the Government of the Northwest Territories a residential school unit that's solely responsible for addressing certain issues by our people, by the elders, be it young people, be it education or health. Would the Minister consider taking that to his colleagues in terms of having a specific residential school unit that would work also with the national healing program in Ottawa? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 138-15(5): Support For Residential School Survivors

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll put that on the agenda for our next meeting for discussion. But I want to assure the Members that the membership on this committee right now is at the most senior level. We're talking about deputy ministers and assistant deputy ministers who are actually involved in this now. I think that tells the Members the importance that this government puts on this sort of work, and I want to make sure that we're keeping it at the most senior level. So we will have the discussion, but I'm quite satisfied that right

now this issue is being given the level of importance that it should see.

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

Question 139-15(5): Human Resources Policy Regarding Overtime/Lieu Time

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are in follow-up to the Member's statement I made in regards to the government's policy on overtime, Mr. Speaker, and my questions are to the Minister of Human Resources. Mr. Speaker, I have discussed this with the Minister of Health and Social Services and I do believe that the Minister of Human Resources has been made aware in correspondence. My understanding is that with the centralization of human resources, and I support Human Resources trying to get some consistency and some coordination and reviewing policies to see where consistency is important and following through with that, but in this area I think they're doing more harm than good by making this policy consistent. The fact is, Mr. Speaker, not all government jobs are alike. I don't think anybody could dispute that somebody working in an office in downtown Yellowknife, their job is not and their overtime requirements are not the same as somebody who works in an emergency in the hospital. The policy has to be flexible enough to accommodate that. But my understanding is that the government has a policy where government-wide no one can bank any more than 75 hours of overtime. Anything over that, they get paid out and they can't take time off. So I'd like to know from the Minister whether he thinks that's a wise policy in managing human resources. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

Return To Question 139-15(5): Human Resources Policy Regarding Overtime/Lieu Time

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, in fact, as we pulled human resources together and looked at the departments and how they were managing their lieu time activities, we found there was great inconsistency between departments of how it was banked, how much could be used, if it was refillable, how much could be carried over from calendar year to calendar year, and a decision was made, in working with the other departments, that we did need to bring some consistency back to this and establish the 75 hour amount per year. We also do recognize that, in fact, not all occupations are the same and, as well, operation requirements are the same. So we have made allowance for two areas of exemption to this, which we allow them to continue to have a bit more lieu time, and that's the operating room at Stanton as well as employees who have heavy work schedules in early winter and seasonal periods around that time. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad the Minister mentioned that, because I think that speaks precisely to the inequity and the problems that come out of this Minister's policy. Mr. Speaker, it is not right for the government to have one policy, even just within the nursing field. There are nurses at the OR room at the

hospital who are allowed to bank 150 hours and the rest are 75 hours. Does he think that's fair, Mr. Speaker? How could that be fair? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Asking the Minister's opinion on this, I'm going to disallow that question, or if you want to rephrase your question, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 139-15(5): Human Resources Policy Regarding Overtime/Lieu Time

MS. LEE: Mr. Speaker, I don't want to know the Minister's opinion; that was the wrong use of words. I would like to know, would the Minister review this and see if that is not affecting the morale of the nurses when even in the same nursing field they have different banking hour requirements? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 139-15(5): Human Resources Policy Regarding Overtime/Lieu Time

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have tried to address some of the operational issues through this policy, and the one reason, for example at Stanton, is because the operating room does shut down each year and for lengthy periods of time. It was felt that this is an appropriate method of ensuring we had nurses to cover that year round when they would come back on. Again, for seasonal or for heavy work schedules in the winter or early spring, are paid out effective as of October 1st is another area. So we do try to put some flexibility in here. But the big matter here is, we have to address our operational issues. Whether a person is allowed to bank more time or not, we still have to fill that position. If they decide to take it and go on an extra long holiday, we still have to have nurses or employees filling that position. So it costs the government money one way or the other. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 139-15(5): Human Resources Policy Regarding Overtime/Lieu Time

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This flexibility that's built in for OR nurses is done because it's convenient for the government. It does not pay attention to equity issues and fairness to all the health care professionals. The government allows this flexibility because the OR shuts down. But for the rest of the health care professionals, they are asked to work overtime excessively because there's a shortage of workers, they can't take any time because there's a shortage of workers, they're asked to get cash paid out. But you know what? People don't want to work three weeks in a row, or 10 days in a row. As a Minister of Human Resources, does he not see a problem of overworking the workers and treating workers unfairly, Mr. Speaker? Would the Minister revisit this policy? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 139-15(5): Human Resources Policy Regarding Overtime/Lieu Time

