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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Tuesday, October 24, 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): Please be seated. Good afternoon, colleagues. Welcome back to the House. I would like to draw your attention to the sea of green in the gallery today. I asked the Sergeant-at-Arms to beef up security in here and I think he might have overdone it a bit.

---Laughter

---Applause

I would like to draw your attention to the commander of Joint Task Force North Colonel Chris Whitecross.

---Applause

And Captain Tom Tulloch, director of joint command and task programs for Canadian Forces College in Toronto.

---Applause

And the future senior leadership of the Canadian Forces. They are here from across Canada and around the world. They are here on an Arctic field study exercise which is part of a 10-month Canadian Forces training course. Please join me in welcoming them to our Assembly.

---Applause

Thank you, Members. Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. McLeod.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**Minister's Statement 38-15(5): Community Capacity Building Fund**

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to provide an update on the status of the \$35 million community capacity building fund established by the Government of the Northwest Territories from funding made available by the Government of Canada under the Northern Strategy.

The community capacity building fund provides significant one-time funding to communities to allow them to advance their unique priorities. One of the key features of the fund is that all local governing bodies in a community must agree on priorities before a proposal can be submitted. Starting November 1, 2005, community governments have been able to draw down their allocation any time over three fiscal years. When originally announced by the Government of the Northwest Territories, the deadline for proposals was November 1, 2006, but I am pleased to advise my colleagues that this date has now been

extended to March 31, 2007. This will allow communities who are still working on their proposals to take the time that they need.

At present, communities in the Northwest Territories are at various stages of advancing their community plans and applications for funding. To date, 15 funding proposals have been submitted and 11 communities have received funding totalling close to \$11 million.

In reviewing the applications received, it is evident that each community has spent considerable time and energy in the consultation and planning processes to come to consensus and to develop sound funding proposals. The range of projects proposed by communities is impressive. For example, three communities are using the funding to expand community complexes or hamlet offices to include additional services and infrastructure support for various community groups.

Several communities are working on the development of new or enhanced community facilities such as community workshops, commercial cooking facilities, sawmills and cultural and traditional centres. Some communities are making investments in housing projects for seniors, staff and the community, while others are focussing on improved transportation systems such as road construction and upgrades. Several communities are using the funding to develop and support local day care centres and youth centres.

The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs is aware of numerous communities actively finalizing their proposals, but is also aware of a few communities having some difficulty in reaching consensus. In order to address individual community concerns, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs has offered to assist communities in the planning and application development process.

I would like to congratulate the 15 communities who have reached consensus and have successfully developed proposals that reflect community priorities. It is evident that the one-time funding will achieve its goal of supporting communities to achieve their priorities, and will leave a lasting legacy that will benefit all residents of NWT communities. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**Member's Statement On Aurora College Graduates**

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise in the House to congratulate the recent Aurora College Graduates in the Sahtu.

Mr. Speaker, all these students should be proud of their achievements. They are most impressive, considering the Norman Wells Aurora College program is delivered out of a decrepit 20 by 50 foot ATCO trailer. A crying shame, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to recognize the graduates from the Kitchen Helper Program: from Norman Wells, Kyla Green, Yi Beng, Chen, Robin Lu, Dean Neyanda; from Fort Good Hope, Chelsey Gully; from Deline, Tanya Modeste, Conrad Modeste; from Tulita, Jonathan Yakeleya.

The graduates from the Heavy Equipment Operators Program are: from Norman Wells, Mr. Kochon, Daniel Jackson, Peter Kubrakovich; Deline, Tyrone Yukon, Harry Beyonnie, Aarron Lee Mackeinzoo; in Fort Good Hope, Nicholas Tobac, Clarence Gardebois, Joseph Furlong, Amanda Kelly.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all the Members of the Legislative Assembly to join me in congratulating these graduates and wishing them success. I also hope my colleagues will join me in urging this government to put a proper Aurora College facility in Norman Wells. That would make the people of the Sahtu very proud and continue to support them in their education endeavours in terms of making a contribution to the Northwest Territories, to the economy, to build capacity and to show the people in the Sahtu region that when business is ready to go ahead with the pipeline or any other exploration, our young leaders are ready to go, they're willing to help, but we need some proper facilities in that region instead of a 20 foot by 50 foot ATCO trailer that is also known as...I don't know what kind of words I can put to the trailer that we have there, but it's deplorable, Mr. Speaker, and I think this government should step up to the plate, as the students have done, just to finish off this graduation program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Workers' Compensation Board Policy On Chronic Pain

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of WCB indicated in the House that the Board of Governors of the WCB is planning on changing the policy on chronic pain, more specifically that the board is looking at allowing those suffering from chronic pain due to workplace injury to be eligible for permanent partial disability. Mr. Speaker, even though I have to learn this by listening in on the third-party exchange, I feel like 'Desperately Seeking Susan'. I was so desperate for good news I was jumping up and down for joy because I thought after all these years it was an opening of some sort. Until, of course, I started reading the transcript, Mr. Speaker, and realized that even to this day the Minister, the board and this government continues

to dither on making a decision on something that is so clear.

Mr. Speaker, let me tell you once again, it is the law that people with chronic pain cannot be discriminated against as compared to any other injured workers, and this WCB keeps on doing that. The Martin decision in Supreme Court said so and the Valic decision in the Supreme Court of the NWT said that. Instead of changing the policy, which is the job of the council and the Minister and the government, they have decided, the latest as of yesterday, until yesterday, they were going to go back to the same court and ask if the changes they're making are constitutional. I'm glad they changed their mind on that because I think that was bad legal advice.

Mr. Speaker, I am optimistic that the Minister and the board have finally seen the light of day and that they cannot dither any longer and treat those workers with chronic pain in a discriminatory fashion. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I asked the Minister whether or not any changes to this would apply to all the chronic pain cases and, Mr. Speaker, the Minister indicated, well, there aren't too many. Well, I tell you, he gave an answer in this House and there are at least 36 workers over the last year with that same condition and while the Minister and the board are waiting, whether or not they have time to meet to discuss something as important as this for the people who are suffering as we speak, this is just, Mr. Speaker, I cannot tell you how upset I got when I started reading this transcription. And there's no time. There's no need for the council to consult anymore on something that they are legally obligated to do, and if they do not go do that, I'm going to ask the Minister of Justice for money to go to court myself.

MR. SPEAKER: Ms. Lee, your time...

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Federal Budget Reductions

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't know if this is the right time for it with all these guys being up here, but I want to speak about the federal government's attitude towards the Northwest Territories.

---Applause

Mr. Speaker, we recently heard about all the cuts that were made. A billion dollars cut for youth groups and for volunteer groups, adult literacy groups and for women's groups. Mr. Speaker, these people put a lot of work into the job that they do. Why should we have them sitting like little pups under the table waiting for some scraps to fall off. We have money constantly leaving the Northwest Territories and yet these folks have to fight for every nickel and dime they can get. It's really not fair to these people who try to provide a service. The Canadian government gives money all over the place and maybe it's time they started giving some money back to the Northwest Territories.

They like to talk about sovereignty all the time. We used to have an Armed Forces base up in Inuvik. That closed down a few years ago. Five hundred people left town.

Maybe it's time to look at re-opening that, putting another one up there so we can have those 500 people back.

We want highways, Mr. Speaker, and the thing that troubles me about the whole thing is the money that leaves the Northwest Territories. Every year we lose millions of dollars and we expect our NGOs and people who try to provide half decent services to constantly scratch and scrape for every nickel and dime they can get. It's really not a fair process, Mr. Speaker.

I think it's time this government, and I know Ottawa listens to us, and I think it's time...

---Interjection

MR. MCLEOD: Well, I'm hoping Ottawa listens to us. Ottawa, are you listening?

---Laughter

I'd like to see our government send them a real strong message because it's the people of the Northwest Territories that elected this government and we should be looking out for their best interest instead of having our strings pulled from Ottawa. I do not like the fact that they do make a lot of the decisions for the Northwest Territories. I am not a puppet and I don't think this government should be. So I think it's time we took a strong stand and maybe told Ottawa that enough's enough. We want what's rightfully ours. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Federal Budget Reductions

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join my colleague in talking about the federal government and ask the people of the Northwest Territories to consider this as they reflect on the Conservatives' approach to social policy as it pertains to the North, to the needy, to women, to those that require literacy training. They have absolutely savaged those programs. They have cut smoking cessation, adult literacy, youth employment, women's volunteerism programs, the Court Challenge Program. Mr. Speaker, it's shocking, it's appalling and it was done without consultation. This government seems intent on ruling and governing by edict and fiat. In fact, I know that most jurisdictions found out about this in the newspaper or on TV. In fact, some of the program departments in the federal government found out about the cuts on TV.

So this is a shameful display for those in Ottawa that ask to lead us. While my colleague is pleading to Ottawa to listen, my suggestion to the people of the Northwest Territories is much more fundamental and I am asking them to keep this in mind, because I understand the Conservatives are going to need every seat they can get come the election. When it's time to vote in the Northwest Territories, remember what they have done to our social programs.

It's as simple as ABC, Mr. Speaker; "Anybody But a Conservative."

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Behchoko Public Housing Rental Arrears

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

Mr. Speaker, housing in Behchoko is a mess. The community of Behchoko has some serious arrears on rental units, the public units. There are currently 182 public units in Behchoko. Mr. Speaker, these 182 units are under the umbrella of the NWT Housing Corporation. That's our Housing Corporation here in the Northwest Territories government. Some residents argue that they have been rated wrongly in the past, paying high rent when they were unemployed, for example. Mr. Speaker, assessments in the past were done incorrectly. Their complaints have fallen on deaf ears, Mr. Speaker. Unable to pay their rent arrears simply continues to accumulate, leaving them hopeless and potentially homeless, Mr. Speaker. Some owe as much as \$76,000 on public government units, Mr. Speaker. Now these clients face eviction. No one has dealt with this problem and worked on any plans to help these people.

