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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Monday, October 23, 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, Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. Pokiak, Mr. Ramsay, Honourable Floyd Roland, Mr. Villeneuve, Mr. Yakeleya

ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good afternoon, colleagues. Welcome back to the House. Orders of the day. Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Krutko.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**Minister's Statement 37-15(5): Update On The Affordable Housing Initiative**

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to update Members on progress made to date on the affordable housing initiative that will provide a \$100 million investment in affordable housing in the Northwest Territories over the next three years.

Mr. Speaker, commitments made by this government to invest in housing through the affordable housing initiative will give us a lasting impact on our residents, our communities, and our territory for generations to come. Our success in acquiring the federal funding to complement the GNWT's investment will provide us with an opportunity to provide residents with an improved quality of life. Over the next three years, I anticipate that we will deliver new housing in every community in our territory. In addition, our increased emphasis on energy efficiency and maintenance is targeted to ensure that these homes will remain affordable and adequate well into the future.

Mr. Speaker, on two occasions during this Legislative Assembly, motions have been passed calling on the Housing Corporation to reduce core need. These motions called for reductions in core need, a renewed focus on the needs of seniors and the disabled, new partnerships with communities and aboriginal governments, and innovative approaches to provide adequate and affordable housing to northerners.

Mr. Speaker, I want to assure Members that this government takes these motions very seriously, and will continue working towards the goal we all share of improving housing conditions for all northerners and meet targets established by this Assembly.

I am pleased to inform this House that the Housing Corporation's initial allocations in communities called for up to 530 new dwellings. Based on these allocations, we estimate spending approximately \$33 million in year one with the construction and delivery of over 170 homeownership and public housing dwellings in communities across the Northwest Territories. In year two we expect to expend an additional \$32 million to construct and deliver more than 160 units, and year three calls for the spending of approximately \$34 million to construct and

deliver more than 170 units. The delivery of new housing, the construction of multi-unit dwellings, and the replacement of public housing units will improve housing conditions, reduce core need, and ensure that residents in need enjoy the benefits of homeownership. As well, this year's construction has provided employment and training opportunities for our labour force.

Land planning and development is a key component of the affordable housing initiative. The Housing Corporation continues to work together with the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs and communities to ensure that land is available for construction. The formation of partnerships and community support are key factors in ensuring the success of this initiative. Land is in place for year one of this initiative, and we continue to work with MACA and communities on acquiring and developing land for years two and three.

Mr. Speaker, the provision of affordable housing contributes to our territory on many levels. The economic and social benefits of developing housing are significant, and are among the most effective tools for community development. Housing is more than just bricks and mortar. Affordable housing is vital to the health and safety of our citizens, to the economic sustainability of our communities and the quality of life of NWT residents.

Mr. Speaker, the affordable housing initiative represents a new beginning in our efforts to reduce core housing need and to ensure that residents of the Northwest Territories have access to adequate and affordable housing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**Member's Statement On Health Care Difficulties Experienced By Constituent**

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I wish to make a statement about how a constituent of mine is being treated by our health care system.

The troubles began for him in December of 2003 when chest pain and tingling sensations were present. A stress test was to be performed but due to results from blood testing, a low priority was given to allow these tests to happen. The doctor quoted a wait time of six to 12 months. In January, while preparing for a vacation, my constituent consulted with his family doctor regarding concerns over travelling. While on vacation in February of 2004, my constituent had what appeared to be a heart attack. All tests for a heart attack were found to be

negative. The doctors overseas instructed my constituent to see a neurologist upon his return to Canada.

Since getting back to Yellowknife in February of 2004, my constituent has had numerous appointments, referrals and meetings with me, as his MLA, doctors, the former CEO of Stanton Hospital and others regarding his lack of a proper diagnosis. It has been almost three years, Mr. Speaker, and my constituent is living with debilitating pain, unable to work, unable to support his family, unable to sleep for more than 15 minutes at a time, all because we cannot find or get him the help he needs and he deserves.

How long does a resident of the Northwest Territories, or Canada for that matter, have to suffer before we offer some help? Mr. Speaker, his case needs a thorough examination and I find it unthinkable that we continue to let him suffer. He is now in the process of trying to go overseas to have his condition dealt with, at his own expense I might add. Why must he be forced into such drastic measures, and why is our health care system failing him? I'm looking for some answers for my constituent in his search for some help. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Colleagues, I'd like to draw your attention to the Speaker's Gallery and the presence of Mr. Sam Gargan, a former Speaker of the House.

---Applause

Members' statements. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

Member's Statement On Observations On Recent Actions And The Road Ahead

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to rise today to let my constituents know, and the people of the Northwest Territories know, that in the months that are remaining this Assembly that I will bring their issues to the table through this forum in the House using every Member's statement that's available, as well as questions to Ministers. I will be rising in support of the many initiatives as the need arises and the occasion permits to speak to the many issues and initiatives that I believe are good ones that are underway by the government, but I'm also going to raise some issues that have to be resolved that we have to look at more closely. I'm going to be very critical of the Conservative government in this House in what they have not done for the North, or what they have done, and I'll be raising those issues.

Today I would like, as well, just to reflect briefly on the process that transpired here late last week. Mr. Speaker, the practice as we know it through years of trial, the convention, the tradition has been when there are issues that involve concerns with Ministers of significance that we go into Caucus. That was done back in the conflict days of the '90s; it was done more recently when there were criminal charges and such against another Member, as recently with the Premier. I want to make the point in this House, as I have to the press, that what has transpired did not allow me due process, that we circumvented or ignored our own procedures; procedures that are absolutely critical in my mind for the functioning of a

consensus government. The only thing I believe that allows us to function as a consensus government is the fact that we have the ability to come together as 19 Members to talk about issues, and I can remember meeting many times on these type of matters before any decisions were taken. That was not the case and that is unfair and unfortunate, but it has been done, so now we move on.

But there are some lessons, in my mind, that we want to take a close look at because I understand we are not finished with some of the issues as regards to Cabinet. I want to say to this House that...

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request 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. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we must take the steps necessary to protect those processes that have been developed and that are vital to consensus government. As well, I will not be party to any further types of what I saw as legislative vigilante justice, nor will I agree to any unanimous consent. This Legislature deserves better and so do the people of the Northwest Territories.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude by saying we have a tremendous agenda ahead of us with very limited time and we owe it to the people of the Northwest Territories to take care of their business. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On RCMP Services In The Tlicho Languages

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. (Translation) My Member's statement for today is regarding leaders, the RCMP. When we call the RCMP station in Rae, we are forwarded to Yellowknife station. Sometimes when there are emergencies, we have to wait a very long time to get a response and people are not happy with that. (Translation ends)

...an issue or a concern that many people from my community of Behchoko have been phoning the RCMP after normal hours. Mr. Speaker, calls from Behchoko to the RCMP are routed to Yellowknife detachment after regular hours with no person there speaking the Tlicho language. In Behchoko, a number of people that speak their Tlicho language just hover over 60 to 80 percent. This is something that we take great pride in, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately, it sometimes puts our citizens at risk when services are not available in our own languages. Measures must be in place to ensure the protection and safety of our people, especially those who are unable to speak English, should be a priority.

Mr. Speaker, elders in our community who can only speak their native tongue rely on the people to speak for them. They cannot always count on someone being able to help them especially in emergency and violent situations.

Mr. Speaker, as part of the RCMP accountability to the Northwest Territories, they state that in cooperation with the GNWT Department of Justice, they are committed to leading the country in the delivery of superior services, reflective of community needs and values. They have an opportunity to demonstrate this commitment by providing round-the-clock services in a Tlicho language, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Behchoko want to work with the RCMP and the Government of the Northwest Territories to find a solution. Together, in partnership with the GNWT and RCMP, we can work towards a safer community for all residents. Mahsi.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Condolences To The Family Of Lorna Norn

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I just want to express my sincere condolences for the family and relatives and all the friends of the late Lorna Norn who perished in a house fire in Fort Smith earlier this week.

Lorna leaves behind three small children ranging from ages two to 10. Lorna is the daughter of Leona Poitras from Deninu Kue and was raised by Bill and Terra Norn of Deninu Kue.

Mr. Speaker, our prayers go out to these family members who all came together to raise an outgoing, very vibrant and well liked, and a very family oriented northern mother who was keen on providing the best for her family, but sadly her dreams and aspirations were shortened by this tragic event; an event which will not be easily forgotten by residents, by northerners, friends and especially family members from all over Tu Nedhe who knew Lorna.

Lorna will always be remembered through her children, and I ask the Creator to watch over them and ask that the many family members and friends of Lorna to take care of her children, which I'm sure will happen, and ensure that her children are always reminded of the wonderful person that their mother was to all the people that knew her. God bless her and her kids. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Mobile Alcohol And Drug Treatment Programs

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of the many goals of this government is to look at healthy families, self-reliant people helping themselves. Mr. Speaker, people in our smaller communities want to know how does that translate into their lives and into their

communities. What does that possibly mean? What type of action could be put in place to get to those goals, and where do we start and where can we help and why do it?

Mr. Speaker, communities down the Mackenzie Valley have a high increase of alcohol and drugs in the Northwest Territories. It's been reported that the Northwest Territories are big spenders on alcohol and drugs; that we have probably the highest consumption of alcohol here in the Territories and that there's a high crime rate due to the use of alcohol. If you look at the RCMP stats or the Crown stats, businesses lose thousands and thousands of dollars in this issue here due to absenteeism from workers. Families, especially young children, are devastated, affected every weekend in the communities. Children run homeless and there's homeless homes in those small communities. Mr. Speaker, then there's health, there's education. We just go on and on.

Mr. Speaker, interestingly enough this morning News/North and on CBC Radio there was a report of a potential strike of workers at Nats'ejee K'eh that may happen. The healing process will come to a halt, Mr. Speaker, for people who want to seek alcohol residential school care. Well, there is a solution, Mr. Speaker. It's right from the people; the people asking we could help ourselves. The government has to look at alternatives, mobile, residential treatment programs in the communities or on the land. Bring the programs on the land. Bring the whole family, not just the individual. Get them out into the land. Get family instruction, have it small. People help themselves out there, Mr. Speaker, similar to the justice program that we started in Fort Good Hope under the Department of Justice. Do a pilot project. Bring the families out there to reconcile and do some healing. Put the families out there, Mr. Speaker, and in the communities they can help them by the Housing Corporation take care of homes. Education can look at the children and help them with their education studies; employment where people get to work.