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have revisited this policy. Looking at the

direction different departments are in, we felt there needed to be some consistency taken into account here. We've made the necessary moves and made a couple of allowances for operational issues. So the whole fact of lieu time is something that we have. Just having 75 hours in place is to try and help the employee morale and allowing them to take extra time off, not just annual leave earned. So it is something we've tried to address, we've tried to be flexible, but at the same time we have to look at operational issues that each department has to work with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 139-15(5): Human Resources Policy Regarding Overtime/Lieu Time

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have to tell you that this inequity is caused because of overall shortage of health care workers and it is really playing on the morale of the nurses, because nurses are being treated differently and the policy is based on the lack of nurses and this is just a catch-22 thing that's making the whole situation worse. I would urge the Minister, could the Minister just commit to looking further and talking to his managers and really revisiting this, because I'm telling you, this is...

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

Further Return To Question 139-15(5): Human Resources Policy Regarding Overtime/Lieu Time

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think we can show on a number of fronts where we take very seriously the issues that employees face who work for us here in the Government of the Northwest Territories no matter what department. We have looked at this. We need to bring some consistency back. We have tried to be flexible where operational requirements are looked at, and feel that this is the avenue we need to work with for the time period and see how it works out. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 140-15(5): Ministerial Interaction With Departmental Employees

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to direct my questions today to the Premier and it gets back to my Member's statement today where I talked about a connection, and what I see from this side of the House is a disconnection between Cabinet and the rank and file employees of the Government of the Northwest Territories. I want to ask the Premier when was the last time he instructed his Cabinet Ministers to go on a tour of the various departments or corporations that they represent and actually sit down and talk to the rank and file employees they represent? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 140-15(5): Ministerial Interaction With Departmental Employees

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I don't recall the last discussion or direction from me to a Minister to do that. But certainly it is expected that Ministers will visit their

departments and while they're there they will be speaking with whoever. Now, I don't know if they can speak to everybody, that's a tall order in some cases, but, yes, Ministers are expected to visit their departments both at headquarters and the regional levels. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 140-15(5): Ministerial Interaction With Departmental Employees

MR. RAMSAY: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to know if Cabinet has a policy in dealing with employees in the various departments and corporations that the government represents or has control over. Is there a policy in place where an employee in whatever -- has direct access to the Minister? Is there a policy that says an employee in, let's say, Justice cannot contact the Minister directly? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 140-15(5): Ministerial Interaction With Departmental Employees

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, we don't have a formal policy that any staff member can be phoning the Minister's office directly, but there is a chain of authority within an organization and normally we would expect people to talk to their supervisor. But, Mr. Speaker, certainly all employees have an opportunity speak to their MLA, and if their MLA happens to be the Minister, then, of course, they do that as well. But I don't think any Minister has ever said that I will not speak or I will not be open to any person in the public, whether they work for government or whoever they may work for. We are open to everyone. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 140-15(5): Ministerial Interaction With Departmental Employees

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think it would be beneficial to the Cabinet members if they did get out and had more on-the-ground contact with the employees that they represent and, in fact, they represent us as well. So I'd like to see you out there more, having that hand-to-hand contact and discussions with rank and file government employees so you can actually hear and discuss issues that are of a concern to them. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to ask, where in the development stage is any type of whistle-blower legislation from this government? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 140-15(5): Ministerial Interaction With Departmental Employees

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A discussion paper is being prepared and will be ready for distribution this fall. I don't have an exact date, but it's being handled through Human Resources. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 141-15(5): Federal Funding Budget Reductions Impacting The North

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs some questions on the funding cuts that are impacting the North. Some of them, of course, are for volunteerism and recreation association. I just got a letter here from Fort Simpson. I believe the Minister may have a copy of that same letter. But they're dismayed about the cuts and how it's making an impact on them. I'm just wondering if the department, Mr. Speaker, is looking at the significance of the impact to the programs that they deliver. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 141-15(5): Federal Funding Budget Reductions Impacting The North

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I don't have the luxury of having the letter in front of me. I'm not sure what letter he's referencing. The federal cuts have had impact on some of our partnerships that we have been working on, especially in the area of volunteerism. It's a working relationship that we've been working very hard on to develop over the last while, since the year 2000. The federal government had been providing core funding. We've been offering support on different areas where we could support Volunteer NWT. We are now in a situation where the core funding for Volunteer NWT is no longer available. We're looking at ways to see if we can rectify it. We've done a number of things, including action plans, and those things, of course, are in jeopardy now because of the Volunteer NWT situation. I've written a letter to the Minister of Heritage voicing our concerns. Of course, if at the end of this fiscal year there are no new resources found, Volunteer NWT would more than likely have to close its doors. So we're trying to avoid that right now. We're looking to see how we can be of assistance. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 141-15(5): Federal Funding Budget Reductions Impacting The North