Mr. Speaker, this government has not done its part to find a solution to this problem. I refuse to believe that this current government will stand by and allow this to continue. Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister of NWT Housing Corporation at the appropriate time. Mahsi.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Net Benefits From Resource Developments

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I had a Member's statement prepared today, but hearing the lead that's been taken by some of my fellow Members with respect to the federal cuts, I think I'll change my topic and talk about that very subject.

Mr. Speaker, this summer some of the Regular Members had the opportunity to go into some of the small northern communities here and see some of the living conditions. We went there with a theme to talk about the cost of living, but we really saw the conditions of living. Something that really stuck out in my mind is, when we went to the community of Fort Liard we had a small gathering of people there and somebody who had just moved from Newfoundland to the Northwest Territories stood up before our committee and said, I thought Newfoundland was poor until I came to the Northwest Territories. He was talking about the living conditions, when he talked about mouldy houses, when he talked about the lack of services, when he talked about having to send the little kindergarten children home from school on their first day of school because the teacher had to leave the community, more than one teacher had to leave the community because there was no place for them to live when they got to the community of Fort Liard. They had to turn away, and the

little kids that were looking forward to starting school that day had to be turned away.

Then contrast that with our new Prime Minister Stephen Harper coming here and standing in our Great Hall talking about the mighty resources of the Northwest Territories, and talking on the world stage about the Northwest Territories and Canada, Northwest Territories being a part of the Canadian image of an energy superpower. Where are we talking about the energy coming from? Where are those natural resources coming from? They're coming from here. Yet the extraction is going to take place and the people of the Northwest Territories are still going to be living with the worst social conditions in this country. The statistics are there. All you have to do is look at the rates of suicide, you look at the rates of addictions, you look at the rates of everything which is a negative social indicator and I'm sorry, but the Northwest Territories and northern Canada wins the prize. We've got the worst conditions. We've got the most resources. I hope the federal government doesn't just look at us as a bastion of revenue and royalties and money flowing into their coffers, because we need to keep a portion of that money here in order to serve the needs of our people so that we do not have them living in the conditions that they're living in today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Paulatuk Community Freezers

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on my tour of Paulatuk on September 13th, 2006, I had an opportunity to speak with the mayor, who is also the resource person for the Paulatuk Hunters' and Trappers' Committee. Mr. Speaker, I was informed that many of the residents had stored their traditional food at the local community freezer after a successful spring and fall hunt. At the same time, Mr. Speaker, the Paulatuk Hunters' and Trappers' Committee had a refrigerator repairman travel to Paulatuk to conduct what was thought to be a minor repair to the local community freezer. Mr. Speaker, it turns out the compressor was dysfunctional to even be repaired. The estimate to repair the compressor was about 35 to 40 thousand dollars.

Mr. Speaker, because of the breakdown of the community freezer, many residents lost most of their traditional food which was to last over a few months. We know the cost of living at the local Northern Stores. Bought food is very expensive in isolated communities. Mr. Speaker, in 2005-2006 the then Department of RWED purchased 25 freezers for Paulatuk and 25 freezers for Ulukhaktok. There was an understanding, if required, the Department of ITI now would provide further freezers.

Mr. Speaker, a freezer is a vital component of household items to store traditional and store-bought food. Given the understanding, Mr. Speaker, why weren't these freezers purchased and sent to Paulatuk this summer? Mr. Speaker, in closing, I will have questions for the Minister of ITI at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Barren Land Caribou Management Practices

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I'd just like to talk about this government's Barren Ground Caribou Management Strategy for the Northwest Territories rolled out earlier this year. The five key components of this strategy focus on, one, engaging partners; two, ensuring appropriate information is available for management decisions; three, managing impacts of human activities; four, informing the public about their role in this management scheme; and five, addressing hardships. Of course the success of this strategy rests on everyone's participation and input.

Mr. Speaker, the one strategy component that I would like to get more information on is the fifth component related to addressing hardships. Winter's coming and I feel that this is where our declining numbers of caribou really become important, and the hardships because of that will become very evident in many of our small remote communities in the NWT where cash is scarce, rent is high, and the cost of living is rising every day.

Mr. Speaker, these hardships are already being felt by local hunters and providers with increases in fuel prices and the need to travel further out on the land to find the main meat source. Later on today I will be asking the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources if the department has any information available to northerners, especially those who rely heavily on caribou, about how this government is planning to help them and at what cost. I will be asking these and other questions, Mr. Speaker, because this information is listed in the strategy document as TBD -- To Be Determined. I want to know what we have determined to date. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Management Of The Human Resources Department

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take a second and welcome the brave men and women of the Canadian Forces to our proceedings here today.

---Applause

I'd like to once again address the concerns I'm having or hearing from the public and the employees in our public service in regards to the management of the Human Resources department. Cabinet Members and other Members of this House have heard me stand up on numerous occasions over the past three years challenging and taking the government to task over how it consistently mishandles human resources. The fact of the matter is that the Minister has stood up in this House and admitted that there are numerous challenges and concerns and everything is not as it should be with the new department.

Last year the Minister entered into a sole-sourced \$475,000 contract with an American firm, the Hackett Group, to try to develop recommendations to improve client service and business processes. Mr. Speaker, I have questioned at length the former Justice Minister about HR concerns at North Slave Correctional Centre and, Mr. Speaker, there was an operational review done there with 63 recommendations about how they could improve client services there, and I wonder how many of those recommendations have in fact been acted upon. The excuse has always been that HR was still sorting their issues out. I've had issues with constituents waiting to retire from the government, persons with disabilities having barriers to employment with the GNWT, and then there's the very large issue of recruitment and retention of health care professionals and staffing issues at Stanton and other health centres across the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, HR is such an important and critical piece of our operation and it is imperative that the public and our workforce have every confidence that our HR department is functioning effectively. Mr. Speaker, judging by the comments I hear, the e-mails I receive, I lack the confidence that this department is doing its work and delivering the service and response to the clients it represents. Given all the issues that have been brought up in this House in regards to human resources, I believe the communication between the Minister and the Regular Members on this side of the House is not what it should be. HR seems able to do as they wish because of confidentiality becoming a barrier for Members to take on individual cases because of fear of reprisal from the department. Mr. Speaker, I certainly will have some questions for the Minister responsible for Human Resources at the appropriate time. Thank you. Mahsi.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Visual And Performing Arts Celebrations

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, wish to acknowledge our brave men and women in green here in the gallery today. It's quite overwhelming to see them all. Thank you for coming.

Mr. Speaker, every day the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment contribute to individual artists and groups of artists through grants issued by the NWT Arts Council. In 2005-2006 there were 124 applications for grants totalling almost \$1.2 million, of which the NWT Arts Council was able to fund 84 projects totalling \$355,000. In the last update on the NWT Arts Strategy from last March, the Government of the Northwest Territories stated that it believes a collaborative, holistic approach is needed to support and develop a vibrant arts sector.

There are many examples of this type of approach and the government's support of venues like Folk on the Rocks, Festival of the Midnight Sun, End of the Road Music Festival, and the South Slave Music Festival is certainly to be commended, Mr. Speaker. They are fine examples of government doing something.

However, Mr. Speaker, even though artists from all other parts of the Territories appear there or have their work shown at these venues and festivals, there is a way to help benchmark and show what we could do and could do better and help support it. I believe this government could do better. I believe this government could do more. I believe it's time this government realizes that we need a government-sponsored festival or venue on an annual or semi-annual basis that we could help showcase these artists from across our territory, Mr. Speaker.

Artists from the performing arts, visual and traditional arts need the opportunity to network with their peers and receive feedback from a large audience at an arts festival or awards night. I see this festival as a collaboration and a celebration of arts, Mr. Speaker, with the recognition given to artists who excel or show promise in their particular area.

Mr. Speaker, I believe it's time to discuss ideas that the Department of Education take the lead in establishing an NWT annual arts achievement award night to celebrate and enhance the arts sector of the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I will have questions for the Minister of Education on seeing what he can do to take the next step to help celebrate our arts community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Member's Statement On Role Of The Armed Forces In Canada's North

MR. BRADEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I, too, would like to welcome and reflect on the presence of so many people of the Armed Forces of various countries in the world who are touring the North on an extended training mission. Mr. Speaker, the military has had a long and very valued tradition of involvement and contribution and participation in this community, not only for the duty they have in Canada's Arctic protecting the nation but with the very life and fabric of Yellowknife. I remember the establishment of what some might fondly recall as the "Yellow Submarine," the first base here for the Armed Forces in Canada. Now we have a very modern, new building and facilities at the airport. This is a presence that I understand, Mr. Speaker, that is over time going to grow and I welcome that very much. Mr. Speaker, the people who are here with us today are, of course, representative of the role of the Armed Forces in Canada and in our North.