Mr. Speaker, the solutions are there. We have to get behind these qualities and that and get the people to start looking after themselves the best we can. Give them the tools and support. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Workers' Compensation Board Claimant Ivan Valic

MR. BRADEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Last Friday the Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board tabled in this Assembly a glossy version of the various activities of the WCB in the last year. The Minister related to us the cover story of this magazine which featured an inspirational story of a man who entered into Canada from Czechoslovakia who, after a serious work-related injury persevered and, through determination, returned to work.

Mr. Speaker, I'd remind the Minister that there is, in too many cases, a very unglorious version of affairs to do with the cases of some injured workers in our WCB. I would relate again to this Assembly the case of Mr. Ivan Valic, an injured worker who was injured some 19 years ago and continues to seek a resolution to his issues, especially

those regarding chronic pain. Mr. Speaker, on December 14th of last year, Justice Virginia Schuler of the NWT Supreme Court ruled that Mr. Valic's rights in regard to the Charter had been violated, that his right to natural justice had been denied. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to suggest that perhaps like the gentleman featured in the WCB's magazine, Mr. Valic is also an inspiration, but there's an irony here in that he's an inspiration not in the case of overcoming person adversity and suffering, but rather that he continues to struggle valiantly against a bureaucracy and a system that seems to have gone out of its way to trample his rights.

Mr. Speaker, when Justice Schuler granted Mr. Valic's request for a new tribunal there was a hope in that ruling that such a tribunal would be struck in a timely manner. We are now coming up 10 months and this is just not acceptable, Mr. Speaker. It shows again that our WCB, the Appeals Tribunal, and the various processes that we should have working on behalf of injured workers are indeed, in some cases, continuing to stymie them. Mr. Speaker, it's been 10 months since Judge Schuler's decision and I wonder what is meant by her request for timely consideration in the view of our WCB, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On RCMP Presence In Sachs Harbour

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I make my statement, I'd like to send out a birthday wish to my son Darren John Pokiak who turned 19 yesterday.

---Applause

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about the need for RCMP presence in Sachs Harbour again. I know this has been going on for a long and I'm still going to pursue it for the presence of RCMP in Sachs Harbour.

Mr. Speaker, I had an opportunity to travel with the Honourable Brendan Bell and his staff and also the RCMP to Sachs Harbour in late June of this year. At that time, Mr. Speaker, there was a public meeting where the Minister heard firsthand exactly what's going on in the small community, where there's no RCMP presence, in terms of alcohol and drug abuse, carelessness of firearms, and also family violence, which shouldn't be tolerated in any community, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Sachs Harbour, again, is one of the 11 communities without an RCMP presence and I hope that the department can address all these problems down the road. Also, Mr. Speaker, the mayor informed at the meeting that Sachs Harbour did have two RCMP members years ago. A small isolated community like that, they should have RCMP presence.

Mr. Speaker, I understand because of the legislation there needs to be two RCMP members located in the communities. This makes it really difficult, Mr. Speaker, for the communities without an RCMP presence. Where is the safety of these people?

Mr. Speaker, during the public meeting Minister Bell promised -- and I say promised -- the mayor and public that by July 2007 there will be two RCMP members stationed in Sachs Harbour. Mr. Speaker, I'm willing to work with the Minister in that regard and I'm going to quote Minister Bells' comment in light of the transcripts on page 721 on Wednesday, October 18th, 2006, and I quote, "It's not about, at this point, coming up with more from this government for officers. The feds pay for the tab when it comes to capital. We are looking at capital for Sachs Harbour. We think we have a federal commitment there." Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to complete 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. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In closing, Mr. Speaker, the safety of all northerners needs to be addressed by this government and the federal government by ensuring police officers are stationed in all the NWT communities.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

MR. POKIAK: In closing, Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Honourable Brendan Bell at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Territorial Dementia Centre Funding

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last week the former Minister of Health and Social Services committed to have in the capital budget for YACCS be in place for the '08-09 fiscal year, and obviously this is better than nothing but it's still disappointing from where we all thought we were at. Mr. Speaker, for at least a dozen years, concerned citizens of Yellowknife have worked tirelessly on this project. In fact, the government was so impressed with the proposal done by the YACCS that it actually hired the consultant that worked on the project to do a plan for the entire NWT. Well, good on them for doing them, but where are we with the NWT-wide plan for the seniors with Alzheimer's and dementia conditions, I ask you, Mr. Speaker.

For the YACCS, the first idea was to borrow the money commercially and build it itself as long as the government would be willing to commit to O and M funding. Then the Minister came back to say that they would rather fund it within the GNWT budget through the regular capital project process. It was a hope that the federal government might be able to step in. I was especially encouraged when the Minister committed \$1 million for planning money last year and I logically assumed that the project would advance accordingly in subsequent years. So imagine my surprise, Mr. Speaker, when I learned that this was not in the books at all. So now we are all supposed to go away with the verbal commitment that this will be in the books for '08-09, but I have to tell you, the way the budget process works around here where even a

capital item in this year's budget could fall off the books for one reason for another, I'm going to have to insist on something more concrete and substantial.

Fiscal year '08-09 is a commitment for the next Assembly and that is just too distant and far too short. As such, Mr. Speaker, I'll be looking at the new Minister of Health to commit to a plan and put some money for the upcoming '07-08 budget; not only that, I'll be looking to him for an NWT-wide plan on Alzheimer's and dementia care, because I have to tell you this, Mr. Speaker, this is not just a Yellowknife issue, I believe all our citizens with A and D, wherever possible, should be allowed to spend their days in their communities and to do that, this government is going to have to plan, a concrete and substantial plan, and this plan has to include how to look after these elders in the interim and not just in facilities. So we need to revamp the home care and assisted living programs all across the NWT to clear the void and we need a plan and we need a plan for infrastructure. So, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to advise the House that whoever is going to get this portfolio has now been notified. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Incentive Programs To Address Housing Utility Costs

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have been talking a lot about the cost of living in the North. However, I would like to challenge this government for the somewhat unobvious and intangible things that they are doing to address the cost of living.

We, as Regular Members, went around to communities in late summer and talked to residents of the North about the cost of living. Now, fortunately for us, the weather is holding very nice. The long-range forecast is still good. It's October 23rd and it's still warm and summer out. I can say in my own house in Hay River, we have not turned the boiler on yet, but that doesn't mean the cold weather is not coming and the cost of fuel is very high and many northerners are struggling to deal with the cost of living. A big part of that is their utility costs.

Mr. Speaker, when we take action as a government to address the cost of living, we think of things like the Arctic Energy Alliance. We think about public service announcements, we think about energy audits. We think about pamphlets and brochures and a whole bunch of stuff, which the only real value they have towards the cost of living would be if you are using it as fire starter if you are fortunate enough to have a wood stove in your house.

I think we, as a government, need to get a little more creative, do something a little more tangible. I think that an interest-free program for northerners to access money....Ironically, if you have an issue with the cost of living, you don't have the capital money you need to install a pellet stove or a wood stove or put insulation on your house. So we need something that is a tangible, real measure that will go some ways towards helping people address that. So I would suggest that perhaps under the auspices of the NWT Housing Corporation, there should be an interest-free loan program that northerners can

access and they can reinvest this money into their house. Enough with all those things that are out of everybody's reach. Later today, I would like to ask the Minister of Housing how long it would take him to come up with something real in that area, something useful. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Cost Of Natural Gas In Inuvik

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to rise to speak on the increase in natural gas for customers in Inuvik. It's become a real concern to the residents of Inuvik because they feel like they have a forum or a hearing to express their displeasure over the increase in the price of natural gas. The supplier is allowed to make a reasonable profit, but a lot of people up there think that it's an unreasonable request that they are putting forward, a 16 percent increase when they had to deal with another increase last year and the supplier is saying that they are going to be cheaper than diesel. Well, 1998-99 when this came forward, fuel was like \$25 a barrel, now we are up around \$60 a barrel. That's driving the price up. It's not realistic for people to switch back to diesel after they have already converted to natural gas. It's expensive and very costly. A lot of people's concern up there is that the fields are 50 kilometres from Inuvik and they are still expected to pay the high increases to the price of natural gas. The Public Utilities Board has said that there has not been enough evidence of public concern over this issue. I take exception to that because I have been getting a lot of correspondence from people up in Inuvik and I do speak for the people in Inuvik. I would like to think I speak for them. So they are asking me to bring this forward and they want a public outcry. They will get a public outcry minus the tears.

I feel people up there want a forum, they want a hearing, they want the opportunity to hear the supplier's case for increasing the price and they want an opportunity to voice their opposition to such price increase. The supply, Mr. Speaker, is only 50 kilometres from Inuvik and it's probably cheaper in Alberta than we pay in Inuvik. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On All-Weather Year-Round Road To The Diamond Mines

MR. HAWKINS: In 2004, there were over 50,000 passengers and cargo flights landing in Yellowknife. This year, the number of flights grew by 30,000 flights because the winter roads closed early. A lot of these flights flew over Yellowknife waking babies, upsetting parents and causing a serious amount of noise pollution. When and if the pipeline goes ahead, flights over Yellowknife will only seriously increase.

Last year, the diamond mines were only able to get about two-thirds of their vehicles that they required in to get their freight and resupply ready. That forces them to find extra alternative ways to get that freight in by flying it through. As a consequence, Mr. Speaker, Yellowknife is subjected to the Russian planes in our airspace flying over 24 hours a day all summer. This means this annoyed a lot of Yellowknifers, if the Minister of Transportation isn't getting it.

The territorial government is spending millions on fixing winter road access every year to help industry, but it seems climate change is beating us down and our winter roads are shrinking. So, yet again, Mr. Speaker, this is a fine example where the NWT continues to support industry and the federal government by us spending millions of dollars on roads that we get very little or no return at all on, but it's not all doom and gloom, Mr. Speaker. I have a solution to the problem. We need to finally complete the Ingraham Trail, Mr. Speaker, by building an all-weather year-round road to the mining corridor. We have to do this long before Nunavut wakes up and realizes that the Bathurst deepwater port may be a good argument. So, Mr. Speaker, we need to reinvigorate Diefenbaker's dream about access to the North.