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I won't reference the letter anymore, Mr. Speaker. I guess the whole point is, has the Minister of Community Affairs taken the time to look at the impacts and come up with a detailed presentation to the communities of what impacts there were? I guess that's the confusion, Mr. Speaker. Some of them are known quite quickly, like the volunteerism which lost I think it was \$190,000. But has the ministry assessed other areas of impacts to the communities, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 141-15(5): Federal Funding Budget Reductions Impacting The North

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, there has been some work that has been ongoing. Our deputy ministers have been looking at the situation. Sport North, who is a partner in this with Volunteer NWT, has also been looking at discussions. The Volunteer Canada has also had a lot of discussion with their members on this. They've taken a position that they'd like to start lobbying the government, rather than... They want to take the position that they would take the opportunity to lobby the government to change their mind. Of course, we in the NWT have still the responsibility of trying to get the organization to continue working. We had, last year, supported the declaration towards volunteers in the NWT. We also developed a related action plan. We have not come to any conclusion as to the total impact of this, but it's something we're looking at and, of course, we're very concerned about. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 141-15(5): Federal Funding Budget Reductions Impacting The North

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed unfortunate that the federal government didn't see fit that the small, little programs that affect people's everyday lives was worthy to go on their chopping block. It's mostly a federal responsibility, but is our government, is our ministry looking at an action plan maybe of paying for some of these costs in the short term in the event that there's no replacement funds from the federal government? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 141-15(5): Federal Funding Budget Reductions Impacting The North

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we consider volunteering in the NWT a very important aspect of our society. We need the volunteers in the communities. I'm sure that would continue without Volunteer NWT. But this is a very good program, the whole initiative for volunteering and the whole area that Volunteer NWT has been covering is very important for us. We will do whatever we can to support them. We've looked at ways and are trying to come up with options that we can try to come and fill the void. It's going to be a real challenge, given our resources, but it's something we're going to continue to have discussions with Sport North, Volunteer NWT, and see if we can come to some way of moving forward with continuing to support volunteers in the NWT. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 141-15(5): Federal Funding Budget Reductions Impacting The North

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I noticed that in the last couple of weeks the Dene Nation did provide a couple rallies there, Mr. Speaker. I was wondering if there's any territorial strategy by our

government to protest these cuts, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 141-15(5): Federal Funding Budget Reductions Impacting The North

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, on September 27th, 2006, Volunteer Canada had a conference call with all their provincial, territorial and local network programs and members, and they talked to the people that were affected by these federal program cuts. They are recommending against fighting the Government of Canada on their decision to cease funding for Canada volunteer initiatives, and they're recommending that the affiliated groups lobby for continued investment to the volunteer sector through a vehicle program of the new government's discretion and design. We are doing our share to advocate on their behalf. We are lobbying the federal Ministers and the federal government and we will continue to support them and do what we can to help out. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Pokiak. Sorry. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

Question 142-15(5): Social Housing Rent Scale Policy

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment just dealing with some more of the income verification rent scale policy that this government doesn't seem to want to change.

AN HON. MEMBER: Shame.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mr. Speaker, you know, the rent scale policy that we have today was developed 10-plus years ago, with good intentions, I'm sure, but obviously today it doesn't work. It doesn't work for communities; it doesn't work for individuals; and it doesn't work in our employment economy here today. I guess just what my colleague Mrs. Groenewegen from Hay River South was talking about, the frustration of having people to have to verify their income on a monthly basis to the LHOs which, in turn, work with ECE to provide the subsidy or what rent they're going to charge them on. But should people not report these monthly rental incomes, Mr. Speaker, they automatically get charged the maximum amount of rent, regardless of what excuse they have or anything. If they don't have any paper, they're automatically charged the maximum, thus resulting in these exorbitant arrears that all these LHOs have with their clients, some of them up to \$80,000 in rental arrears, Mr. Speaker. Like, holy smokes! Is there any intention and has the Minister made any commitment to his staff and to the people in the public housing sector, that he will review the rent scale policy and make the appropriate changes so that people don't have this disincentive hanging over them all the time? They're...