They also represent the service and the sacrifice of Canadians and many other of our allies in various places of the world that aren't as peaceful and as free as the land that we live in, Mr. Speaker. I want to say that I am one Canadian who is very grateful for these people, for the sacrifice that they make when they put themselves in harm's way because what they are doing, Mr. Speaker, is defending the very things that we are here doing. They are defending our freedom, speech, representation, democracy, sovereignty and those are things worth fighting for, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

---Applause

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

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, last week I attended a function with yourself and I wanted to recognize the members of the Canadian Forces in the gallery. I had a tour and I certainly appreciate the work that they do...(inaudible). As Mr. Braden said, they defend our precious freedom here and thank you very much. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. If we missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to the House. I hope you enjoy the proceedings. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 168-15(5): Aurora College Infrastructure Requirements

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Mr. Speaker, I mentioned 18 graduates from the two Aurora College programs that graduated this month. The programs were partly administered and delivered out of a trailer, a 20 foot by 50 foot building. Now, Mr. Speaker, how is it that we can live in such a dilemma? We are encouraging our students to get all the things they can, only to make it an old ATCO trailer that they are getting the programs out of. Can the Minister inform me what his department is doing to improve this trailer park college? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 168-15(5): Aurora College Infrastructure Requirements

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like the Member, I would like to express my congratulations to the grads from the recent programs offered in Norman Wells. That campus has been extremely active and very proficient in seeing graduates get through the facility and the facility is somewhat challenging, as the Member has pointed out. ECE continues to work with our partners at Public Works to explore what options there may be for replacing that building in the future. We are prepared to look at different options. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 168-15(5): Aurora College Infrastructure Requirements

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The campus that he's referring to is very challenging. It's like a honeybee's nest with all the flies and bumble bees flying around because it's so active. We have an increase of activity. We have self-government negotiations. We have

business in our communities that are expanding. I would like to ask, Mr. Speaker, what type of short-term options may be planned for the Aurora College facility in Norman Wells? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 168-15(5): Aurora College Infrastructure Requirements

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the long run, what I would hope to see is a new building that would be government owned that would accommodate the classroom space that we need to provide that community and that region with the adequate training space. In the short term, I think we are prepared to consider leasing a premises or whatever. I do agree with the Member that that facility is in dire need of being replaced. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 168-15(5): Aurora College Infrastructure Requirements

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to hear the Minister talk about the short-term option of leasing premises or leasing some form of facility to encourage the students to continue their education. Mr. Speaker, I also hope that the Minister would give some thought in terms of a new facility that they would consider the community or the region of the Sahtu or any other region before they get their facility. Mr. Speaker, in terms of the short term and leasing of a premises, when would the people in the Sahtu know that they could possibly look at a new facility in the short term under the answer by the Minister? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 168-15(5): Aurora College Infrastructure Requirements

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said, I have been talking with my colleague, the Minister of Public Works, about this issue. We don't have a solution at this point, but we are aware of the pressing need in the community and we will continue to work to get a facility into the long-term capital plan and look for a short-term solution to the inadequate space. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 168-15(5): Aurora College Infrastructure Requirements

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Minister again for supporting people in the Sahtu in terms of a short-term solution. When can I ask the Minister to make a commitment to coming to our region and talk about a leasing of a premises so that people could have an idea as to when they will see a facility in the Sahtu that would make them all smile when they go to the Aurora College classroom?

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

Further Return To Question 168-15(5): Aurora College Infrastructure Requirements

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I always enjoy visiting the Member's communities with him when given an opportunity to travel in the Sahtu. I would welcome the opportunity to join him in a visit to Norman Wells to address that issue in the not-too-distant future. Thank you.

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

Question 169-15(5): Workers' Compensation Board Policy On Chronic Pain

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are to the Minister of WCB and it's with regard to what he said yesterday on the WCB's opening of the door of sorts, that they are looking at changing, finally, the policy on chronic pain which would allow benefits of permanent/partial disability. He's saying, on page 884, that they have to look specifically...The thing I am having trouble with is WCB is again having to consult. I think it's a good thing to consult, but at a certain point when a Minister and the corporation and the Board of Governors who haven't been given the powers under the law to make the decisions...Now the government did not go and consult on what the government should do about the Ed Horne case. You don't go and consult on a legal position. I submit to you that there is a very clear legal decision. The Supreme Court decision says the council must change the policy. Will the Minister send a directive forthwith to the council and say that they must change the policy? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister responsible for WCB, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 169-15(5): Workers' Compensation Board Policy On Chronic Pain

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the current policy of the board for chronic pain does specifically mention chronic pain as a pain disorder and it does specifically say that compensation benefits can be provided for the lifetime of the recipient if necessary. So that is, in many ways, probably dealing with the constitutional requirement.

It's important to point out that the court decision of Justice Schuler states that it was the policy in effect in 2001 that was not in compliance with section 15 of the Charter. I want to point out, too, that the Auditor General, who did a study of the work of the Workers' Compensation Board at the direction of this House, clearly says in her report that the WCB should regularly consult with stakeholders and management, particularly in controversial areas such as pain disorders. So the WCB has direction from the Auditor General on this issue at the direction of this House to consult with stakeholders. That is, I believe, what they are intending to do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 169-15(5): Workers' Compensation Board Policy On Chronic Pain

MS. LEE: Mr. Speaker, I have to tell you that this government, this council and this Minister is on the verge of being negligent. It's illegal not to have that policy. Now, how could they use the power of the office of the Auditor General to dither? Mr. Speaker, that didn't apply to cases where there is a Supreme Court of Canada decision and a Supreme Court of the NWT decision that says what you are doing is discriminatory. This is outrageous, Mr. Speaker. He said, on page 884, and I quote: "The current policy, 3.10, does not specifically list permanent partial disability...". That's a problem. You don't need to consult, you don't need to dither, you don't have to revisit. Change the policy. Why don't you do that right now? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 169-15(5): Workers' Compensation Board Policy On Chronic Pain

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's also important to remember that the Auditor General's report pointed out that the Minister does not make policy. It's the board or the Governance Council that makes policy. So the Governance Council has agreed that they are going to look at their policy. They are prepared to consult and make the changes and they have a policy in place that allows for a lifetime disability pension right now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess nobody has the power to make the policy. I wish I could be in there and make that policy, Mr. Speaker. The Minister has the power to make the policy. WCB law allows him to send a directive and he said yesterday that the council is going to make the policy but they want to consult more. I am telling you it's a good thing that the WCB did not go to the Supreme Court because they would have had their wrists slapped again and they should change their legal advisor and do the thing now...

MR. SPEAKER: Do you have a question, Ms. Lee?

MS. LEE: ...or he should resign.

MR. SPEAKER: I didn't hear a question there, Ms. Lee. Do you want to rephrase your question, Ms. Lee?

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me just be clear again. The law of the Territories is...

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

Supplementary To Question 169-15(5): Workers' Compensation Board Policy On Chronic Pain

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister, will the Premier, will the council, get legal on chronic pain policy, change the policy to meet with the Valic decision? They cannot be illegal any longer, and I apply that to the Minister of Justice, too.

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

Further Return To Question 169-15(5): Workers' Compensation Board Policy On Chronic Pain

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Governance Council has agreed that they are going to examine the policy. They are going to change it if it needs to be changed. They are quite prepared to move on looking at that. That commitment has been made. I have made it publicly. The issue is one that they have said they are going to move on. I will talk again to the chair of the Governance Council and make sure that they look at it very quickly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 169-15(5): Workers' Compensation Board Policy On Chronic Pain

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What is it exactly stopping the Minister to write that directive?

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

Further Return To Question 169-15(5): Workers' Compensation Board Policy On Chronic Pain

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I understand it, the Financial Administration Act prohibits the Minister from providing any direction to the WCB that will impact on the accident fund. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve. Sorry, the honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

Question 170-15(5): Behchoko Public Housing Rental Arrears

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

Mr. Speaker, with my previous Member's statement on the 182 public units in Behchoko that owe outrageous rental arrears, I would like to ask the Minister of the Housing Corporation, can the Minister explain to this Assembly how we, the GNWT, Government of the Northwest Territories, allow one public unit, as an example in Behchoko, to accumulate \$76,413 in rental arrears which is still increasing? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Krutko.

Return To Question 170-15(5): Behchoko Public Housing Rental Arrears

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the objective we set for our local authorities is that they do have to collect in the range of 90 percent of the revenues from rents that are charged to the tenants. We also have the Rent Supp Program, which offers those tenants a subsidy on the amount of rent that is being paid either through a subsidy, do an evaluation of the tenant to determine how much they are supposed to pay. As the Member states, these go back for some time. In order for someone to end up with \$76,000 in arrears, they have to either have a high, high income or haven't paid their rent for a number of years. I think that is the problem we are having in collections and we, as a government, and as an

organization, are trying to resolve this issue by ensuring that those people have options that they can look at. They can go into a payment plan, they can get into homeownership, but the important thing is they have to make the attempt to pay. It has been an issue with regard to Behchoko.

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

Supplementary To Question 170-15(5): Behchoko Public Housing Rental Arrears

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the Minister stated, this has been an ongoing issue for quite some time now. That's quite true. The LHO is under the umbrella of the NWT Housing Corporation. We do have the accountability there, Mr. Speaker, as the NWT government. Mr. Speaker, my next question leads to what the Minister indicated on unemployment or high employment. There is something wrong with this system, Mr. Speaker. How can people who are not employed incur debts such as \$76,000 or owing an average of \$11,000 when this government has a system in place such as the Housing Subsidy Program? Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 170-15(5): Behchoko Public Housing Rental Arrears

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, we are aware that this is an issue with regard to Behchoko by way of how their rents were collected. It was managed and administered by a community organization. We had to take this back a number of years ago. I think there is a system in place where we do have the ability to backtrack the accounts as they are on our records. But they were under a different management agreement a number of years ago, in which we realized we do have some problems with that. Again, Mr. Speaker, the principle through that local housing authority is that they do have to ensure that they do work with the clients to make sure that they either pay their rent or work through a payment plan to bring those rents down. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 170-15(5): Behchoko Public Housing Rental Arrears

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again, the system is simply not working. It just goes to show here, Mr. Speaker, that what we are doing here, we are not doing anything about the arrears. It is a huge issue in the community. As the Minister has explained, the renter arrears continue to accumulate over the years without any investigations or suggestion of a solution to this problem. How is this government being accountable for the debts incurred by numerous renters continuously accumulating more and more arrears against their rent? Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 170-15(5): Behchoko Public Housing Rental Arrears

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have put a call out to the tenants of the

authority in Behchoko to come forward and show us exactly how the rents were calculated, give us the information that they have so that we can assess it and try to find a solution on exactly how we came up with that number. I know a number of years ago, one of my predecessors looked at the possibility of working out an arrangement with Behchoko because of this particular problem. It is a problem. We are trying to work with the Member and the community to find a solution to the problem. Again, we cannot set a precedent in one community realizing that this also has effects in other communities. So we are trying to find solutions to this problem. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 170-15(5): Behchoko Public Housing Rental Arrears

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is my final question for the Minister. If the Minister is serious about remaining accountable as a government, he will see the urgency of the situation and investigate it immediately, Mr. Speaker. Is the Minister prepared to conduct such an investigation and get to the bottom of these things once and for all? We cannot continue with this. Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 170-15(5): Behchoko Public Housing Rental Arrears

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are willing to send people into the community, sit down with each of the tenants and do an assessment tenant by tenant to see if we can come to the bottom of this problem. So I commit to the Member that I will direct my department to go into Behchoko and basically do just that by sitting down with the tenants and go with each one of them to ensure that we are being fair but also ensuring we try to find a way out of this problem. Thank you.