Mr. Speaker, maybe this Conservative Prime Minister will finally wake up and hear the cry of the North's promise about true access. Mr. Speaker, now I have heard the cost of flying those planes, the diamond mine resupply, costs millions and millions of dollars. So let's start reinvesting this money into road infrastructure rather than allowing it to fly away.

As the Premier has said, it only costs about \$50 million to build a rough road all the way up from Yellowknife to this mining corridor, so let's spend money that would be money well spent. Logistically, it makes sense to allow resupply to happen year round, rather than squeeze it in between 90 days or less. I am saying the GNWT and the mines should petition the federal government together, because the federal government is the one receiving the royalties and they should be a major player in this. Mr. Speaker, may I seek unanimous consent to continue my statement?

MR. SPEAKER: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Are there any nays?

AN HON. MEMBER: Nay.

MR. SPEAKER: I hear a nay. Members' statements. Returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure today to introduce in the gallery, my constituency assistant, Ms. Jennifer Debastien, down for orientation at the Assembly. Thank you.

---Applause

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great honour to recognize my sister Elizabeth Hardisty in the gallery today. Mahsi cho.

---Applause

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I wanted to recognize the former MLA for the Deh Cho and the Speaker of this House, Sam Gargan.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize Ms. Donna Bernhardt, my constituency assistant from Tuk and also Kayla Kudlak and Craig Ruben, who are Pages here. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to welcome everyone in the gallery, but if I may make special mention of Mr. Sam Gargan. I used to work in research when he was a Member and I worked for him when he was Speaker. I remember he used to call me at every telephone stop with a project. I don't know if any other Members do that, but I would just like to welcome Mr. Gargan to the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. If we missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to the House. I hope you are enjoying the proceedings. It's always nice to have an audience. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 157-15(5): Mobile Alcohol And Drug Treatment Centres

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my statement, I talked about the alcohol and drug issues in the Northwest Territories. My question is to the Minister of Health and Social Services, the Honourable Floyd Roland, in terms of the issue the communities want to look at regarding mobile alcohol and drug treatment programs that are community based, regionally adapted, that would serve not only the individual but the families as a whole to have mobile family treatment centres in our communities. Would the government consider looking at that option in terms of best effectively working with the families in this issue of alcohol abuse?

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

Return To Question 157-15(5): Mobile Alcohol And Drug Treatment Centres

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The issue of drug and alcohol treatment programs in the Northwest Territories is one that has concerned us for quite some time. As long as I have been a Member of the Legislative Assembly, the issue has come up time and again. The Department of Health and Social Services, over a number of years, has tried to adjust its programming to fit the criteria for northern families and individuals. In this situation I know the department has undergone a review of how it provides programs and, with the previous efforts of the previous Minister, things are in the works to change. I would have to look at this particular avenue, what's entailed in it, what direction we would like to go in and see how that fits with the plans that are in place. As of yet, I think Members would realize that I need to get some of that detail from the department and gladly look at it, initially at least. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 157-15(5): Mobile Alcohol And Drug Treatment Centres

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the issue of alcohol and drug treatment programs comes up almost on a weekly basis in our communities where children are running around and families are disrupted by the abuse of alcohol and drugs now. The complexity of drugs now in the Northwest Territories makes it really hard. So in terms of the Minister catching up on some of the issues here in terms of Nats'ejee K'eh, in terms of other treatment programs, we need to have specialized treatment programs. I am looking for the option for the Minister to come to this side to our region and look at mobile treatment centres. It's a good option. The funding seems to be okay. We can have an option to look at it, almost to the point where we could look at piloting such a program in the region as the Minister of Justice has done with the correctional institute. Can I ask the Minister to come back to the table with that type of flexibility? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 157-15(5): Mobile Alcohol And Drug Treatment Centres

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the Member's statement he made a number of comments on the issue we face in the Northwest Territories and what we need to do as a government; provide the tools. Ultimately, Mr. Speaker, in this area of programming -- and I can speak from experience -- it starts at home with the individual. If you want real change, it has to start at that level. As a government, we have to have the necessary tools in place to ensure that people can deal with the issues that are before them. In this specific case, I would have to get up to speed as to where the department is in the area of alcohol and drug programs. I know in the past, we have looked at a mobile treatment plan. I have to see if that is still in the works and how effective that was. Once I have that information, then I would be able to look into it a little further. At this point, I don't feel I can give a serious commitment as to what needs to be done. Once I get further updated, then I can

respond in a more appropriate manner. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I agree with the Minister 100 percent; it starts with us. We have to start taking some ownership and responsibility. That's what the community has been asking for for a number of years. They want to take the responsibility. We have the Department of Housing to help out. We have the Department of Education that can help out. We are looking at a comprehensive program, not just the individual where they are taking from the community into Nats'ejee K'eh or some other treatment centres...

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

Supplementary To Question 157-15(5): Mobile Alcohol And Drug Treatment Centres

MR. YAKELEYA: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Can he look at these types of options and come back to my question in terms of yes, we can do this, it's feasible and it can get done. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 157-15(5): Mobile Alcohol And Drug Treatment Centres

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: As I stated earlier, once I get up to speed in the area of particular programs in the drug and alcohol area, if we are working on that initiative, I would gladly sit down with the Member and look at what options are there, what plans may come up, and work with the Social Programs committee in this area as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 157-15(5): Mobile Alcohol And Drug Treatment Centres

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What are the plans of the Department of Health and Social Services in light of the newspaper or CBC report in terms of Nats'ejee K'eh? Where will people go?

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

Further Return To Question 157-15(5): Mobile Alcohol And Drug Treatment Centres

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe the plans are almost completed as we go through this process, but, as I stated earlier, I need to meet with the departments and get some indication as to where they are with the work. At that point, we would be prepared to sit down with Members. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

Question 158-15(5): Highway No. 5 - Chipsealing Project

MR. MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a number of questions to the Minister of Transportation and

it's with regard to a road issue that is very dear to the people of Thebacha and Fort Smith. That is the incomplete chipsealing of Highway No. 5 from Fort Smith to Hay River.

This has now been incomplete for years. There has been some work done. They put it on very thinly, the last application, almost with a butter knife. It is breaking up as they put it down. There is another significant track that's unpaved and it goes through the park. I would like to ask the Minister if he would consider approaching Parks Canada, who I understand as well has an infrastructure budget and is prepared to consider those types of projects that go through their parks, as something they are possibly interested in cost sharing. I would like to ask the Minister if he would consider contacting parks in that regard. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 158-15(5): Highway No. 5 - Chipsealing

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Yes, Mr. Speaker, we will do that.

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

Supplementary To Question 158-15(5): Highway No. 5 - Chipsealing

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, would the Minister please indicate to the House what kind of time frame he would be able to, in the next two weeks or so, have his officials draft a letter for his signature? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 158-15(5): Highway No. 5 - Chipsealing

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the department does have a condition rating of all the highways in the Northwest Territories including Highway No. 5. In our rating, Highway No. 5 has come back as a highway that is safe and reliable. There are some areas that we have included for attention in terms of chipseal. There are two sections in particular that we are looking at. We will certainly take the recommendation from the honourable Member to speak to the parks people and see if we can look at some cost-sharing initiatives. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 158-15(5): Highway No. 5 - Chipsealing

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that commitment. If the Minister could just indicate the time frame that he would be looking at being able to get his officials to have that letter drafted for his signature, it would be of great comfort to the constituents of Thebacha. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 158-15(5): Highway No. 5 - Chipsealing

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We will commit to having that letter drafted within the next couple of weeks and have it sent out. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 158-15(5): Highway No. 5 - Chipsealing

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would also like to ask the Minister if he would commit to the involvement of his staff regionally, because we are going to be sitting down with the new parks superintendent and, of course, the band and the Metis president. This is a very important issue to Mayor Martselos to talk about how we could possibly do this at the regional level as well. Would he commit to his staff being involved when that meeting is set up? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 158-15(5): Highway No. 5 - Chipsealing

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, we certainly will involve our regional staff in our discussions with parks. We will also consult with them as to any prior discussion that may have been held and be able to relay that information to the Member. Thank you.

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

Question 159-15(5): RCMP Services In The Tlicho Language

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. (Translation) Mr. Speaker, my previous statement, I would like to ask the Justice Minister a question. When we call the RCMP station, they forward the information to Yellowknife. (Translation ends)

...Member's statement, the community of Behchoko has serious concerns about the safety of its Tlicho speaking residents who do not have the ability to access RCMP in their own language around the clock. Mr. Speaker, what is the Minister prepared to do to ensure our citizens have the ability to communicate with the RCMP around the clock in the Tlicho language? Mahsi.

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

Return To Question 159-15(5): RCMP Services In The Tlicho Language

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Member for the question. This is an issue the Member has raised a number of times. We've had discussion in committee about the challenge. I think it's particularly heightened in the Tlicho region where there are many unilingual speakers. We want to make sure they

have access to the RCMP. So it is something we have raised with the RCMP. I am prepared and have indicated to the Member that we would go into the community and talk about policing issues, along with the Minister of MACA. We will be doing that shortly after session. I think we need to propose a number of potential solutions and discuss how they may work. One of the things we know is that Justice has piloted a program called Can Talk, which involves translation of something like 150 languages for court services and other justice programming. It is something we have offered to the RCMP and I will follow up with those discussions. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 159-15(5): RCMP Services In The Tlicho Language

MR. LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, in light of the recognition of the Tlicho language as one of the largest aboriginal communities and we also speak our language, I am glad the Minister recognizes that. We are faced with a dilemma in the community where there is a lack of communication between the departments. a lack of understanding. Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister, could the Minister commit to hiring a full-time Tlicho speaking, whether it be receptionist, clerk or dispatch, at Behchoko detachment for after hour services. Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 159-15(5): RCMP Services In The Tlicho Language

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, I think it's best that we sit down with the community and talk about some options. Obviously the concern is after hours and we need to come up with some sort of 24-hour mechanism in order to do it in a cost-effective manner. We have looked at solutions like this translation service through the telephone. I am not sure that that would be adequate. It's possible we can work with other departments and talk about the need maybe at the health centre. Potentially there is translation there that we could borrow. Mr. Speaker, I will say that this is a problem. We can't go by the number of asks, because I have a feeling that many people would not come forward with concerns when they know the service isn't available. So I think the first step is to go to the community and talk about how we might provide a service like this. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 159-15(5): RCMP Services In The Tlicho Language

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when the opportunity arises in a partnership, we are always happy to join forces with departments or the Ministers. On this particular issue, the community would like to see some results, whether it be this year or next year, but the sooner the better. So I would like to ask the Minister if he's willing to make a commitment in this House, whether this will be part of the business plan cycle for 2007 to implement for next year. Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 159-15(5): RCMP Services In The Tlicho Language

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, I can't make that commitment on behalf of the RCMP. Obviously we don't provide them direct operational advice. We can't indicate to them where they have to put their resources, but I will raise this with the RCMP. I will come to the community and I will give the commitment to the Member in this House that we will work to find a solution. I know this is a need in the community and I do appreciate the region's support in this regard. So we will work with the region to try to address this problem. Thank you.