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 142-15(5): Social Housing Rent Scale Policy

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Members are aware, we've been involved in a review of the income security programs for all of our subsidy programs across the Northwest Territories for some time. But this government, when we transferred the subsidy from the Housing Corporation to ECE for delivery for public housing, made a public commitment that there would be no changes to the program for at least the first year. So we said that before April 1st, 2007, there would be absolutely no changes to the subsidies, and that was something that Members of this House wanted to hear. So we have stood by that and we haven't changed the delivery of the subsidy program.

Now, what we are trying to do is make sure that we standardize the delivery of subsidies across the Northwest Territories. So we are looking at making some changes for the 1st of April 2007, but Members of this House will have to hear what they are and we'll have to have some discussion before that happens. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Short supplementary, Mr. Villeneuve.

Supplementary To Question 142-15(5): Social Housing Rent Scale Policy

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand there is a review of the Income Security Program. I'm not talking about the program itself, I'm talking about this rent scale policy that we have developed for the LHOs to enforce upon public housing clients. That rent scale is outdated and it's out to lunch, and the guidelines that encompass that specific policy are also outdated and they are a disincentive to people in the communities. People don't work for money or for a cheque anymore, they'll work under the table because they don't want to bring in any documentation so they don't get charged the maximum amount...

MR. SPEAKER: Do you have another question, Mr. Villeneuve?

MR. VILLENEUVE: ...just have a disincentive with that policy in place. So why do we even have it there if people aren't going to want to go out and become self-reliant?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. I heard a question there. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 142-15(5): Social Housing Rent Scale Policy

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that we're talking about two different things here. Right now, the LHOs are responsible for delivering the housing to clients, almost like a landlord. So they set the rents. The rents are not related to the income of the family or the occupants of the house. Each house has a rent that is established by the LHO. People then come to ECE, as they would in Yellowknife or any other market community, to get a subsidy so that they can afford to pay whatever rent is set by the LHOs. At ECE, it's not a question of how much the rents are; it's a question of how you fit into the structure that was there before the transfers of the subsidy program from the Housing Corporation to ECE. So at this point, there's been no change in how that is delivered.

But I guess, Mr. Speaker, some people have had to come in and verify their rent on a monthly basis and they may not have had to do that in the past. As I said to Mrs. Groenewegen, we'll make sure that we're talking to our agents across the Northwest Territories to remind them that people with consistent incomes don't have to come back and verify their income every month.

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

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't know how the Minister can say that this has nothing to do with rent. It has everything to do with rent, Mr. Speaker. It's called the rent scale policy. You know, and that policy is developed by this government, again, for the LHOs to carry out, to charge the government back what they would charge for a one, two, three, four, five-bedroom, and the client pays a portion of that and this government subsidizes the other portion and that's the rent that the LHO receives for that unit. So basically these clients want to come out with the minimum amount of rent possible that they have to pay for perhaps a dilapidated unit that's never been maintained for years...

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Villeneuve, do you have a question? Do you have a question, Mr. Villeneuve?

Supplementary To Question 142-15(5): Social Housing Rent Scale Policy

MR. VILLENEUVE: Okay. With this review of this Income Support Program over the last year, is there any commitment from ECE that the rent scale is going to be brought up again? It's been brought up by Members on that side, Members on this side. Is it going to be reviewed again to more accurately reflect what people are willing to pay?

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

---Laughter

Further Return To Question 142-15(5): Social Housing Rent Scale Policy

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure that we can ever promise that we'll have a program that allows people to pay what they're willing to pay, because some people may not be willing to pay anything. But, Mr. Speaker, the rent scale itself again is a question that should be directed to the Minister for the Housing Corporation. It's the Housing Corporation that is responsible for setting the rent scales. ECE, through our Income Security Review Program, or process, will determine what levels of subsidies are paid so that people will know how much they are going to actually have to pay no matter what the rent scale is set. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mr. Speaker, why did I waste my time even mentioning to the ECE then? Why didn't the Minister of Housing stand up...

---Laughter

...and answer those questions with regard to the rent scale policy, because that's what I was asking about. I wasn't asking about the...

MR. SPEAKER: Do you have a question, Mr. Villeneuve?

Supplementary To Question 142-15(5): Social Housing Rent Scale Policy

MR. VILLENEUVE: My question, okay, to the Minister of the Housing Corporation...