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

Question 171-15(5): Barren Land Caribou Management Practices

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister responsible for the Environment and Natural Resources just with what I was talking about earlier in my statement on addressing the hardships that people are going to start feeling here. The winter is coming and cost of living is going up. Rent is going up. Arrears are going up. Their main meat source is getting scarce. I am wondering if there have been any recommendations brought forward or any plans on how this government and how much it is going to cost this government to start addressing some of these hardships that local hunters and providers in all of our small communities are going to start feeling the brunt of with our declining caribou numbers. Is there anything that is coming out of the department? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 171-15(5): Barren Land Caribou Management Practices

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, we don't have any exact numbers of what resources would be necessary and what special efforts would have to be made. We are looking for information from all of the regional management bodies. Hopefully, we can deal with it with their advice. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 171-15(5): Barren Land Caribou Management Practices

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think there has to be some sense of urgency with the government on moving on some action to kind of mitigate the real impact that the dwindling numbers of caribou are going to have on people that rely heavily on caribou as their main meat source. Is there going to be any interim changes happening; maybe an increase in income support or what avenues do we have? I know that the advice from the Wek'eezhii Renewable Resources Board was made to the government in how they are going to address this issue. What are we going to do about it in the short term over the course of the next six months, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 171-15(5): Barren Land Caribou Management Practices

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are always aware of the difficulty people have in accessing caribou meat, where they depend on it. The most immediate thing we can do in the short term, of course, is to ensure that our income support offices are aware of the situation, are able to take that into consideration when they make allocations to people. Mr. Speaker, I know that it is difficult. It is more than just an income issue. It is also an issue of wanting to have the wild meat that people have a desire for. Mr. Speaker, over time we will work it out, but in the short term, in terms of emergency efforts, it would be largely through income support. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 171-15(5): Barren Land Caribou Management Practices

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can I get some commitment from the Minister that he will instruct the Department of ECE that provides income support that, perhaps, they should start broadening the eligibility requirements to specific cases of why people need income support; i.e. gas money, food, money to buy shells, hunting materials and stuff like that? Can that be included in income support in the short term, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 171-15(5): Barren Land Caribou Management Practices

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Member's advice. Mr. Speaker, we will have to talk with ECE. Our people are already doing that. We will be talking with ITI with regard to meat replacement. We will be talking with other departments as well because it does involve, in fact, departments like Health and Social Services. Mr. Speaker, we are hosting a caribou summit this winter. We are hosting workshops I think as early as November on hardships associated with the declining number of caribou. So those are all efforts that are being made. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 171-15(5): Barren Land Caribou Management Practices

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just with respect to the caribou conference that is coming up early this winter, can the Minister provide a brief outline of who is going to be included in this workshop? We just can't have a caribou management workshop to address these caribou management issues that is solely going to include just the NWT. It has to be even more circumpolar almost to come up with a good plan to address the declining caribou, because caribou don't recognize any borders. Can the Minister commit to the House and to the people that he will include everybody in the circumpolar regions that do have caribou or reindeer that they will be included or invited to this conference? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 171-15(5): Barren Land Caribou Management Practices

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, the proposed conference includes participants far broader than just the GNWT. Mr. Speaker, it will include co-management boards, aboriginal governments, outfitters, resident hunting organizations, Nunavut, Yukon, Saskatchewan, Dene Nation, regulatory boards, of course GNWT departments, people from ITI, Education, Social Services and so on, industry people and NGOs, caribou management boards, and Members of the Legislative Assembly will be invited. So we are keeping it as broad as we can. We are probably looking at 100 to 150 delegates and our intention is to get as much good information as possible and also to develop more understanding of the management plan as well as what is happening to our caribou herds.

Mr. Speaker, as far as going broader internationally on circumpolar, that is something that I will talk to the department about. But we hadn't contemplated going to countries with reindeer, for example. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 172-15(5): Paulatuk Community Freezers

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier, I spoke with regard to the community freezer in Paulatuk and also I applaud the Department of ITI in regard to sending their 25 freezers down in 2005-06. When we were having a meeting in Lutselk'e on a retreat, I did talk to the Minister briefly about getting more freezers for Paulatuk. At that time, he was going to confirm it. So I would like to ask the Minister. Why weren't these freezers sent to Paulatuk this summer? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 172-15(5): Paulatuk Community Freezers

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Member has indicated, we have sent, I believe, 50 freezers to Ulukhaktok, 25 to Paulatuk, and obviously we have had some recent problems with the community freezer in Paulatuk. We are prepared to sit down and arrange for more freezers to come to the community, but we do need to talk to the HDC, the hunters and trappers. We need a request from the hunters and trappers. I understand the region is working with them now. We need to understand who the families are that are in need of freezers. We can't determine that on our own so we do rely on the hunters and trappers to come forward and let us know who in the community needs these freezers. As we have indicated in the past, we are more than prepared to work with that hunters' and trappers' group to sort this issue out. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 172-15(5): Paulatuk Community Freezers

MR. POKIAK: Thank you. I would like to thank the Minister for his response. I will contact the HDC, but my understanding is that they are aware that they were supposed to at least get another 25 freezers over the summer. In that regard, I would like to ask the Minister, once that is done, when will the freezers be sent to Paulatuk? Will it be over the summer or will it be this winter? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 172-15(5): Paulatuk Community Freezers

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, I will have to check on that. It is my understanding that, in the past, we have used the barge schedule. We have needed some lead time to make sure that we could get the freezers ordered, on the barge and delivered to the community. I think the next opportunity is next summer to do that, but certainly let me see what is available in the region, Mr. Speaker, and I will get back to the Member. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 172-15(5): Paulatuk Community Freezers

MR. POKIAK: Thank you. The weather is kind of getting cool right now, so right now I think they are pretty safe, but I would like to make sure that these people in Paulatuk not lose that subsistence they got like this past fall and summer. So I would like to try to get the freezers down here either by airplane or can that happen, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 172-15(5): Paulatuk Community Freezers

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, let me say I agree with the Member that the urgency obviously with the weather turning colder is not as great as it was in the summer. We do believe that this is the model that makes sense, having people have their own chest freezers. The issue in Paulatuk where we have a large community freezer had the refrigeration unit go out on the equipment, much of the community subsistence harvest was lost is something that we don't think makes sense anymore. We want to make sure that we hedge our bets and that everybody has a freezer, everybody who needs one. So we will work with the community in that regard, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Question 173-15(5): Visual And Performing Arts Celebrations

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement today, I spoke about the need to have a territorial celebration of the arts. What I was getting at is the Northwest Territories needs to take the lead on initiatives to help embrace and help promote our arts community. So, Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment is, would he look into establishing an NWT arts achievement award night? It could either be an annual or semi-annual event. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 173-15(5): Visual And Performing Arts Celebrations

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Arts Strategy did talk about a need for us to consider an awards program for the arts. I think that it would make good sense for us to consider something like an awards evening or an event to draw some attention to those awards programs. This was reinforced when, in September, ITI and ECE had a consultation group take another look at the Arts Strategy and give us recommendations. They reiterated that we needed to take a look at doing something like that. I will certainly talk to my colleague with ITI to see whether or not we can move forward with such a program.

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

Supplementary To Question 173-15(5): Visual And Performing Arts Celebrations

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That was a very welcoming answer from the Minister. I appreciate his collaboration and the necessity to talk to the Minister of ITI. Mr. Speaker, my next question to the Minister is, could he sort of outline some time frame that he could look at getting back to committee with this initiative? Could he look at doing this maybe before the next session that begins in February? Could he get back to us on that detail? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 173-15(5): Visual And Performing Arts Celebrations

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are waiting for the final report from the group that we brought together in September. Sometime after we get that final report, I will sit down with my colleague. I expect that will be before the next session. I expect that, between ITI and ECE, we will be able to have some answers before the February session.

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

Question 174-15(5): Public Hearing On Natural Gas Price Increases

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I spoke to the concern from Inuvik residents about the increase in the natural gas price. One of the statements I made was the Public Utilities Board and said there was lack of evidence over concerns and had the members been living in the Northwest Territories, then I am sure they would have heard the concerns. But that is another issue for another day. I would like to ask the Minister of the Public Utilities Board, how is it that the supplier of natural gas can raise their rates without a public hearing where citizens can hear their justifications or voice their concerns? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 174-15(5): Public Hearing On Natural Gas Price Increases

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I did hear the Member's comments during Members' statements yesterday. I did take the opportunity to check the act. There are requirements that the Public Utilities Board has to follow. It is the responsibility of the Public Utilities Board to provide information to the general public. However, the utility company that also is requesting an increase has responsibilities, that is to inform the municipality, and those things have been done in this case. There have been issues raised by some of the Members regarding increase request and also the municipality of Inuvik has raised the issue. A number of residents have also raised the issue. There has been an information request provided to the utility company to supply back-up information. That may very well lead to a hearing. At this time, it is not determined if that is required. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 174-15(5): Public Hearing On Natural Gas Price Increases

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Does a utility company not have to have a hearing before the rates are increased? I think that was my question, Mr. Speaker. Do they have to go through the Public Utilities Board to hold a hearing and not wait for the concerns of the citizens? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 174-15(5): Public Hearing On Natural Gas Price Increases