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

Question 160-15(5): All-Weather Road Access To The Diamond Mines

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I was getting to in my Member's statement, I was talking about this government not taking a sit down approach when dealing with the federal government. Mr. Speaker, we need year-round access to our mining corridor and, Mr. Speaker, we need a Transportation Minister to deliver that message. So to start to get to some of the answers to these questions, can the Minister tell me if his Department of Transportation has any preliminary estimates or any information on how much industry has spent this spring and summer because of the loss of their winter road access through flying in all the materials to the mines? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 160-15(5): All-Weather Road Access To The Diamond Mines

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can't guarantee the accuracy, but my information that we have through our discussions with a joint venture group has indicated that the costs, because of the winter road situation to the mines, will run around \$100 million. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 160-15(5): All-Weather Road Access To The Diamond Mines

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday in Yellowknife, it was plus five degrees. I checked the weather before I came downstairs, it was plus three degrees in Yellowknife and it was plus nine in Hay River. So I am getting at the fact that the climate is changing. Does the Minister of Transportation have any estimates on what it would cost to turn the Ingraham Trail into a year-round road, not of paving or chipseal quality, but simply a year-round access road to the diamond mine corridor? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 160-15(5): All-Weather Road Access To The Diamond Mines

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have a firm number on what it would cost to build an all-weather road. We have been working with a joint venture company, stakeholders that utilize this winter road and had looked at a number of options including an all-weather road. I think there were 18 different scenarios that we were looking at as options. They narrowed it down to two or three. We haven't scoped it all out. An engineering firm has been hired to do some of the early assessments. We certainly will work with them and support them, but I don't have a firm number at this point. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 160-15(5): All-Weather Road Access To The Diamond Mines

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister earlier said it was approximately \$100 million spent in resupplying the mines this spring and summer, Mr. Speaker. I think it's a shame that that money is being spent in that regard. We could be putting it into real infrastructure, Mr. Speaker. When we have a Prime Minister who says if we do not approve the pipeline, there will be no resource deal, so, Mr. Speaker, let's turn that around and say if the Prime Minister doesn't approve infrastructure and a resource deal for the NWT, we should say no pipeline, Mr. Speaker. Let's show him who truly is standing up for the NWT. With that said, Mr. Speaker, would this Minister be willing to build a coalition approach with the industry such as the mining groups and go stand up to Ottawa and say we need their support? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 160-15(5): All-Weather Road Access To The Diamond Mines

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course. I think we are already taking the first steps to do that. We have participated as stakeholders with the joint venture initiatives that are underway. We have also been working with the Tlicho and the Tlicho corridor to look at realignment, look at scoping out what it would cost to do work in that area. There are a number of initiatives on the table here. I don't know if we are ready to move forward and go pound on the Minister's door in Ottawa until we have some firm numbers on how we would cost-share some of these initiatives.

I have to point out also that the \$100 million costs are not government costs. Those were the mining companies that had to bear that burden, so that's not something that we have any flexibility on. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Final Supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Supplementary To Question 160-15(5): All-Weather Road Access To The Diamond Mines

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, that \$100 million would have been good money going into highway infrastructure, Mr. Speaker, with a partnership

three ways with the federal and territorial government, but that's another argument. Mr. Speaker, can I get some timelines from this Minister? Nunavut is considering the Bathurst Inlet port and if we are asleep at the switch too long, they are going to jump ahead of us on this opportunity. So what type of timeline can this Minister of Transportation tell me he's going to work with industry to ensure we are doing this project in a timely way? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 160-15(5): All-Weather Road Access To The Diamond Mines

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have already had some early discussion on this. We've had some face-to-face meetings with industry. We have had some discussions on some of the options with different stakeholders. So we have already embarked on looking at how we can deal with some of these initiatives. Of course, this coming winter is going to give us a better understanding of what we are really up against. Are there ways we can look at alternate routes? Are there ways we can consider some other options is something we will have to decide.

I want to point out though that we have already, along with the Premier, sat down with the federal Minister and indicated that these were some of our concerns and these were some of the issues that may be coming forward. So we've already taken the first steps. There is still a lot of legwork to do in trying to resolve some of these issues. Thank you.

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

Question 161-15(5): Incentive Programs To Address Housing Utility Costs

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. David Krutko. In my Member's statement today, Mr. Speaker, I talked about the real challenges of northerners living in their own homes and living in rented homes, and the cost of living and how they struggle to address that cost of living. I don't know exactly what would be the best vehicle for delivering a program that could assist with making homes more energy efficient, but I have not been too impressed with what I've seen so far in terms of tangible efforts on behalf of this government.

Right now under the NWT Housing Corporation there's funding available for emergency home repairs, seniors' home repairs, so it's something that's along those same lines. It would not be grants, but even if residents could get interest-free loans that they could pay back over a period of time, they would recover the cost of the money they would invest by the savings in their homes. It could be for a fairly short list of improvements. It could be siding; it could be insulation; it could be new windows; it could be a pellet stove, a wood stove; something that would make their cost of living more affordable. Is this something that the NWT Housing Corporation has even contemplated and would there be anything that would preclude the Housing Corporation from undertaking such a program? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Honourable Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Krutko.

Return To Question 161-15(5): Incentive Programs To Address Housing Utility Costs

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to thank the Member for her question, because I think it's important that we do look at new initiatives and make sure we're able to assist residents to bring down the cost of operating and maintaining a home, but I think it's important we change the method. I think one of the best programs I've seen today, especially where people depend on the Fuel Subsidy Program, we have a program where we assist seniors by putting monitor heaters in their homes as a secondary heat source, which they're able to sustain the fuel that they do get through the subsidy program but it gets them through the winter because it's up and it's energy efficient. It also consumes less fuel so they're able to use the fuel that they do have over a longer period. I mean these types of initiatives that we've piloted, we've done with different communities, but I think it's through the Emergency Repair Program we have. We can have a universal program like that for all communities and I think it will really assist in the cost of living, it will assist us in the cost of the Fuel Subsidy Program. But I think, more importantly, how do we operate and maintain homes, bring down the cost of energy but, more importantly, make it affordable for people to live in it. So we do have programs, such as the monitor heater program I mentioned, but we do have other areas in regards to the programs we have for repairs, emergency repairs, RRAP, in regards to people with disabilities.

But I think we do have to look at the programs we have. We are looking at coming forward with a consolidation of our programs. We're hoping to come out with something in the new year which will have those features in it. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 161-15(5): Incentive Programs To Address Housing Utility Costs

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am aware of those programs. I am talking about a new program. You know, kudos on all that and thank you for that, but that's not what I'm talking about. I'm asking for a set aside amount of money in a revolving fund that can be loaned out to homeowners to do energy saving upgrades to their home. Is there any capital, or does the Minister know of any source of capital, which could be the start of something like this that could be implemented in the near future? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 161-15(5): Incentive Programs To Address Housing Utility Costs

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are looking at consolidating our programs into four general areas, and also we're looking at increasing the borrowing limits that we have had in these programs before. I think by increasing that, looking at especially the eligibility criteria that we have in our

programs so that it's more accessible to all residents in the Northwest Territories. But more importantly, we do look at the energy efficiency of how do we improve homes to make them more energy efficient but also make them cost neutral so you're not spending more money. If anything, you'll be spending less money to operate and maintain a home. So we are bringing that forward by way of consolidation of our programs from the 14 programs we have to date into four general areas. So with that change, we're hoping we will see a real change in the programs we deliver. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 161-15(5): Incentive Programs To Address Housing Utility Costs

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Okay, Mr. Speaker, thank you. I'd like to make this really simple. I'm a resident of the Northwest Territories. Say as an example I'm having a hard time affording to heat my home. I would like to have \$3,000 to install a pellet stove in my house. I would like the government to loan me that money interest free, and over a period of time I would pay it back and I would use the savings on my heating cost to pay back that loan. Is such a program available? Do you have the capital anywhere? Is this doable? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 161-15(5): Incentive Programs To Address Housing Utility Costs

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, the programs we have today are needs tested. They don't allow all residents to have access to our programs, and I think that's why we are looking at changing that. We are developing energy plans and whatnot that we're putting in place. But more importantly, we realize we do have to change the programs and services we do deliver, working with other departments to look at this by way of looking at the energy we use but, more importantly, by consolidating, changing the criteria we have in our program. So we are looking at that by the way of the consolidation of programs. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 161-15(5): Incentive Programs To Address Housing Utility Costs

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I just want to say that I was not speaking about myself personally when I was...I was just trying to give you an example to make it very clear for the Minister. Mr. Speaker, I'm talking about a new program and I don't want it to be needs assessed. Many people who have two income earners out there still don't have the money to do an energy upgrade or add something to their house that would make it more affordable, so I don't want this to have a test applied to it. I want it to be a loan. The money would be paid back. It would be in a revolving fund. All it's going to cost the government is the administration. I'm not talking about existing funds. Would the Minister undertake a new program to assist residents with their cost of living? Is there any money in the system for that? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 161-15(5): Incentive Programs To Address Housing Utility Costs

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, at the present time, no, there is no such program in existence.