---Laughter

That's fine. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 143-15(5): Recruitment Of Front-Line Social Service Workers In Ulukhaktok

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday I made a statement in regard to front-line workers in Ulukhaktok, particularly in regard to the social worker and the mental health worker. I'm just wondering, the Minister said he was going to provide information today with regard to the status of the recruitment. So can the Minister advise us what the stage is right now? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 143-15(5): Recruitment Of Front-Line Social Service Workers In Ulukhaktok

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the information that I have is that the competition is closed Friday, and that there's going to be screening and hopefully interviewing very quickly thereafter. I'm not sure how many applicants they have because it's not closed yet, but the information I do have from the department for the social worker and wellness worker is that the competitions are going to be closed and the screening will take place very soon; next week. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 143-15(5): Recruitment Of Front-Line Social Service Workers In Ulukhaktok

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So if I understand correctly, the position would close this Friday and they'll screen the applications on Tuesday. I'm just wondering, Mr. Speaker, with that, if there's unqualified potential applicants for these two positions, what will happen with the two positions presently? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I didn't catch the part of the Member's question about whether they are qualified or not.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Pokiak, could you rephrase your question to the Minister. Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The question I had is I understand right now from the Minister that they will screen the applications by Tuesday and they have a number of applicants right now. If there are unqualified applicants presently right now that they're screening, what will the department do to fill those positions right away? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 143-15(5): Recruitment Of Front-Line Social Service Workers In Ulukhaktok

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the hope is that of the people that applied some will be seen to be qualified by the hiring committee and that there will be a choice and some interim process to allow those positions to be filled. If it's found that none of the candidates are suitable, then we're going to be in a difficult situation of trying to cover off with casuals and support from the Inuvik Health and Social Services Authority office in Inuvik. But at this point, as I indicated, Mr. Speaker, I'm not aware of who has applied or what their qualifications are. So I'm going to be optimistic that there will be qualified candidates applying. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 143-15(5): Recruitment Of Front-Line Social Service Workers In Ulukhaktok

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just my last follow-up, Mr. Speaker. I'm just wondering, after Tuesday and the review of the applicants, I'm just wondering how soon after that the applicants are reviewed. If there's qualified potential social workers and mental health workers, will the department hire these people? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Time for oral questions has expired; however, I will allow the Minister to answer. Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 143-15(5): Recruitment Of Front-Line Social Service Workers In Ulukhaktok

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we share the sense of urgency that the Member has indicated to us here, that we will get through this process as fast as we can and if there are suitable candidates, we'll make sure that that process is done as quickly as possible and job offers are made hopefully within a matter of a couple of weeks. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Time for oral questions has expired. Honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to return to item 7, oral questions, on the orders of the day for one question. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 7, oral questions. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Oral questions. Honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

REVERT TO ITEM 7: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 144-15(5): Territorial Dementia Centre Funding

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, colleagues. I really appreciate that. Thank you, and I will keep it to one question; I promise. Mr. Speaker, during oral questions earlier, I had asked the Minister of Health and Social Services questions about the territorial dementia centre that was planning to go in Yellowknife. The Minister said, on my unedited hand notes here, he said that the dementia centre is now on the capital plan. Those were his words in this House when I asked about it getting on the plan and getting on with it. So he said "now on the capital plan." Can he tell me where that is, where I'll find it, and will he provide a copy of that notation to all Members of this House? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Return To Question 144-15(5): Territorial Dementia Centre Funding

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what I intended with my previous answer was to indicate that up to this point, this current business planning process, the dementia facility had never been formally brought forward as a capital project, that work had been done over the last few years. We've used some federal money; we have identified land for the project. It was put in through the capital process for the first time this business planning session, and while it would not be reflected in the capital plan, as I indicated to the YACCS people, it is now in the capital planning process and will be part of the business planning process as we bring it forward again for '08-09. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Oral questions. Written Questions. Honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

ITEM 8: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Written Question 15-14(5): Territorial Residential Schools Interagency Committee

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

1. Can the Minister provide a territorial interagency framework for survivors of residential schools in the Northwest Territories?
2. Can the Minister provide an outline through an action plan that will see and establish a territorial residential schools interagency committee?
3. Will the Minister provide the MLAs the mandate, roles and responsibilities of the territorial residential schools interagency committee?
4. Will the Minister explain how the region in the North will be an active participant with the NWT residential schools interagency committees?

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Written questions. The honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

Written Question 16-15(5): GNWT Funding For Literacy Programs

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment:

1. GNWT funds the Literacy Council about \$440,000 this year. Can I request a breakdown of the funding and is it committed on an annual basis?
2. GNWT provides funds in the excess of \$6 million towards literacy programming:
 - Can I request a breakdown of the funds?
 - Is the funding committed annually?
 - Can I get a breakdown of the communities that are benefiting from these funds – which community and how much contributed?
3. GNWT is providing some core funding to the Literacy Council. How much is our core funding contribution as GNWT?

Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Written questions. Returns to written questions. Replies to opening address. Petitions.