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the process allows for interveners. There is a process that requires application to be filled in and applied for. It has to be justified. There is also a mechanism to cover some of the costs of people that are identified as interveners. A public hearing is something that would be determined by the Public Utilities Board after there is clear demonstration that there is a need for it. At this point, it is really premature in the case of the municipality of Inuvik. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 174-15(5): Public Hearing On Natural Gas Price Increases

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Is there going to be a public hearing into the rate increase proposed for the gas supplier in Inuvik? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 174-15(5): Public Hearing On Natural Gas Price Increases

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did have a chance to talk to the chair of the Public Utilities Board. At this time, it is not demonstrated that there will be a hearing. There have been a number of issues raised around the increase. A number of requests for information have been brought forward. All indications are that, more than likely, there will be one. But at this point, I can't confirm that, absolutely, there will be one. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 174-15(5): Public Hearing On Natural Gas Price Increases

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I find it kind of odd that people of Inuvik have raised a concern. Now, I thought...I will just get to my question. Will the Minister communicate to the Public Utilities Board the importance of having a public hearing before any further proposed increase to the natural gas rates in Inuvik? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 174-15(5): Public Hearing On Natural Gas Price Increases

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are other processes that are available. People have the ability to file as interveners. The municipalities can do this, Individuals can do this, so it is not clearly demonstrated in every occasion that there has to be a hearing. In this case, there have been a number of issues brought forth by the municipality. There are also a number of issues by residents. The MLAs for that area have raised an issue. All of this information has to be compiled and looked at before there is confirmation that there will be a hearing. At this point, the Public Utilities Board is not in a position to confirm that there will be a hearing. Thank you.

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

Question 175-15(5): Human Resources Department Client Service Levels

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to ask questions today to the Minister of Human Resources. It has been almost two years since the amalgamation of the HR departments. It is getting close to two years. I don't see any improvement in the area of client service, Mr. Speaker. In June, I questioned the Minister in regard to the service levels. It is not good enough that employees or the public call various persons at HR and get three or four different stories about where their files are, what they can access, and what they can't access. Questions go unanswered. E-mails go unanswered. Telephone calls go unanswered. Nurses new to town, whether they are married to maybe an RCMP officer or teacher, wait months without hearing a reply back from the Human Resources department. In fact, they have to deliver resumes to the hospital themselves. I do not think that is acceptable. The first question I have for the Minister today is, how can the Minister demonstrate that the client service levels have improved at the Human Resources department, given the fact that they have spent \$475,000 last year trying to find a better way to do business? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister responsible for Human Resources, Mr. Roland.

Return To Question 175-15(5): Human Resources Department Client Service Levels

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I must say the Member has a propensity to focus on the negative of how we do business in the government. We have listened to the Members in this Assembly about the concerns around HR. The Member himself stated he has been raising issues for three years. I think he has raised a number of issues in this setting right now referencing previous times he has raised issues on certain files within Human Resources. I think, instead of looking at the glass half empty, I want to see it half full and what we have done. The Member has raised the issue of a sole-source contract that we put in place to look at our practices within government. We can clearly identify that we have dealt with the backlog that came along with the amalgamation. It has not been two years since the last budget. Last year was when we officially kicked off

Human Resources. There was planning before that as to how we would try to go about doing this. So we have done quite a number of things around clearing up our backlog on the pay and benefits side as well as try to do ongoing business; terminations, layoffs and pension data that is available. If there are particular issues that the Member wants to address, I would gladly try to work with him and deal with those specific issues and bring them to closure. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 175-15(5): Human Resources Department Client Service Levels

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a propensity for standing up in this House and questioning the government in regard to concerns my constituents are raising like the honourable Minister had when he was on this side of the House. I just wanted to point that out for the record, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister what performance measures or indicators does the Minister employ when he is trying to gauge whether, in fact, service levels are improving in the Human Resources department. I would like to ask him that specific question. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 175-15(5): Human Resources Department Client Service Levels

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, since taking on this activity and putting human resources into one area, dealing with the backlog files, a number of things I've put in place to monitor the work that has been going forward. One, it is on the pay side of the equation on our backlog what gets done. The second piece, and becomes more critical, is the benefit side and the backlog there. In both sides, pre-September 2005, and post-September 2005, because that is when we really started pulling things together within the department to try and smooth them out and get the flow working. We do have work. I have said that in this House on a number of occasions. There is room for improvement. We are putting the pieces together. One of the big pieces around there is dealing with our PeopleSoft program going from 8.3 to 8.9 and coming with a clean version, as we call it, or the vanilla version, where we stick with a program and change our practice around that to make sure we are using it more efficiently. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 175-15(5): Human Resources Department Client Service Levels

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do have a concern in the area of human resources. I know the Minister spoke in June of over 100 areas of concern in the Human Resources department. As a Regular Member, we haven't had a briefing where we actually got to talk about what these concerns are and how we are going to address them as a government. I think that is fundamental and the communication has to be better between the Minister and the Regular Members on this side of the House in terms of where we are going with human resources and human resource planning. When

does the Minister plan on sharing with us what exact work has been done from that active review? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 175-15(5): Human Resources Department Client Service Levels

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as soon as the AOC committee is going to give me some time that we can bring a briefing forward, I will gladly meet with them to schedule something and give the latest information on the work that has been done. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 175-15(5): Human Resources Department Client Service Levels

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given what I laid out for the Minister in terms of nurses seeking employment and the staffing issues at the various health centres across the Northwest Territories, I am wondering if the Minister could give some consideration to, in fact, having a special team assigned to the recruitment and retention of health care professionals here in the Northwest Territories, because, in my mind, the current Human Resources department just isn't fitting the bill, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 175-15(5): Human Resources Department Client Service Levels

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the issue of recruitment of nurses for the Government of the Northwest Territories is, in fact, an area that we focused on. In fact, as of July this summer, we, within the human resource group, pulled a number of people together and their sole focus is dealing with the recruitment of nurses. Since July, we have been helpful, in fact, in pulling together and hiring 55 indeterminate or term nurses in that time period. So that unit is starting to work. We have had to make a number of those adjustments as we've moved along to fine tune HR and the way we do the work as well as try to focus on the more critical areas. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 176-15(5): Incentive Programs To Address Housing Utility Costs

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am going to take a run at a question again today. Today, I would like to ask the Premier something that I was trying to get an answer from Mr. Krutko about yesterday. Mr. Speaker, we have spent an inordinate amount of money as this government talking about energy efficiency, lowering our greenhouse gas emissions, making energy an issue with respect to the cost of living of northerners, and we have come up with a lot of very abstract concepts. Again, last night as I watched CBC, I see the budding actors of the Arctic Energy Alliance again with their public service announcement on CBC which

must cost a lot of money talking about not leaving their vehicles idling and all that sort of thing. It is not enough. I would like to see us do something more tangible. I would like to ask the Premier today if there is any way that an amount of money could be identified that would allow northerners living in their own homes to access money to make home improvements that would lower their cost of utilities in their communities on a repayment basis. Like I said, we have had a lot of money for consultation, posters, advertisements and all kinds of promotional material and gimmicks. How about some real cash that northerners could access on a repayable basis to do some home improvements to save costs on the bottom line for their cost of operating their homes? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 176-15(5): Incentive Programs To Address Housing Utility Costs

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I agree that we can't just advertise and urge people to cut down on their energy consumption. That is important. I think the work of the Arctic Energy Alliance is good in that one. We do have to look at some more specific ways of helping people in the North to reduce their cost of living and to make their homes more energy efficient. Mr. Speaker, as we go through our budget planning process in preparing for each budget, there is opportunity for Members to have input, and certainly if the Members in this House are ready to support us, then we would look seriously at a program similar to such as Mrs. Groenewegen is raising. Or there might be other good ideas out there how we might get a good bang for the buck by providing some very specific things to residents in the North. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 176-15(5): Incentive Programs To Address Housing Utility Costs

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Premier for that answer. We need to do something now. I don't know why this has never been done before. I don't know what other ideas might be out there, but this is one idea that's not out there. That's an idea that's right here and now and it seems like it should be simple. Keep the list of things that people could access money for short; a pellet stove, a wood stove, windows, insulation, siding. Even put a cap on it. Say a maximum of \$10,000 repayable interest free. They save the money on their bill; they use their savings to repay the loan. It seems simple to me and, like I said, when you compare it to the amount of money that we put into some of these things which have netted really unquantifiable results, I think it's a good idea. What department would the Minister or the Premier see such a program coming under? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 176-15(5): Incentive Programs To Address Housing Utility Costs

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, if we were to do the program that Mrs. Groenewegen's referring to it would either be done through the Housing Corporation or it could be done through ENR, that would be another possibility,

or a combination of departments. We did have programs similar to that in the past where we assisted people to buy things like solar panels and turbines and so on. This is something more specific and, Mr. Speaker, with the support of Members, then of course our government is ready to look at this kind of good program. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 176-15(5): Incentive Programs To Address Housing Utility Costs

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I respect the Premier's reference to the budget planning process and that kind of thing, but I think we need to do something now. I think that we should demonstrate that we can actually come up with an idea and find money for it. I'm sure we found money for all kinds of other things when they presented as an emergency and I think this is urgent. I think this is an urgent need in the North. I don't want to see this months and years in the planning. Let's keep it simple and let's try to find some money for a program to start as soon as possible. Is that possible? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 176-15(5): Incentive Programs To Address Housing Utility Costs

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, that's possible. We're well into our business planning. This would require new money, as Members know, but if there was a consensus here, or a majority of people agreed, then certainly we would look at that. We've looked at it, but we also have to recognize our fiscal situation. It may have to be somewhat limited or modest, but we're certainly not opposed to that kind of support. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 176-15(5): Incentive Programs To Address Housing Utility Costs

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, like I said, we do dedicate a lot of dollars to the concept of energy conservation and I would like to ask the Premier then if he would support the reprofiling of some money that may already be identified in the budget that could be reprofiled for something more tangible, something more real to northerners that we could get this program set up as soon as possible. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 176-15(5): Incentive Programs To Address Housing Utility Costs

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly we would and we would look for advice from the Members as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 177-15(5): Management Of The Human Resources Department

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions as well are to the Minister of Human Resources and in my 20 years on government as a manager and superintendent, acting regional director, even as a carpenter's apprentice with the union, and in this House here, all the Assemblies, I have been very interested in human resources. In fact, I know some of the Members here from the 13th Assembly, we did not speak in favour of the disbanding of the Personnel department of the day and it's taken nine years for the government to come back to realize that they do need a centralized human resource function which is so critical to government. I know as Minister of Health and Social Services and ENR I thought we got very good service.