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

Question 162-15(5): WCB Policy On Chronic Pain - Valic Decision

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, thank you. My questions this afternoon are for Mr. Dent, the Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board of the NWT and Nunavut. Mr. Speaker, the WCB set out a new policy for chronic pain in 2004. The Valic decision of the NWT Supreme Court of 2005 rejected this policy on the basis that it was discriminatory. Mr. Speaker, the Minister, in a letter to my colleague Ms. Lee in June of this year, said the WCB was going to reapply to the Supreme Court to see if its new policy was indeed going to comply with these constitutional issues. Mr. Speaker, has this been done and has the WCB now got a policy that won't violate workers' rights anymore, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Honourable Minister responsible for the WCB, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 162-15(5): WCB Policy On Chronic Pain - Valic Decision

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think while Justice Schuler's decision did comment on the policy in effect as of 2004, the decision and the ruling was based on the policy in place as of 2001. So that was the reason that the WCB was considering having a constitutional look at the 2004 policy, to see if it would fit the test. In fact, I'm advised the WCB has decided that they are going to go out to stakeholders and take a look at redrafting the 2004 policy over the course of the next few months. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 162-15(5): WCB Policy On Chronic Pain - Valic Decision

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to see if I get this straight now. So the WCB has decided not to take the direct step of going to court and checking its work out, it's instead going to go to stakeholders and add yet more months, perhaps even longer, to getting a policy that is constitutionally correct, Mr. Speaker?

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

Further Return To Question 162-15(5): WCB Policy On Chronic Pain - Valic Decision

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The WCB is aware of what the ruling is in the Martin case; it is quite aware of the ruling from Justice Schuler; and they will be working to ensure that the policy that they bring in is one that fits within the Constitution of Canada. But they are also hoping to work with stakeholders, injured workers and employers to make sure that the policy reflects not

only that constitutional requirement, but what northern workers and employers are expecting to see from the WCB.

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

Supplementary To Question 162-15(5): WCB Policy On Chronic Pain - Valic Decision

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, in the case of the injured worker, Mr. Ivan Valic, the 19 years of delays and denials and systemic discrimination and avoidance and delay of seeing this man at least get his day before our system and have his case heard, Mr. Speaker, we're just going again in loops and circles at least with this man and I understand potentially a few dozen other workers who have chronic pain cases before our Appeal Tribunal. Mr. Speaker, how is it, then, that we are going to enable Mr. Valic to have a fair and open hearing in a timely manner before the Appeal Tribunal if we're still out there trying to figure out what our chronic pain policy is going to be? This is the centre of his case. What are we going to do to get Mr. Valic's day before our tribunal, Mr. Speaker?

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

Further Return To Question 162-15(5): WCB Policy On Chronic Pain - Valic Decision

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I think that Justice Schuler's decision is quite clear. It says that the appeal shall be heard in a freshly constituted tribunal in advance of the Workers' Compensation Board having a new policy. She recognized that it would take some time to work out a new policy, and provided direction for the standards that should be in place for the rehearing. I understand, Mr. Speaker, there will be a preliminary hearing later this month for Mr. Valic's lawyer, and after some issues there are resolved we expect that the tribunal can be scheduled fairly shortly after that. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 162-15(5): WCB Policy On Chronic Pain - Valic Decision

MR. BRADEN: So, Mr. Speaker, do I have this right then? Is the WCB continuing to interfere in Mr. Valic's due process before the Appeal Tribunal? So, Mr. Speaker, while we have a new chronic pain policy based on 2004 going forward hopefully, we're still arguing on an old chronic pain policy that has been rejected and is common knowledge that it goes against best practice and what other WCBs are doing? Mr. Speaker, are we still continuing to subject this worker to old, outdated, outmoded and, obviously, an unconstitutional process, Mr. Speaker?

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

Further Return To Question 162-15(5): WCB Policy On Chronic Pain - Valic Decision

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I said no such thing. I don't know where the Member gets that information from. The WCB has not applied to take an adversarial point of view at all in the Appeals Tribunal hearing. It has been five years since it has been reheard

and I expect there will be some new medical evidence that will be submitted. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 163-15(5): WCB Policy On Chronic Pain - Valic Decision

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was holding back on the questions for WCB because I believe that the AOC is working on the response to the work that the committee has done, but the Minister's answers to the Member for Great Slave has intrigued me on this issue so I would like to ask the Minister for more information about what it is exactly that the WCB is going out to the stakeholders on. Does that suggest that the WCB is now ready to change the policies that would be more in line with the Valic and Martin decision, which is different from what the corporation has been telling us? The information I have is that it's the corporation's position that their policies are in line with these decisions and that no changes had to be made. Another change I've just heard from the Minister is the fact that the corporation is not going back to the Supreme Court to have them look at the constitutionality of whatever it was doing with Valic, which was always my position. I always thought that the corporation had all the information it needed to make its own decisions. It's good that it's not going back to court and using that as a process of delay. But I'd like to know exactly what the corporation's position is. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 163-15(5): WCB Policy On Chronic Pain - Valic Decision

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The current pain policy that the WCB has in place recognizes chronic pain as a convincible injury and that compensation may last for as long as the chronic pain lasts, which could be a lifetime for some people if that's the way it was. One of the things the WCB is going to take a look at, though, is specifically whether or not a permanent partial disability should be one of the things that's listed as possible. The current policy, 03.10, does not specifically list permanent partial disability, even though in effect it can be granted to somebody who has that long-lasting syndrome. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 163-15(5): WCB Policy On Chronic Pain - Valic Decision

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have to tell you, this is really, really good news. I'm really glad to hear the Minister say this. I am very hopeful with the Minister's suggestion that the WCB actually is willing to look at chronic condition as not just a compensable injury, but the whole issue has been about the fact that workers with chronic pain cannot get the permanent disability pension and the Minister is now just suggesting that that is a possibility. So I'd like to ask the Minister for some deadline and what exactly is this process, what is the role that the Members here have? Can we have a process with the corporation to work on this together, Mr. Speaker?

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

Further Return To Question 163-15(5): WCB Policy On Chronic Pain - Valic Decision

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll certainly make the compensation board aware of the Member's interest and I have no doubt that they'd be interested in having Members participate in the consultation process. When I talked last to the chair of the Governance Council, the Governance Council is examining their options for consultation. They're looking for a process that will allow stakeholders some meaningful input and not one that would see them holding public hearings that perhaps nobody showed up to. So they hadn't really set the final process, but they're hoping to do it fairly quickly to have things resolved over the course of this winter.

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

Supplementary To Question 163-15(5): WCB Policy On Chronic Pain - Valic Decision

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to be cautious in my support of the Minister, because I happen to think that the corporation really doesn't need that much more consultation and dithering on this issue, I'm going to tell you. But I have to tell you that I've had such little good news out of this that I'm prepared to hang onto anything, and what I'm hearing today is that the corporation is willing to look at chronic condition as something that would be eligible for permanent disability. Now, that's an opening that I'm willing to go with. But I'd like to ask the Minister and the corporation and the board of governors, you don't need that much more consultation. They know everything there is to know, so could we set some deadline? Could the Minister commit to having a proposal to us within the next month for us to really review it? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 163-15(5): WCB Policy On Chronic Pain - Valic Decision

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll talk to the chair of the Governance Council and see how quickly this can be done. With the Governance Council meeting only between four and six times a year, I can't guarantee that the Governance Council will necessarily have it within the next month. They can't always schedule their meetings that quickly. But, Mr. Speaker, I am confident that they will move very quickly to deal with this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 163-15(5): WCB Policy On Chronic Pain - Valic Decision

MS. LEE: Short supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Could I ask the Minister as to whether there's an opening for this review of policy to apply to all the outstanding files that deal with chronic pain? That whatever the corporation comes up with that it would apply to all the outstanding files dealing with chronic pain? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 163-15(5): WCB Policy On Chronic Pain - Valic Decision

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't believe that there are that many outstanding files, but I will certainly talk to the WCB to see what their intention is. Thank you.

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

Question 164-15(5): Health Care Difficulties Experienced By Constituent

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to ask some questions today to the Minister of Health and Social Services and it gets back again to my Member's statement where I mentioned a constituent of mine who has gone without a diagnoses for three years, is living in chronic pain, unable to work, unable to support his family and unable to sleep for any more than 15 minutes at a time, Mr. Speaker. It's unthinkable that a government can allow a resident to suffer this long with this type of situation. I'd like to ask the Minister responsible whether or not the Government of the Northwest Territories has a policy to deal with a resident who feels there's no alternative but to seek medical attention outside of this country? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 164-15(5): Health Care Difficulties Experienced By Constituent

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe there would be a policy in place that's in effect that would deal with how patients access services, whether it's in our territory then to the next jurisdiction where we have a contract for services and if there are no facilities within Canada, then further to pre-approve programs. But that would follow a timeline and process. In the particular Member's spoke about here in the Assembly, although I'm not going to get into the level of detail, I'm aware that he hasn't been left out there on his own. There have been many doctors' visits to try and deal with the situation. Unfortunately, they haven't been able to deal with the specific issue that the Member feels needs to be done, and that's travelling outside the jurisdiction. At this point, I'd have to get more detail as to what the specifics would be in this particular case. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 164-15(5): Health Care Difficulties Experienced By Constituent

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my constituent has seen a number of doctors, had a number of meetings, referrals to specialists of various nature, and is, in fact, on a waiting list in Calgary to be seen down there, as well. But I want to ask the Minister and the government, how long does somebody have to wait and what do we deem in terms of what is an acceptable level of a wait time to at least get a diagnosis

to get somebody the help that they need? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 164-15(5): Health Care Difficulties Experienced By Constituent

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, throughout Canada, the issue of wait times has been important; in fact, to the level where it's being addressed nationally through the federal government and provinces and territories to deal with that issue of wait times within the field of health and social services. In this particular case, we have worked with other jurisdictions, other doctors, and many referrals to try and come up with a solution here. Unfortunately, we haven't been able and we're waiting for the next opportunity. Again, if the services are available within our jurisdiction, that's the first place we would go. If not available, then we would go to the next jurisdiction. In this case it would be Alberta, and that is in the process right now. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 164-15(5): Health Care Difficulties Experienced By Constituent