ITEM 11: PETITIONS

Colleagues, yesterday, the Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty, presented a petition to the House regarding community security services in Behchoko. I must rule this petition out of order as it does not meet the form and content required as specified in the rules of the House for the presentation of petitions.

The petition is intended for Members of the Tlicho Community Government. It does not contain material allegations calling for action on the part of a Minister or myself, as Speaker, of this House. The document can still be laid before the House in the form of a tabled document. This avenue remains open to Mr. Lafferty. Thank you, Members.

Petitions. Reports of standing and special committees. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 43-15(5): Petition To The Tlicho Community Government Regarding Security Services For Residents Of Behchoko

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table a document that contains 116 signatures of residents of Behchoko. The document is for presentation to the Tlicho Community Government to petition the local government to deal with the issues of security services for residents of Behchoko. Mahsi cho.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

Tabled Document 44-15(5): Letter From The Mackenzie Recreation Association Regarding Federal Budget Cuts

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table a letter from the Mackenzie Recreation Association with respect to the federal funding cuts.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Tabling of documents. The honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bell.

Tabled Document 45-15(5): Agricultural Products Marketing Council Annual Report 2004-2005

Tabled Document 46-15(5): Agricultural Products Marketing Council Annual Report 2005-2006

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following documents entitled Agricultural Products Marketing Council 2004-05 Annual Report and Agricultural Products Marketing Council 2005-06 Annual Report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

ITEM 14: NOTICES OF MOTION

Motion 4-15(5): Revocation Of Appointment To The Executive Council

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, October 23, 2006, I will move the following motion: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nunakput, that this Assembly formally revoke the pleasure of the Assembly from the appointment of the Honourable J. Michael Miltenberger as Member of the Executive Council; and further, that this Assembly recommend that a new Member be chosen to be a Member of the Executive Council.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time, I will seek unanimous consent to deal with this motion today. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Notices of motion. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. Motions. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to deal with the motion I gave notice of earlier today.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The Member is seeking unanimous consent to deal with the motion he gave notice of earlier today. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Deal with the motion, Mr. Ramsay.

ITEM 16: MOTIONS

Motion 4-15(5): Revocation Of Appointment To The Executive Council, Carried

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS pursuant to section 61(1) of the Legislative and Executive Council Act, the Legislative Assembly recommends to the Commissioner the appointment of Members of the Executive Council;

AND WHEREAS pursuant to section 61(2) of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, the persons appointed hold office during the pleasure of the Legislative Assembly;

AND WHEREAS the Assembly, pursuant to these powers, has selected the Honourable J. Michael Miltenberger to sit as a Member of the Executive Council;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the Honourable Member for Nunakput, that this Assembly formally revoke the pleasure of the Assembly from the appointment of the Honourable J. Michael Miltenberger as a Member of the Executive Council;

AND FURTHER, that this Assembly recommend that a new Member be chosen to be a Member of the Executive Council.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. The Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am moving this motion today as a result of what took place in this House yesterday and I believe I have the right as a Member to speak my mind and to stand up for the constituents I represent. I feel very strongly that yesterday I was threatened and intimidated in this House. I don't believe that that should be condoned or tolerated in any way, shape or form. The Government of the Northwest Territories has a zero tolerance policy in place for workforce harassment or workforce intimidation and we should practice what we preach and we should lead by example in that, Mr. Speaker.

This is obviously not an easy issue to deal with. Again, I want to thank those who have stood up here courageously today in an effort to help me push this issue forward. I look forward to hearing what other Members have to say on the issue. I look forward to that. Once again, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. To the motion. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, am in support of the motion. Based on what happened in the session yesterday, I think it's really important that we be accountable to what we do in the House here, especially when you are...(inaudible)...on personal families and friends. It shouldn't be tolerated in an Assembly like this. I think we all agree that things like this shouldn't happen in our House. I was very disappointed, like I said, yesterday in terms of what happened in this House. So I will support the motion, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. To the motion. The honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to say a few words on behalf of Cabinet on this matter.

Mr. Speaker, the work of Members of this Legislative Assembly is difficult. Often discussions become heated in this House and sometimes words are said that shouldn't

be said. Clearly, the remarks made by the Minister were inappropriate. However, the Minister has withdrawn his comments and apologized without reservation for his comments and has asked Mr. Ramsay in this House to accept his apology.