My question to the Minister is just to give a sense of scale here. Can the Minister indicate firstly how many employees do we have and could he give us a ballpark figure of how many transactions in any given week or month that we would probably do or deal with with the various employees in the various forms?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Minister responsible for Human Resources, Mr. Roland.

Return To Question 177-15(5): Management Of The Human Resources Department

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to actually get a breakdown of the full amount of employees and break them down whether it's casual employment or indeterminate would take a bit of work. But I know on average there are over four and a half thousand employees across the Northwest Territories that we run payroll for. So you do your payroll. In fact, for example, when you deal with terminations there's a lot of people coming and going within government and an average monthly...For example, in the last nine months, Mr. Speaker, the average monthly termination process we've dealt with have been 357. So that's a fair bit of workload dealing throughout that exercise. We've had to deal with the new hires, recruitment, as well as dealing with our backlog situation as I made mention of earlier. In fact, I believe we are starting to come around to now start focusing on not just dealing with past issues, which has slowed us down substantially, but now look at how we really deal with our human resources going forward. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 177-15(5): Management Of The Human Resources Department

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I know that there's also concern for some of the facilities and how they're currently operating and I'd just like to ask, get some assurances from the Minister that while there may be some complaints from a small number of employees, will whatever work is done in terms of making sure we do employee satisfaction surveys that it will involve as well the hundreds of employees that I would consider the silent majority so that we do not have our policies and direction for Stanton set just on small

numbers of employees that may raise specific concerns. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 177-15(5): Management Of The Human Resources Department

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as issues arise with our human resources side of government we have to look at all factors, no matter the small amount of people that would raise concerns. We have to look into them to ensure we are doing what we can to try to deal with those. Obviously as we do some changes for one group it affects another group and that can raise issues on its own. We are doing a better job, I believe, when we look at most of our facilities. When we do a comparison across Canada with our health facilities, the shortage of nurses is still a thing that affects all jurisdictions. As I've stated earlier, we have now focused a unit within Human Resources and dealing with hiring of new nurses to bring them north. We have also, Mr. Speaker, created a float pool of nurses that helps us deal with the filling in of nurses who would either go on holidays or take time off. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 177-15(5): Management Of The Human Resources Department

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to publicly clarify the issue of the concern about reprisals, and the Minister will know that I've approached him on this issue as well to be able to ensure that anybody that comes through the door of an MLA can come through the door and speak on issues without any fear that there's going to be a backlash because they've come to their Member of the Legislative Assembly. It's a fundamental requirement of our ability to do our jobs as Members of the Legislative Assembly. So I'd just like the Minister to clarify on that issue as well.

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

Further Return To Question 177-15(5): Management Of The Human Resources Department

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the Member stated, our job in this Assembly is to deal with the constituents that come through our doors on any particular issue. So there's no fear there. As well, our employees have to realize that because we're within a union, there's a process of dealing with issues. As Members come to our door or come to my door on a human resources issue, my first response would be where it is at in the stage of dealing with our systems in place with the union and follow that process through. Mr. Speaker, just for stability of our workforce, we do have to follow a chain of command as we deal with our issues. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 177-15(5): Management Of The Human Resources Department

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the final question is just a clarification in terms of timeline for the much beloved PeopleSoft system that came into effect many Assemblies ago and has been a burden on us over the years. The Minister has indicated a substantial investment in this and getting a vanilla version that is integral and integrated and intact, and hasn't been tampered with by our staff. Can the Minister indicate when in fact that system will be fully operational? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 177-15(5): Management Of The Human Resources Department

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we just went through the first phase of that, recognizing what needs to be done to clean up our older version of 8.3. It was significantly customized, as we call it, where we changed the programming to fit our criteria, which lead to further problems. So we've had to go through that phase. We are now entering into the next phase of beginning the work to convert towards 8.9, the vanilla version, as I stated earlier. Hopefully, as we proceed this year, I'm looking towards, I believe it would be April 2007 that we would be able to be fully into the 8.9 process as 8.3 will no longer be supported. Thank you.

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

Question 178-15(5): Workers' Compensation Board Policy On Chronic Pain

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This afternoon I would like to continue questioning Mr. Dent, the Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board, on the file that Mr. Ivan Valic, an injured worker who for some 19 years now has continued to pursue what he believes and what the Supreme Court of the NWT has shown to be discrimination on denying his benefits, Mr. Speaker.

The Supreme Court of Canada some three years ago decided -- and I think this is what is quite well known as the Martin case -- that workers who suffer from chronic pain are entitled to the same benefits, including long-term disability benefits and vocational rehabilitation, that other injured workers are entitled to, Mr. Speaker. Three years ago, this was when it came out and it was a ruling of the court of Canada. Why have we had to wait for so long for our WCB, as the Minister was telling us yesterday, to take its policy on chronic pain and go out to stakeholders? Why has it taken this long, Mr. Speaker?

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

Return To Question 178-15(5): Workers' Compensation Board Policy On Chronic Pain

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the Valic case, Mr. Speaker, the policy or combination of policies that were found to be wanting by Justice Schuler were those that were in effect in 2001. Whether or not the

new policy that came into effect in 2004 fails the test, that was not considered by the decision. The Governance Council though, having looked at the decision, were not certain whether or not the new policy would stand the test. They were thinking of going to the courts. They've changed their minds and what they had decided to do at their September meeting, they agreed that rather than appealing the Valic decision or anything to do with that decision or going to the courts to test the policy, that they would come up with a new policy or examine their policy, make sure that their policy, the one that they will have in effect, that they'll adopt at their November meeting, will be the one that reflects current practice in jurisdictions across Canada. Subsequent to that they will go out for consultation and they're expecting that the consultation will be finished this year. The policy will be in effect as of the date of their next governance council meeting, which is scheduled for November. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 178-15(5): Workers' Compensation Board Policy On Chronic Pain

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, the Minister yesterday advised that in relation to Mr. Valic's long and valiant struggle to get to the court-ordered appeal, newly constituted Appeal Tribunal, that "the WCB has not applied to take an adversarial point of view at all in the Appeals Tribunal hearing." I'm quoting from unedited Hansard of yesterday. Mr. Speaker, I understand that the board has indeed applied for standing at Mr. Valic's tribunal. I wanted to ask the Minister, if indeed he said yesterday that the WCB has not applied to take an adversarial point of view, why has it applied for standing in Mr. Valic's Appeal Tribunal, which I understand, Mr. Speaker, is a very unusual move for the board to take at Appeal Tribunal level?

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

Further Return To Question 178-15(5): Workers' Compensation Board Policy On Chronic Pain

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's been a significant amount of time since this issue was initially addressed by the WCB. It's also been some time since the policies were changed. The policies the Appeals Tribunal were looking at were different. The WCB wants to make sure that they explain the current policy, which does allow for the individualization of compensation for all claimants so that that's clearly understood. What they're intending to do is ensure that the policies are clearly explained the way they are now, because I think it's important to remember that they were the ones who initially told the Appeals Tribunal to re-hear the Valic case. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 178-15(5): Workers' Compensation Board Policy On Chronic Pain

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, the Appeals Tribunal is an independent body from the WCB. It has its own council. Its members are, we like to think, well versed and well grounded in their work. Why is it that the WCB feels it has to go in front of this tribunal, an independent tribunal, to

again state its case? Why, Mr. Speaker, does the WCB feel the need to intervene in a matter that it has already been found to treat the worker unfairly and unconstitutionally?

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

Further Return To Question 178-15(5): Workers' Compensation Board Policy On Chronic Pain

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to say again that the ruling found that the policies in effect in 2001 were unfair and unconstitutional. They did not say that the policies in 2004 were. The WCB, on application from Mr. Valic, had requested that the Appeals Tribunal reconsider the hearing. At this point, I'm advised that what the WCB intends to do is to present the new policy, make sure that there's a clear understanding or try and make sure there's a clear understanding that indicates that compensation is available in chronic pain cases. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Time for question period has expired; however I will allow the Member a final supplementary, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary To Question 178-15(5): Workers' Compensation Board Policy On Chronic Pain

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, is the WCB afraid that if something goes sideways for them again in this Appeals Tribunal that it's going to cost them a lot of money? Is that what they're doing, Mr. Speaker? Are they trying to protect the fund instead of doing what is right for injured workers?

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

Further Return To Question 178-15(5): Workers' Compensation Board Policy On Chronic Pain

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't believe so. I believe they want to do the right thing for an injured worker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Time for question period has expired. Oral questions. Written questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

ITEM 7: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Written Question 20-15(5): Seniors' Home Heating Subsidies

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

1. How were the maximum annual fuel amounts for the various types of fuel arrived at and how do they compare to the actual amounts needed to heat homes, in particular older homes which are not as heat efficient as the newer homes?
2. How were the income thresholds for the subsidy arrived at, have they been updated to keep up with the cost of living, and how do they compare with the seniors' actual incomes?
3. With respect to the income thresholds, what is the rationale for taking away 25 percent of this subsidy for approximately each additional \$250 worth of

income; is \$250 typically enough to cover the cost of 25 percent of the maximum fuel amounts?

Thank you.

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

Written Question 21-15(5): WCB Chronic Pain Policy

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board.

Would the Minister responsible for the WCB work with the Minister of Justice and bring forward to this House a legislative proposal that would amend or repeal the offending provision of the Workers' Compensation Board Act dealing with the Minister's powers relative to the WCB ratepayers fund within this Assembly?