MR. RAMSAY: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the instant of a constituent feeling that the health care system here in the Northwest Territories and Canada has failed them and they seek alternative medical care outside of this country, or overseas for that matter, in what way do they get some kind of compensation for the money that they've spent to get the help that they need themselves? I'm wondering what the process is for that, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 164-15(5): Health Care Difficulties Experienced By Constituent

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again going from own knowledge of previous experience in this department, is that our process is established for services available within the Northwest Territories. Those that need those services would be directed to the location closest to them. If they don't like that level of service and choose upon their own wisdom to travel beyond that, that would be at their own cost. The same would fall into levels of services that are available within Canada. Again, because we've been dealing with this file with other jurisdictions and trying to come up with an appropriate level of care, if the individual decides to go beyond that of their own decision, then they would be on the hook on their own. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 164-15(5): Health Care Difficulties Experienced By Constituent

MR. RAMSAY: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think that three years is long enough for somebody to be allowed to suffer under the conditions that this individual has been allowed to suffer under, and the inability of our health care system to get him the diagnosis that he needs. He's in the process of travelling

overseas to get some help, and I want to ask the Minister if he'll commit today to at least have a thorough examination of this individual's file. I'd be more than happy to sit down with the Minister and sort this out, because I think it's completely unacceptable that one of our residents has to seek medical care overseas because our doctors and our health care system are failing him. I'd like to ask the Minister to make that commitment to me today, that he will do that. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 164-15(5): Health Care Difficulties Experienced By Constituent

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm not a trained doctor and I don't understand that profession well enough, and I'm sure the Member across will be in the same category. I'm willing to sit down, work with the Member on this and go and do some historical data, go through the process that we've used to date. At this point that's what I will commit to, is to sit down with the Member, review this file. But beyond that, again, we're relying on the professional expertise of the caretakers out there. Thank you.

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

Question 165-15(5): RCMP Presence In Sachs Harbour

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier in my Member's statement I talked about the RCMP presence in Sachs Harbour. I just want to follow up with the Minister. As I indicated in my Member's statement, when we travelled to Sachs Harbour he did commit to the mayor and residents there that there will be an RCMP presence by July 2007. Can the Minister confirm that? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Bell.

Return To Question 165-15(5): RCMP Presence In Sachs Harbour

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me first indicate to the Member that certainly the community and this Member have convinced me of the need for a detachment in Sachs Harbour. One of the most pressing reasons is the distance for service from Inuvik. I was in Sachs Harbour, talked about my desire to see RCMP officers on the ground in the summer of 2007. We wouldn't have a permanent detachment by that point. We would have to send a detachment up in '08 in the summer season. So sometime in fall '08 the detachment could be operational.

Mr. Speaker, the federal government will come up with the capital money to build the detachment. They will also fund their share of the O and M, which is 30 percent. It's on us, on this government, on this Legislature to come up with the 70 percent of the O and M for the staffing complement and I'm seeking to do that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Supplementary To Question 165-15(5): RCMP Presence In Sachs Harbour

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand we're looking at capital dollars to set up some infrastructure in Sachs Harbour, but I think the question I have again, Mr. Speaker, is that at the public meeting he did say that there will be RCMP presence by 2007. Having said that, will he make sure that he follows through on this commitment? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 165-15(5): RCMP Presence In Sachs Harbour

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, again just to be clear, I've toured the old facility with the Member in Sachs Harbour. Obviously it needs to be replaced. It's outdated; it wouldn't work today. We do have a residence there that's currently being occupied by a teacher. I think we could make arrangements. So in terms of capital, we need new capital. The feds have made that commitment. The O and M to see bodies on the ground is a shared responsibility between ourselves and the federal government. The federal government has committed; it's now up to us in the upcoming budget process. So I don't presume to know what this Legislature will determine with the budget in February, but I will certainly bring it forward. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 165-15(5): RCMP Presence In Sachs Harbour

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister sit down with his Cabinet and say let's put that money there? Make it available in the upcoming budget. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 165-15(5): RCMP Presence In Sachs Harbour

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the Member I do it more than once a month on an ongoing basis. Thank you.

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

Question 166-15(5): Affordable Housing Initiative

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are to the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation in regards to the affordable housing initiative. I know we're in the eighth month of the first year of this initiative and I just wanted to ask the Minister about the economic sustainability to our communities with the whole affordable housing initiative and how vital it is to the economic sustainability. Out of the \$33 million that's going to go into the year one for the 170 homeownership and public housing dwellings that the Housing Corp is intending to put on the ground in the next six months I hope, what process has been put out there so far with respect to getting as much of that \$100 million or the initial \$33 million put back into the northern economy? Is there

any priority to ensure that northern suppliers of materials and construction outfits are given the highest priority when it comes to actually putting these units on the ground? Is it northern-based, or is this going to be all going south? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Honourable Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Krutko.

Return To Question 166-15(5): Affordable Housing Initiative

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we do use existing contracting guidelines. We follow the BIP process. We also follow the manufacturing directive that is in place for purchasing. I mentioned in my statement that we are working with communities to build capacity. The one thing I have been doing is trying to formulate that if they have capacity or need assistance to build capacity, through the contracting process we have, we have negotiated contracts in place, we have sole source contracts, we have means that people can build that capacity and I think it's working with communities, working with municipalities and identifying the amount of land we're going to need, land development. So we are looking at all aspects, but we do follow our directives and our policies that are in place in the government and also through the manufacturing directive. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 166-15(5): Affordable Housing Initiative

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let's just move away from the land issue now. I know that's a vital component of this whole initiative. I want to just talk about the housing packages themselves. How much northern input did we actually have into the functionality, the quality of materials that are required and the floor plans? Are these just old housing blueprints that we're pulling out and throwing on the table and saying that we need supply of this many units of this type of house? Because as far as I know, the only housing units that have been built in the past, you know, they're just shoddy materials, shoddy workmanship, shoddy floor plans. Are they up to date and actually have some northern input into them? Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Minister Krutko.

Further Return To Question 166-15(5): Affordable Housing Initiative

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have seriously thought this through in regards to the type of construction we are going to use. We are looking at multi-dwelling facilities, getting away from the stick-built single housing construction, because we are looking at the energy efficiency of these units versus the old units, but also looking at new building methods and materials that we use, which will basically give you better R value. We're able to heat the homes at less costs, but also ensuring that we do allow homes to be built for senior people with disabilities and also try to meet the needs of people in the different areas. So from the

designs and the types of material that we're using, we're realizing that we are building houses differently than we did in the past. But one of the things that we really focus on is looking at the energy efficiency and also looking at multi construction of those facilities than simply going back to stick-built. We realize that we do have to replace a lot of public housing units and in order to do that we also have to look at the energy efficiency of those units. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 166-15(5): Affordable Housing Initiative

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess one of the main reasons I was asking this question is because I was looking at some of the floor plans in some of these units, and, Mr. Speaker, in some of these units you've got bedrooms in these units that are 8 by 10. You know, like how functional is that? You can maybe squeeze a bed in there, Mr. Speaker. That's the point I'm getting at.

---Laughter

You know, and anything else, if you want a dresser or anything, you'll never have any room for it. You don't even have any closet space in there. That's the functionality I'm talking about. People are trying to be affordable, but functional; they have to be functional. You can't have a 16-year-old kid moving into an 8 by 10 room and being happy with it, Mr. Speaker, affordable or not. This is why I'm asking the Minister, has there been any review of what he's actually putting on the table there to make sure that it is ensured that it is functional for people and they will want to move in there? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 166-15(5): Affordable Housing Initiative

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we do look in regards to the type of housing that the community would like. We also look at our statistics of where the needs are. There's the family dwellings, one bungalow or two-bedroom, three-bedroom or four-bedroom. What we're finding in a lot of communities is that people are asking for three or four-bedroom units because there are no units for families with more than three or four kids. I think we have to realize that we have to sit down with communities and see exactly which type of housing they need in the communities, but also look at our surveys that we do to make sure that we are meeting the areas where the need is. Lately the need was with seniors and single families. I think that was where a lot of our housing was built. So we do look at it in the context of the surveys we do, we talk to communities on exactly what type of housing they want and also work with the community to see exactly who do they want to serve, the singles, the seniors or the families in those communities. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 166-15(5): Affordable Housing Initiative

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't know where to really go with this anymore because basically my point is to the Minister, okay, a one, two, three, four-bedroom unit, I can understand the differences and the need. The point I'm trying to make is you're making a four-bedroom out of the same two-bedroom size of a dwelling. Basically you're just making every room small and it becomes less functional and becomes hard for people to actually live in. All I'm saying is when they are considering a four-bedroom house, make it a functional four-bedroom house. People are going to use them for two-bedrooms, bust out a few walls and maybe make a storage room out of one of them because basically that's the size of them, Mr. Speaker. All I'm saying is that people want a house that is going to be functional that they're going to want to be able to pay and afford. Can the Minister ensure NWTers, all residents who are looking at those affordable housing initiatives that, yes, they are going to get a house that is really going to work for them and meet their needs? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 166-15(5): Affordable Housing Initiative

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the program is broken down into two areas. We are looking at replacing about 50 percent of those units with the public housing stock we have. But also we are looking at a homeownership component, which is the Supported Lease Program, which is for eligible clients in those communities to get to be homeowners. But again it's application-based for those families in those communities that would like to get into homeownership. Again, it's for those people that we feel can sustain themselves in that type of a housing setting. Again, it is through an application process that you determine the size of the house, the size of the family and pit the needs of that person that is applying for that unit by way of the Supported Lease Program. So again, it's not only we administer it, but also exactly who is going to acquire or basically occupy these units. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Oral questions. The honourable Member from Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Question 167-15(5): FMBS Office In The Sahtu Region

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a few questions for the Minister of FMBS, Floyd Roland, in terms of the Sahtu people looking at becoming a full partnership in this government by having the Financial Management Board have an office in the Sahtu region. Is the Minister planning to move an FMBS office in our region to become a full partnership with the rest of the territorial government departments? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The time for question period has expired; however, I will allow the question to continue. The honourable Minister responsible for FMBS, Mr. Roland.