I hope the House can accept Mr. Miltenberger's apology and look beyond this issue to the hard work he does as Minister and as a Member of this House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. I will allow the honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have to tell you that this is a very difficult time for us as a Legislature. We have all 11 Members from this side that stood up this morning on another occasion where we had a chance to express our views on this. I stand by the statements I made. I believe that the privilege as a Member here comes with a lot of different aspects to that, one of them being our need and right to feel free from any kind of intimidation and limitation. So this is such a very difficult issue. I do accept the Minister's apology. I do believe he is very sincere in his apology. I think he stood up and took his words yesterday when probably he didn't have to. He didn't have to speak, but he did and he owned up to his responsibility yesterday.

I am still reserving my opinion on this. I think this is a very serious issue. This calls into question the confidence the Members have in the Minister and Cabinet as a whole. Although I would have liked to have had some more time to think about the appropriate measure of consequence should be on this. I do believe that we can stand on principles and eliminate all Ministers who make mistakes. I still can't understand why the Minister did what he did yesterday. I think it was a heat of the moment thing where he responded. I don't know what happened. It really is something that is very severe. At this point, I am just not sure what the consequences of his actions should be and whether or not it is the removal of him from this Cabinet office. I would encourage all the Members here to speak and see if we can come up with a right way to resolve this, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lee. To the motion. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand in support of the motion by Mr. Ramsay. The basis of this is very much as I spoke earlier today, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that there is a standard of decorum and respect for those who are closest to us as we undertake our work and that this is a move, as regrettable as it is, that I feel compelled to support, not only as I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, for the people in this Chamber but for everyone who takes on the mantle of public service. Along with that goes the concerns, and the reputations, and the feelings, and the consciences of the people who are closest to us, our families.

So that is why I believe this is a regrettable but necessary step for this Chamber to send a message out to restore a level of trust and confidence and respect that an institution like this deserves and we have a duty to protect, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. To the motion. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, rise in support of the motion that's before us to be deliberated. I have given it great thought about the actions that occurred yesterday and Mr. Miltenberger is a great colleague and has done many, many years of service for us here and done well this term. However, it's always the principles as Members that are key and the ability to speak freely and not be threatened. It may have been done in a moment of haste and quickly; however, the act was done, Mr. Speaker. That cannot be tolerated because it is also a reflection upon me and my values if I continue to tolerate as slight as that. How much further do we go? Colleagues on this side always say slippery slope. How far down do we slide by allowing actions with such significance to us as Members and to this Legislature as an institution? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. To the motion. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, stand in support of the motion. It's a difficult situation to be in, but I look at things as whether they are right or wrong. I don't say they are wrong because we have a year left, they are wrong because of this or that. I believe what happened yesterday was wrong. We are accountable to the people who put us in here, the people we represent, like Cabinet is, but Cabinet is also responsible to Members on this side of the House and it's a very difficult situation that I find myself in, but there are times when this is not going to be an easy job to do. As much as we all get along in here and I have respect for everyone in here, I would be doing a disservice to my colleagues, to the people I represent, and to my principles and integrity, if I didn't support this motion. Thank you.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the motion. I think this is an extremely unfortunate circumstance we find ourselves in today. However, as I said in an earlier presentation today, I think we have to uphold a high standard and I will also say that nobody who is elected to the Assembly has a God given or superior right to sit in that Cabinet. This is a choice that is made. It is a responsibility bestowed, it is an honour placed on Members who are equals to oversee departments and responsibilities on our behalf and there is no dishonour on sitting on this side of the House and doing your job well. It's not the end of the world and, like I said, nobody has the God given right. I think every Cabinet Minister over there should take note of this today. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I spoke earlier on this issue and am waiting for some feedback from the leadership in the Sahtu region in terms of deciding on a vote here. I am going to be in the same shoes as my colleague from Range Lake when it comes to a position. It's on the principle of integrity for the House and I am going to leave it at that. This type of issue brings back a lot of other issues we've dealt with previously. I am going to decide when you call for a vote.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. To the motion. The honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, since my election last year, I wasn't expecting to be standing here and facing the difficult position we are. At the same time, what happened yesterday, we can't just sweep it under the carpet. We have all seen it and it's unfortunate. I, too, have high respect for Mr. Miltenberger. He's been praised in my community. He went to school in our community as well. At the same time, we are accountable for what we do here as a government. We must speak freely as Members of the Legislative Assembly. We cannot be threatened. We are the ones who put them there, Mr. Speaker. We voted them in. We had high respect for them to take on the role as Cabinet Minister and work with us. It's a sad day for us to be here faced with this, but I must say it's also, like my colleagues have stated, it's a principle of integrity. We are accountable. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. To the motion. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I am not going to reiterate all of what other Members have spoken about. I am sure the message is clear that this side of the House is pretty unified in support of this motion. I will reserve my judgment for when it's time to vote anyway. That's not to say that I, in any form or fashion, condone the behaviour that was displayed in the House yesterday. It's unfortunate that we didn't take more time to discuss this issue, some possible options for ramifications for something like that. It's unfortunate that we have to call for measures this extreme, especially this late in the game. Again, it comes down to the principle of the matter, Mr. Speaker. We all have to uphold a common principle of trust and respect in this House. That's the bottom line. It has nothing to do with personalities, friendships or working relationships. It all comes down to the integrity that we all try to uphold and upkeep in this House, that we ensure that we do treat each other and our constituents from all over the NWT with the utmost respect and due diligence to making sure we are serving them to the best of our ability. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. To the motion. I will allow Mr. Ramsay to wrap up the discussion on the motion.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to the motion once again. Again, it's a very unfortunate situation that I find myself in. I have been in politics for 10 years, close to 10 years. This is one of the toughest things I have had to do. But in those years as a politician, if you go with what you believe is right and what your heart tells you to do, you can't go wrong and I know the difference between right and wrong. No matter if it was any one of the Cabinet Ministers that said something about, yesterday it happened to be my wife and my brother, if they said anything to any one of my other colleagues, I would do the exact same thing. I would bring a motion forward to remove you from Cabinet. To me, it's black and white. It's simple. Some Members are questioning that maybe we need more time, maybe the consequences are too severe. They aren't too severe.