If the Minister chooses not to bring forward the legislative proposal, would he provide the justification as to why he will not during this current session?

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee.

---Applause

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. Notices of motion. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. Motions. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 6, Bill 7, Bill 11, Bill 14, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Committee, I'd like to call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of the committee today? Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Madam Chair. The committee wishes to consider Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly Executive Council Act, No. 2.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Is the committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. We'll proceed with that after a short break.

---SHORT BREAK

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Okay, committee, I'd like to call us back to order, please. We have before us now in Committee of the Whole Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, No. 2. I would like to call on Mr. Pokiak, who is the Member sponsoring this bill, to proceed with opening comments, please. Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I am pleased to provide opening comments for Bill 14 on behalf of the Legislative Assembly Board of Management. Bill 14 will amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council to revise the electoral districts of the Northwest Territories. The bill proposes changes to the electoral boundaries in the communities of Hay River, Inuvik and Yellowknife, while maintain the status quo in the remaining eight constituencies. Bill 14 does not propose any increase to the number of MLAs in the Legislative Assembly.

Madam Chair, on May 30th, 2006, the report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission, 2006, was tabled in this House. On behalf of the Board of Management and, indeed, all Members, I would like to thank the commission, consisting of the Hon. Justice John Vertes, Mr. Eddie Erasmus of Behchoko, and Mr. Rod O'Brien of Hay River, for its hard work and thoughtful recommendations.

Once the commission's report was tabled, the Legislative Assembly Board of Management and all Members individually spent considerable time analyzing its recommendations. The board consulted with MLAs individually and the Caucus and came away with one dominate message, that now is not the time to expand the size of our Legislature.

In a time when spending on programs and infrastructure is under significant restraint, Members were of the view that increasing the size of the Legislature by two Members, at an annual cost of up to \$900,000 per year, was not the responsible thing to do.

Bill 14 implements the commission's recommendations with respect to the rebalancing of the electoral boundaries in Inuvik and Hay River. These recommendations make good sense and do not result in the addition of any seats in the Legislative Assembly.

Madam Chair, Bill 14 does not create an additional seat in the Assembly for Yellowknife, as recommended by the commission, nor does it create a stand-alone seat for the community of Behchoko. The changes recommended for Yellowknife strike a more appropriate balance in the size of the existing seven Yellowknife constituencies such that if none is greater than 25 percent of the average constituency size in the Northwest Territories. The constituency of Monfwi would maintain its current boundaries, make it one of the largest constituencies, although still below the 25 percent guideline established by the Northwest Territories Supreme Court.

Madam Chair, Bill 14 strikes an important balance. It addresses the important and sensitive issue of voter parity without increasing the size of the Legislature. The time is surely coming when additional seats will have to be added to ensure relative equality of representation of electoral boundaries. Bill 14 offers an effective and balanced interim measure. Thank you, Madam Chair. That concludes my opening comments.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. At this time, Mr. Pokiak, I would ask you if you would like to take the witness table.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. I understand you don't have any witnesses so, with that

then, I will ask Members if there are any general comments. Okay, to the detail then. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. I, too, would like to thank Justice John Vertes, Mr. Eddie Erasmus and Mr. Rod O'Brien for their work on this report. We can see, from reading it, that they travelled across the Northwest Territories to give voters a chance to have their say in the structure of this, the Legislative Assembly, this political institution. I agree that it's necessary for the commission to give the public an opportunity to be heard. I know it's challenging to come up with unanimous recommendations, given the competing positions advanced by members of the public, so I think it's important to note that the members of this commission were unanimous in their recommendations.

As they outlined in the report, they heard about the unique nature of the Northwest Territories with its diversity, its different cultures and its regional interests. They also took note of the various criteria set out in the act that they have to keep in mind, which includes things like geographic factors, including the accessibility size or shape of any area, community boundaries, facilities for and patterns of transportation. So it wasn't just the population that they looked at.

But, Madam Chair, the report also points out that equality of voting power is still the most important factor to be considered in setting electoral boundaries for public government. I think it's important that we remember that the commission is independent of the Legislative Assembly and government, and is consultative only. The commission notes in their report that it's up to this Assembly to decide which, if any, of the recommendations that should be accepted.

But having done that, they remind us of section 3 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which says that everybody has a right to vote, and they talk about what that means and how that's been clearly established in various court decisions across Canada. Madam Chair, I accept that it's impossible to achieve absolute voter parity in the Northwest Territories, given all the factors that must be considered, and I also accept that Yellowknife voters have much easier access to their MLAs than do most voters in the Northwest Territories.

The other point that the commission report makes is that the weight of Yellowknife voters right now is likely adequate, given the availability of Yellowknife MLAs to their constituents. I have to say that most of the advice that I've received at my constituency meetings, in conversation or by e-mail agree with what the commission heard from the majority of presenters in Yellowknife, and that is that we don't need more than 19 seats in the NWT Legislative Assembly. I know that I certainly heard from constituents who said that they also were not prepared to see any reduction in voting weight. So if a new constituency is to be added outside of Yellowknife, then there must be one within Yellowknife.

Madam Chair, we also heard that the commission had its strongest presentation for an additional riding in Monfwi, and my colleague Mr. Lafferty has very eloquently pressed the case for an additional seat with me. I understand that he's under some pressure from his constituents and the leadership in that region to push for another seat. I think what this had done in part, Madam Chair, because I recognize, as do my constituents, the

cost of adding seats in the Legislative Assembly is that in hindsight I think we should have given the commission one more guideline. I think we should have asked the commission to make recommendations for us that would keep the seats at 19, while perhaps taking into account those requests like we're hearing from areas like Monfwi, and looking at areas where we have overrepresentation right now in our constituencies. I would certainly suggest that a guideline like that be considered for the next commission and, if not, we'll soon be well over 24 Members in the not-too-distant future.

Madam Chair, since we didn't do that and in order to accommodate the very strong wishes of the residents of Monfwi, personally, I support the recommendations of the commission, and I would say that we tasked the commission to listen to people across the Northwest Territories. I point out that the majority of the members on that commission come from outside Yellowknife, and again say that their recommendations are unanimous. So because of that, I am prepared to support the recommendations of the commission for adding two seats.

I must say, though, that one thing I can't support from the recommendation is the name that they proposed for the new constituency of Pud Lake. I think that may be, or may have been in the past, a tailings pond and I'm not certain that it would be appropriate to name a constituency that. So if we are considering amendments that would see another constituency in Yellowknife, I will be proposing a different name than Pud Lake for it. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. General comments. Next I have Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chair. The issue of recommendations by the Electoral Boundaries Commission brought me back to if we had two extra seats added to the Assembly it was going to be a dominoes affect down the Mackenzie Valley. I strongly support the status quo of 19 Members. The amount of money that's going to be taken out of certain programs within this government is going to have an affect on our programs in the smaller communities. Adding more seats to the House will add more costs. It has an effect on the Cabinet and on the Assembly as a whole.

Madam Chair, the people in the Northwest Territories, especially over the last couple of weeks, think adding a couple more Members to the House would be somewhat questionable. The funding that's going to be required to increase the size of this House is astronomical, especially in light of the programs. The requests that we're asking Cabinet to provide for our communities is going to be very, very short listed and limited. I cannot support that and I will not support that. We need to rethink this and think this for the next Assembly maybe.

Madam Chair, I like providing equal representation of some of the boundaries in some of the larger centres. I spoke to the Electoral Boundaries Commission. When you look at my region, you're looking at about a little over 280,000 square kilometres of territory that I cover. For me to fly into each of those communities, meet with each of the leaders -- and there's about three to six or seven leaders that I meet with on different issues -- the Metis, the band, the land corps, education, the chiefs, the mayors and other regional groups, and that's for almost

for each community in my region. Usually it takes about \$8,000 to do a two-day tour in my region.

So when we look at electoral boundaries and we look at the work, I think our communities are somewhat left out in terms of how we represent our people in the smaller communities. We have different jurisdictions every time we meet in a different community, as opposed to meeting in the larger centres like Yellowknife, Hay River and Inuvik or in Fort Smith. The chief maybe, mayor; that's it. But we in the small communities meet with different leaders, different cultures, different dialects. Even in Deline last year I was told that there were 33 different agencies in just the community of Deline. So when we look at equal representation and representing our people, in the small communities I represent we are truly left out. But I think we all do a good job in representing our people and I'd like to stay with the status quo of 19 and not add another budget item and increase our budget to have two more Members come, otherwise I would have to consider adding a Member to the Sahtu and I do not want to do that right now.

So, Madam Chair, I'd like to stay with the 19, re-jig the boundaries. As it said in here, as Mr. Pokiak has said, it makes good, common sense for this legislation to stay where we are and we thankful for the Electoral Boundaries Commission for the hard work they have done. We listen to people and the Sahtu region will not support two additional Members for the House. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. For general comments I have Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I, as well, support the bill as brought forward with the boundaries of existing jurisdictions, constituencies, in Yellowknife, Hay River, Inuvik adjusted which keeps every constituency under the 25 percent as required by the court ruling.

Madam Chair, the issue comes up repeatedly and the political discussion, as Minister Dent indicated, that we have to have, that we chose not to have when we started this process because I recollect it was raised by myself and maybe one other, is it's going to be up to us politically as a Legislature to set the ceiling of what we consider adequate government and have a boundaries commission operate within that basic parameter. Otherwise, I, as well, have the same concern and we have seen it ratchet up since division. But the easiest way out is you just keep adding more and more seats, you have MLAs tripping over themselves. We are the most over-governed jurisdiction, when you look at all the levels of government that we have; federal, territorial, municipal and all the other organizations that are there. There is a significant cost and I believe that we are well suited to do the business of this House with the membership that we currently have. I agree, as well, that this can be seen as an interim measure and the Legislature of the 16th Assembly will hopefully look at the debate and put it on this table and recognize that one of the challenges they have to do when they set out the terms of reference is have the political discussion ahead of time about the future of the Northwest Territories, and what do we need to provide good government when it comes to MLAs. I know there is a concern that large centres, some communities have the numbers but a small geographic area. Some regions or constituencies have a large

geographic area and relatively small numbers comparatively speaking. Our focus is, and has been, mainly on the numbers, not on the effect of the geography, which is a challenge in itself when you look at the federal constituencies where I believe Nunavut and the Northwest Territories are the two largest jurisdictions in the country with over one million and a half or so square kilometres each and one MLA to cover that whole vast territory, but a relatively small number of people. It's an issue that we have to look at as well next time.