Return To Question 167-15(5): FMBS Office In The Sahtu Region

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as Members realize, I believe we only have three centres where FMBS is directly involved and that's changed with the work of Human Resources. At this point, there is no plan for FMBS to establish any more offices or add any further personnel. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 167-15(5): FMBS Office In The Sahtu Region

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Shame on this government for not having any plans to create full partners. You talk about partnerships in the regions. You have one in the Beaufort-Delta, they have one in the Deh Cho, North Slave and the South Slave. You have offices there, FMBS have staff there and nothing in the Sahtu there. No roads or access. However, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to ask when will this government think about creating partnerships with the people in the Sahtu, otherwise there might be some other issues that come up that will question the sincerity of this government in terms of developing partnerships in the Northwest Territories, including leaving the people in the Sahtu out to dry? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 167-15(5): FMBS Office In The Sahtu Region

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't think it's accurate to say that as a government we've left the Sahtu out to dry. In fact, over the last few years this government has substantially invested in the Sahtu and its people. For example, with the health board, with the education board, human resources centre established there and hopefully, in fact, within a year a new office space to help that situation out. So we've invested in there and are doing the best we can with the available resources. Within FMBS itself, as I stated, we don't have the available dollars to expand beyond the level of services that we have at this point. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Short supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

Supplementary To Question 167-15(5): FMBS Office In The Sahtu Region

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, other regions have the ability to make their own decisions. Mr. Speaker, the Sahtu is left again by this government out to dry. We just don't have the abilities. It's all done up in Inuvik, Mr. Speaker. When will this Minister bring some proposals to have an FMB office in the Sahtu region so we can make our own decisions and have our own decisions made by our own people for the benefit of the people in the Sahtu? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 167-15(5): FMBS Office In The Sahtu Region

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the majority of decisions made now within the Sahtu are made by the people of the Sahtu when you talk about a critical program in Health and Social Services, in Education, in Human Resources even having that centre there. So, Mr. Speaker, we are working to ensure that the level of services we provide throughout the Territories is expanded to communities. If, of course, the Members of this Assembly feel that we should put more dollars into the administrative side of governance and want to give me those funds so that we can establish those office positions in the community, we would look at that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Time for question period has expired. Before we go on, colleagues, I would like to draw your attention to the gallery and the presence of a former Member of the House, Mr. Leon Lafferty.

---Applause

Written questions. The honourable Member from Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

ITEM 7: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Written Question 19-15(5): GNWT's Analysis Of Alternative North's Mackenzie Gas Project Assessment

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a written question to the Premier.

Please provide a government analysis of the study entitled The Mackenzie Gas Project - A Financial and Economic Assessment, prepared for Alternatives North by Pacific Analytics Inc., dated September 26th, including its implication on the government's negotiation with the federal government on resource revenue sharing and devolution. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Written questions. Returns to written questions. Replies to opening address. Petitions. Reports of standing and special committees. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Tabling of documents. The honourable Member from Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 51-15(5): Summary Report Of Meeting Hosted By MP Dennis Bevington Regarding Federal Program Cuts

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have two documents to table today. The first document is a summary report from a meeting on September 30th of this year and it was hosted by our MP, Mr. Dennis Bevington, to discuss the impacts of the \$1 billion Conservative cuts.

Tabled Document 52-15(5): Letter From Volunteer NWT Regarding Federal Program Cuts

The second document I'd like to table is a letter to me from Volunteer NWT, written by the chair, Bill Graham, in

regards to the cutting of programs specific to their areas in Volunteer NWT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Tabling of documents. The honourable Member from Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Tabled Document 53-15(5): Mackenzie Gas Project: Financial And Economic Assessment Prepared For Alternatives North By Pacific Analytics Inc.

Tabled Document 54-15(5): Alternatives North Media Release And Backgrounder Mackenzie Gas Project Assessment

Tabled Document 55-15(5): Corporate Profile Of Pacific Analytics Inc.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table three documents, the Mackenzie Gas Project - A Financial and Economic Assessment; Alternatives North media release on the independent report finds the Mackenzie gas project will be highly profitable and our governments are forgoing billions in potential tax revenue.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hey!

MS. LEE: Billions...

AN HON. MEMBER: Billions.

MS. LEE: And billions with a B; and Pacific Analytic Inc. Consulting Economists. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Tabling of documents. The honourable Member from the Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Tabled Document On 56-15(5): Presentation Entitled Take A Kid Trapping Colville Lake/Sahtu Renewable Resources Board

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a document entitled Take a Kid Trapping in Colville Lake. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. The honourable Member from the Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

ITEM 14: NOTICES OF MOTION

Motion 5-15(5): Recommendation For Appointment Of Executive Council Member

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Wednesday, October 25th, 2006, I will move the following motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nunakput, that this Assembly recommends to the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories that Mr. Kevin Menicoche, Member for Nahendeh, be appointed to the Executive Council.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Notices of motion. The honourable Member from Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Motion 6-15(5): Appointment To Standing Committee On Accountability And Oversight

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, October 25th, 2006, I will move the following motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that the Legislative Assembly approves the appointment of the Member of Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger, to the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Notices of motion. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Bell.

ITEM 15: NOTICES OF MOTION FOR FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 16: An Act To Amend The Jury Act

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, October 25th, 2006, I'll move that Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Jury Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

Bill 18: An Act To Amend The Education Act

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Wednesday, October 25th, 2006, I will move that Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Education Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Notices of Motion for first reading of bills. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

Bill 19: An Act To Amend The Archives Act

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Wednesday, October 25th, 2006, I will move that Bill 19, An Act to Amend the Archives Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Roland.

Bill 20: An Act To Amend The Income Tax Act

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Wednesday, October 25th, 2006, I will move that Bill 20, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Bill 15: Elections And Plebiscites Act

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Wednesday, October 25th, 2006, I will move that

Bill 15, Elections and Plebiscites Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Bill 17: An Act To Amend The Legislative Assembly And Executive Council Act, No. 3

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Wednesday, October 25th, 2006, I'll move that Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, No. 3, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. 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. You can deal with your motion, Mr. Yakeleya.

ITEM 16: MOTIONS

Motion 5-15(5): Recommendation For Appointment Of Executive Council Member, Carried

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recommendation for appointment of Executive Council member.

WHEREAS section 61(1) of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act requires that there shall be an Executive Council of the Northwest Territories;

AND WHEREAS Members of the Executive Council are appointed by the Commissioner on the recommendation of this Legislative Assembly;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the Honourable Member for Nunakput, that this Assembly recommends to the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories that Mr. Kevin Menicoche, the Member for Nahendeh, be appointed to the Executive Council.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. A motion is on the floor. 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. Motion is carried.

---Carried

Motions. The honourable Member from Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. 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. You may proceed with your motion, Mr. Braden.

Motion 6-15(5): Appointment To Standing Committee On Accountability And Oversight, Carried

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, WHEREAS there is a vacancy on the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight, due to the election of the honourable Member for Nahendeh to the Executive Council;

AND WHEREAS it is desirable to fill this vacancy;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the Honourable Member for Nahendeh, that the Legislative Assembly approves the appointment of the Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger, to the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Motion is on the floor. 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

MR. SPEAKER: Motions. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole, bills and other matters: Bills 6, 7, 11, 12 and 14, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I'll call Committee of the Whole to order and I would like to ask what is the wish of Committee of the Whole today? Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Committee would like to consider Bill 12, Garnishment Remedies Statutes Amendment Act, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Okay. We will proceed with that after a break, then. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I'll call Committee of the Whole back to order. Members, we have one matter before us today that the deputy chair has indicated he wants to deal with and that is Bill 12, Garnishment Remedies Statutes Amendment Act. I would like to ask the Minister of Justice, Minister Bell, if he has any opening comments.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: I am pleased to be here today to review Bill 12, Garnishment Remedies Statutes Amendment Act.

This bill amends the Creditors Relief Act, the Territorial Court Act and the Public Service Garnishee Act so that a garnishment order would continue to be in effect for up to one year or until the debt is paid, whichever comes first. The legislation also amends the Exemptions Act to increase the amount of wages that are exempt from garnishment.

Garnishment orders are used to collect debts that have been ordered paid by the court. The order is served on the person who owes the debtor money, usually the debtor's employer, and an amount is deducted from debtor's pay paid into court, and ultimately paid out to the judgment creditor.

Under current legislation, this order can only apply to salaries and wages that are due at the time the summons is served. If the total amount owing is not paid in full, then another garnishment order must be obtained and so on until the entire amount is collected. This is expensive and time consuming. The judgment creditor must pay fees to file and serve each garnishment order, and this cost is added to the amount owed by the debtor. This process involves unnecessary time for court staff that can be better spent on other duties.

Madam Chair, these amendments would reduce the cost and inconvenience of filing and serving garnishment orders every payday. Recent amendments to the Territorial Court Act increased the limit of civil claims from \$5,000 to \$10,000. The amounts of judgments and garnishments have increased, and obtaining a continuing garnishee is an appropriate and cost-effective way to ensure collection and payment of debts.

Section 9 of the Exemptions Act limits the amount of wages or salary that can be garnished in a month. Currently, the exempt is \$300 plus a further r\$100 per adult and \$80 per child. The proposed amendment would raise the limit to 30 percent of salary and wages. This is consistent with legislation in other jurisdictions.

These amendments will ensure the small claims process is an accessible and effective tool for resolving disputes.

Consultations have indicated general support for these amendments.

I would like to thank the Standing Committee on Social Programs for its careful review of Bill 12, and its cooperation in bringing forward amendments that improved the bill.

Madam Chair, we will be pleased to answer any questions the committee may have. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you very much, Minister Bell. At this time, I would like to ask the Minister if he would like to bring any witnesses into the Chamber.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: I would. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Bell. Is the committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Before we do that, Minister Bell, I'd like to turn the floor over to Ms. Lee, the chair for the Social Programs committee. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to provide committee's comments on the bill. The Standing Committee on Social Programs conducted its public review of Bill 12, Garnishment Remedies Statutes Amendment Act, on September 5th, 2006, and October 16th, 2006. During the public hearing, the Minister confirmed that the amendment will result in fewer fees as garnishment orders will have effect for up to one year and it will no longer be necessary to obtain an order every two weeks as is currently required in many cases. While a garnishment order might apply to several paycheques, the fee would only be payable once.