One of my colleagues asked how far do we lower the bar. What are we going to allow to happen here? We have to hold this place at its highest level of integrity and we have

to treat each other with integrity and respect. Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, I didn't get that respect nor that integrity.

I have a good relationship with Mr. Miltenberger. I value the work that he's provided to this territory over the years and I know he's done a tremendous amount of work. His work ethic is not the question, absolutely not the question. The question is his respect and what took place here. Mr. Speaker, it just should not be allowed to happen. It's a very unfortunate situation we find ourselves in, but whether there were two weeks left or a year left, that doesn't matter either. What matters is yesterday the remarks that Mr. Miltenberger made to me crossed the line. That is why the motion is here. The government that that type of attitude and behaviour is just not going to be tolerated. I haven't had an opportunity to go back to my constituents and ask them what they think. I am standing up here today doing what I believe is the right thing to do and the honourable thing to do.

With that, Mr. Speaker, once again, I appreciate the Minister's apology from earlier today but I wanted to thank my colleagues on this side of the House for the courage and conviction they showed here today to stand beside me and say we are not going to accept that type of behaviour in this House.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to ask the Premier to allow Cabinet to have a free vote on this issue and as well as a recorded vote on the motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The Member has asked for a recorded vote. The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. All those in favour of the motion, please stand.

Recorded Vote

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Ramsay, Mr. Pokiak, Mr. Villeneuve, Mr. Lafferty, Mr. Menicoche, Ms. Lee, Mr. Yakeleya, Mr. Braden, Mr. McLeod, Mr. Hawkins, Mrs. Groenewegen.

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

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Miltenberger; Mr. Krutko; Mr. Roland; Mr. Handley; Mr. Dent; Mr. McLeod, Deh Cho; Mr. Bell.

MR. SPEAKER: All those abstaining from the motion? To the results of the vote: 11 for, seven against, zero abstentions. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Motions. First reading of bills. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Pokiak.

ITEM 17: FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 14: An Act To Amend The Legislative Assembly And Executive Council Act, No. 2

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, that Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, No. 2, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question is being called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 14 has had first reading. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 6, 7, 10, 11 and 12, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

ITEM 19: CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I will call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of the committee today? Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that we report progress.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The motion is in order. To the motion. It's not debatable. I mean, it's not debatable, forget about the motion. All those in favour of the motion? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Could I have report of Committee of the Whole? Mrs. Groenewegen.

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. Do we have a seconder? The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, there will be a meeting of the Caucus immediately in the Caucus Room at 5:30 p.m. today.

Orders of the day for Friday, October 20, 2006, at 10:00 a.m.

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions

5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
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 9, Write-off of Assets Act, 2006-2007
 - Bill 13, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No.2, 2006-2007
18. Second Reading of Bills
 - Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, No.2
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 6, Engineering and Geoscience Professions Act
 - Bill 7, Pharmacy Act
 - Bill 8, Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2006
 - Bill 10, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2006-2007
 - Bill 11, Tourism Act
 - Bill 12, Garnishment Remedies Statutes Amendment Act
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 Friday, October 20, 2006, at 10:00 a.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 16:32 p.m.