During the clause-by-clause review of the bill, the committee made two amendments at the government's request to remove a provision which could have created confusion about the priority of maintenance enforcement orders and to add necessary changes to the Public Service Garnishee Act, which were overlooked when the bill was initially drafted.

Following the committee's review, a motion was carried to report Bill 12, Garnishment Remedies Statutes Amendment Act, as amended and reprinted, to the Assembly as ready for Committee of the Whole. This concludes the committee's opening comments on Bill 12. Individual Members may have additional questions or comments as we proceed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Then I believe Mr. Bell would like to bring witnesses into the Chamber. Is the committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed, thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, would you please escort the witnesses to the witness table.

Mr. Bell, for the record, could you please introduce your witnesses. Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Madam Chair. With me today, Reg Tolton, ADM, Department of Justice; Mark Aitken, director of legislation. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Bell. At this time I'll ask the members of committee if they have any general comments to Bill 12. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to speak as a Regular Member in this Assembly, not as the chair of Social Programs. I just want to start by thanking the Minister for bringing this legislation forward. I do realize that any document that says Garnishment Remedies Statutes Amendment Act might not be very exciting, but I have to tell you that this is a legislative amendment that has quite important, practical implications for a lot of residents out there.

I believe the Minister has mentioned the Creditors Relief Act has not had amendments in this jurisdiction for a very long time, and this amendment here seeks to address just a few provisions dealing with that, and I do appreciate that

while we couldn't do a lot more, that the Minister has been able to bring this forward and get this through and have a debate today.

I think it should be made clear, I guess for those who are not aware, that this legislation is not to go after people who have debts and are not able to do things. This legislation applies after all processes have been exhausted and debtors have had their say in court and had an opportunity to defend in court. After everything has been exhausted and resolved, this legislation seeks to help creditors to be able to collect the judgment or the debt without having to incur inconveniences and costs unnecessarily.

I can tell you, Madam Chair, that I didn't practice law for a very long time, but when I did I had some of the debtors' files and at the time I thought it was quite unreasonable that people who had money owed to them had to not only go to court and spend a lot of time getting a judgment, but once a judgment is rendered, nobody helps the creditor to collect that judgment even if they want it. Every two weeks you have to file the garnishee again and pay the fee, and I tell you I don't think unless somebody's going after a huge amount of money, anything less than a few thousand, it was just not worth collecting. The only people I knew that were collecting was to kind of make the point of collecting it on principle. So I think this legislation goes a little lengthy in trying to address that.

I think it also should be mentioned that it's really the government that would benefit as one of the biggest organizations and creditors, probably, in being able to collect some money that people owe to them that they are entitled to have. So I guess I'm speaking just in general in support of this legislation and to say that I'm happy to see that those who are in this business of trying to get what is just to them will be able to do it without having to go through the process over and over again. So let me just end there.

I am going to have a comment or a question to the Minister later on on notice. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Any response, Mr. Bell?

HON. BRENDAN BELL: I want to thank the committee again for their support in this, and thank the Member for her personal interest in this. Obviously her operational experience in the court system probably was behind a number of the suggestions that she was bringing forward in committee. I do believe that they have improved the bill and I think that that's good to see. I look forward to her questions and any other committee questions. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Any further general comments? Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm speaking in favour of the bill. One point of clarification for the floor here this afternoon, in his opening remarks the Minister said that a proposed amendment to the Exemptions Act will raise the limit of the amount of wages or salaries that can be garnished to 30 percent of salaries and wages. So a maximum of 30 percent of a person's salary or wage can be garnished, or is it garnished? Madam Chair, is this 30 percent of gross or net earnings? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Minister Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Madam Chair, the amount referred to is after deductions. So up to 30 percent after deductions.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): So 30 percent of net pay. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. That's fine. That's what I was hoping the answer would be. That's all.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Okay. If the committee agrees there's no further general comments, then are you ready to proceed to the clause by clause? Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. If I could have the indulgence of the House, I'd like to just raise a point that I'd like the Minister to speak on, because I'm not sure exactly if we have a clause that this specifically applies to and I don't want to end up at the end of the bill and find out that I did not deal with the issue. Maybe the Minister and his advisors could tell me exactly what clause I should bring this out to if it should not be in the general comments. The only issue I have is the fact that while this legislation improves the debt collection process in that right now garnishees have to be served I believe every couple of weeks, or every time you want to collect. This one would allow the garnishee to be in effect for up to a year, eliminating the need for the creditors to do the work. But at the same time, in some jurisdictions the garnishee notice has to only be served to either the employer or employee, or I should put it another way. If the garnishee notice is served to the employer, in some jurisdictions it's the same as being served to the employee as well, because the argument is how could you serve notice on an employer without the employee knowing? I'm not explaining this well, but I know the Minister and his advisors know about this because I've raised this as a Regular Member.

For example, in cases like the Maintenance Enforcement Act, the requirements for service of notice is a lot more lenient and the Minister was reluctant in putting that sort of leniency in this legislation, thinking that it should not be that difficult for an employee to be served within 30 days of the employer being served. But I can tell you especially in the Territories where there are, for example, diamond mines where there are workers on different schedules where they could work two weeks in there and two weeks out and before you know it, 30 days is up, four weeks is up. If the garnishee is not served to both the employer and employee, the collection might not be able to take effect. I've had discussions with the Minister on this issue and he's suggested that rather than going through the legislation, but going through changes in the rules or regulations could achieve the same outcome. So I'd like to ask the Minister, before we go into the clause-by-clause review, if he could state, for the record, first of all, I hope he understands my concerns here, and, second of all, that he would, once again, make a commitment to work through the internal ways of adjusting the rules of the court to make that happen? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Madam Chair, for the record, we agree with the Member. She has made, what we think, is a reasoned argument. We know that we need to go to the judges, at any rate, to have the rules of court changed, so I would propose that what I do is direct my officials to sit down with the judges and propose that this be changed to allow this to happen, and I'm prepared to do that. So I think that's how we can best deal with this. The rules of court need to be changed. As the Member said, notice served to employees, the fact that another jurisdiction equals being served to the employee and I think we can accommodate that by asking the judges for a change in the rules of court. So I will direct that to happen. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Bell. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I do have communication with the Minister in writing and I don't want to read it again, and I would like to take the Minister's commitment here to go with. But at the same time, could I just ask the Minister whether or not it would be possible to have those changes made to the rules of court on the service requirement, first of all to confirm that his officials will work toward making it acceptable to have an employer being served the same as the employee and, second of all, whether the Minister could give a commitment as to how long this will take for that to happen and could that happen before the legislation comes into force? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Madam Chair, yes, to the first question. The second question as to how long it will take, it's really in the hands of the judges. So I will direct my officials to raise this with the judges. Hopefully they are amenable and hopefully they can move this through expeditiously. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Bell. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: I think I will go with that. I will keep communicating with the Minister to follow that up. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Lee. General comments. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A quick question on the 30 percent limit, raising the limit to 30 percent of net income. What were we at before we raised it to 30 percent? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Madam Chair, as I stated in my comments, currently the exemption is \$300, plus a further \$100 per adult, \$80 per child. This proposed amendment raises that to 30 percent of net salaries and wages. As I have indicated as well, this is something we took from other jurisdictions. This is where the bar sits in a number of other jurisdictions. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Bell. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think just the fact that they worded the exemption, \$300 plus a further \$100 and \$80 per child is kind of misleading. Basically that was the maximum. I am just not sure how this can be explained better. Was the maximum just \$300 plus the \$80 or \$100 for every extra adult or what was it? Is that the maximum that was set before the \$300 and now we are moving to 30 percent, or is there another percentage that we were looking for? The word exemption is in there, so what does that exempt, the garnishee, the debt or what? Just explain it to me a little clearer.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Madam Chair, I am sorry if it's confusing the way it's laid out here. The \$300 currently could be exempted from seizure. So you could be left with only \$300 if you had a court order against you. That was the one amount. Now it varies, depending on whether you were looking after children. There was a certain amount, if that was the case, but \$300 was the number you could be left with per month. Now we are saying the most that somebody can go after is up to 30 percent net of what you make each month. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Bell. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Madam Chair. That makes sense now. Actually, I would say we are lowering the limit for anybody who is making over 30 percent, \$1,000 a month. The limit is going to be coming down for what is allowable to be deducted off your cheque. Am I correct? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: The Member is correct, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: That's all. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Any further general comments on Bill 12?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Detail.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): If committee is agreed, we will move onto detail. Bill 12, Garnishment Remedies Statutes Amendment Act, 2006. Creditors Relief Act, clause 1.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Exemptions Act, clause 2.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Public Service Garnishee Act, clause 3.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Territorial Court Act, clause 4.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Transitional, clause 5.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Commencement, clause 6.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, committee. To the bill as a whole?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Does committee agree that Bill 12 is ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Bill 12 is now ready for third reading. I would like to thank Minister Bell and your staff for your assistance today. What is the wish of committee? Mr. Braden.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Braden. The motion is in order. It's not debatable. All those in favour of the motion? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Thank you, committee. I will now rise and report progress.

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 has been considering Bill 12, Garnishment Remedies Statutes Amendment Act, and would like to report that Bill 12 is ready for third reading. 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 Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Third reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Bell.

ITEM 21: THIRD READING OF BILLS

Bill 8: Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2006

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that Bill 8, Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2006, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The motion is on the floor. 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 8 has had third reading. Third reading of bills. The Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

Bill 10: Forgiveness Of Debts Act, 2006-2007

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Frame Lake, that Bill 10, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2006-2007, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The motion is on the floor. 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 10 has had third reading. Third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, orders of the day for Tuesday, October 24, 2006, at 1:30 p.m.

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. 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

19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

- Bill 6, Engineering and Geoscience Professions Act

- Bill 7, Pharmacy Act

- Bill 11, Tourism Act

- Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, No.2

20. Report of Committee of the Whole

21. Third Reading of Bills

- Bill 12, Garnishment Remedies Statutes Amendment Act

22. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Tuesday, October 24, 2006, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 16:09 p.m.