But for this particular exercise, I fully support keeping it the same, adjusted within the 19. For my constituents, it is very clear that we don't need any more government. But if we have an extra half million dollars a seat or whatever it is, then let's put that half million dollars into the base somewhere to do fuel rebates, to do wood stove programs, promote energy efficiency, more nurses, more doctors, more teachers, language programs, and the list could go on; chipsealing Highway No. 5.

---Laughter

So if there's any concern about finding the money, then I think we could all find ways to put that money to better use than adding more MLAs just because the court says and we want to see if there's a Legislature, just keep ratcheting up the number of MLAs in shrinking constituencies. Our job is to make the tough decision. We didn't do it at the front end. We have a chance to hold the line here and hopefully set it up to do it the next time. But I would suggest to you it would not be responsible for us to add to the cost of government that is already very, very high, so I fully support this Bill 14 as it's laid out. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Next on the list I have Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Along with myself, I think there were five MLAs altogether who made presentations to Justice Vertes and the other two members of the Electoral Boundaries Commission earlier this year. Madam Chair, there were two points that I put to the commission at the time. The first one was that, indeed, there was no need to grow the size of the Assembly. The 19 Members provided for in the NWT Assembly were enough to do the work, perform the tasks that we're required to do, and so that maintaining the 19 was, at least from the point of view of the capacity and the number of MLAs required was adequate.

The other request was to look at within the existing ridings to shave the peaks, if you will, and fill the valleys where we could do some adjustments with our ridings, especially in Yellowknife and then, of course, in Hay River and Inuvik, Madam Chair, to bring some more consistency to all our ridings and in effect do some housekeeping in that respect. I think that through the bill as presented, the second part of my request was indeed fulfilled, Madam Chair.

But to the first part of it, the size, the growth of the Legislative Assembly, this is where I put considerable weight, a considerable emphasis, Madam Chair, in the assignment that we gave to the boundaries commission to go out there and listen to the constituencies, listen to our people, and come back with their best recommendations on how our territory is changing, how our demographics are changing, where the populations are potentially

shifting to, where they are going to shift. This is what the commission did. They came back with a recommendation for the expansion of two ridings. Given the report they came back with, Madam Chair, and in the process of that, the signals that we received from the community of Behchoko that they strongly felt they deserved and, indeed, were sort of at the threshold of warranting a new riding, that this made sense. I also know, Madam Chair, that from the point of view of my community of Yellowknife, that there would be an offsetting desire to create some parity here and look for an additional seat in Yellowknife.

Madam Chair, a reality is that Yellowknife now has I believe somewhere in the neighbourhood of 47 or 48 percent of the population in the Northwest Territories, but here in the Legislative Assembly about 37 or 38 percent of the voting weight. That is, I believe, an allowable discrepancy, but I know that there are people in the community, and I will say I'm one of them, that I do not want to see that level of representation, comparative representation, eroded, Madam Chair. I think on that basis that establishing another seat for Yellowknife is a way of maintaining the parity, or at least the perception of parity, in our relative populations.

So in that respect then, Madam Chair, as I did in my newsletter in June, I have endorsed the recommendation of the boundaries commission and I favour that position on the floor of the Assembly today.

Madam Chair, I think it's important to consider that in making this kind of decision, one of the MLAs, of course through the Electoral Boundaries Act, have taken the work of the boundaries commission as a recommendation. We have the final say, at least in terms of the act and our own decision-making capacity. But, Madam Chair, I do want to keep in mind that we aren't the only ones who have a say in how representation should be determined. Regular citizens, Madam Chair, quite rightly have the opportunity if they feel that their representation is not fair and balanced with those of others in the Northwest Territories, they can take their grievance to a court and have it heard.

Madam Chair, eight years ago that is indeed what happened to this Assembly, and there was quite an unexpected outcome I think to what the legislators-of-the-day thought would be the case when they decided to ignore or decline the recommendation of the boundaries commission in 1999, or was it 1998, Madam Chair. This is especially an area of concern to me, Madam Chair, that I think in seeking the support of the recommendations of the boundaries commission, we are supporting the people of Behchoko, we are supporting the people of Yellowknife, we are avoiding, I believe, the potential for this issue going yet again into the courts, and potentially for the Legislative Assembly to let go something that we should indeed have responsibility for and take the steps, indeed, to represent our citizens as equitably and fairly as we can. So in that respect, Madam Chair, it's perhaps fitting that the voter, the constituent in this case can and does and may have the last word in this issue, and that is why I support the boundaries commission and the creation of two more ridings, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Next on the list I have Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Madam Chair. Madam Chair...(English not provided)

Madam Chair, I'd just like to highlight what I've said in my own language, that with the report that came out in May and also just with the recent report from Mr. Pokiak, that there was a statement there that came away with one dominant message. Madam Chair, not all Members agreed at that time in the Lutselk'e meeting that there was one voice. Some Members disagreed with what took part there. So I would just like to highlight that as a clarification and the number of change from the recommendation itself as well. There was \$600,000 and now it's \$900,000.

Anyways, I'd like to touch on the Monfwi and Behchoko riding that we've been highlighting for quite some time now. This past spring, Madam Chair, the Electoral Boundaries Commission recommended that the current riding of Monfwi be divided in two ridings, Behchoko and Monfwi, which include Edzo, Whati, Gameti and Wekweeti. Behchoko will be a standalone. This commission made the recommendation based on the list of 12 criteria stipulated by the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act and I will touch on some of them.

Madam Chair, the community boundaries established on the lands, resources, self-government agreements, including land claims and treaty land entitlement agreements. Two, demographic factors, including the scarcity, density or related growth of population of any area. Three, patterns of transportation, the communication within and between the different areas. Four, language, cultural and other special community and diversity of interests of the residents of Northwest Territories. Madam Chair, the population of Monfwi puts it at plus 25 percent of average variation, a recommendation that came out of the Electoral Boundaries Commission, meaning that it is significantly under-represented. Behchoko has steadily increased in population over the past 10 years, Madam Chair. It is the largest aboriginal community in the Northwest Territories.

Madam Chair, Hay River, Inuvik and Dehcho all have two seats. Monfwi has the same or greater population. This precedent has already been set in this House. It only makes sense for Monfwi to have two seats as well. Madam Chair, it makes sense to divide Monfwi riding as recommended. Behchoko is on the highway system and has reasonable access to goods and services offered in Yellowknife. The outlying communities are accessible only by air or ice roads and, therefore, have limited access to these services. The concerns of each type of communities are different from each region. To ensure a fair and equitable representation to outlying communities, again it only makes sense to have our own riding, recognizing their uniqueness, demographic factors and the needs arising from these, Madam Chair.

The creation of the Tlicho Government has meant increased demands upon the MLA as a conduit between that level of government and territorial government demands another MLA in this region or NWT has yet to be faced. Because of the uniqueness in governance, Tlicho members living in Yellowknife who are recognized as a member of Tlicho by birthright, not because of where they chose to live, often call upon myself for assistance, Madam Chair. These Tlicho members often have concerns tied to their original communities. They should be considered part of the decision, but they are not, Madam Chair. The Tlicho people pride themselves on the fact that we are the largest aboriginal group in the Northwest Territories. We have worked hard to maintain

our language and cultural traditions. This makes us unique from Yellowknife or other larger centres.

Some would recommend that we should keep the status quo. Madam Chair, if status quo means my region is significantly under-represented, status quo means outlying communities remain unrepresented and neglected. If I would argue with a stronger voice, smaller communities would have voted out, as an example, the \$40 million courthouse for YK or other major projects in larger centres that I've encountered in the past. Instead, that money would have gone to the region as where our priority lies. How often do we have to be outvoted before we figure out that status quo only serves to keep our smaller communities marginalized and silenced, Madam Chair?

Dividing Monfwi into two ridings does not only benefit the Tlicho, it would serve the betterment of all small communities in the Northwest Territories. Madam Chair, if it takes my support for the Electoral Boundaries Commission's recommendation, then I will support it in order to get a seat for the Monfwi riding.

Madam Chair, I've had a teleconference today with my leadership just prior to noon and they're watching us and they're waiting patiently of the outcome of this session. Mahsi Cho.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Next I have Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Madam Chair. First let me again also have my thanks to Honourable Justice John Vertes, Eddie Erasmus and Rod O'Brien who put a lot of work into travelling and hearing from the people of the Northwest Territories and putting together this commission report. I think it was a very useful exercise.

As has been indicated here by a number of other Members, in hindsight maybe we should have sat down and talked about some more constraints on the commission in terms of limiting the number of seats and limiting the growth in government. I think that's certainly something that we need to take into account and we task the next Electoral Boundaries Commission in the number of years going forward. I think that there's a lot of merit in that.

Madam Chair, let me say that I am in support of this commission's report and I'll tell you that the primary reason for this, and I have had the benefit I guess that maybe not all Members have had to the same extent, but I've had the benefit to travel extensively with the Member in the Tlicho region. I've listened to people very passionately and eloquently articulate their desire for additional representation. I think it's more than the numbers, Madam Chair. They've made a very compelling argument, in my mind, as has the Member, that when we talk about the rural and urban dynamics in this House, we know that Members who represent one community or part of a community have a set of challenges. Those who represent a number of other communities, smaller communities, have an entirely different set of challenges. I can tell you that I believe that the Member for Monfwi has both of those sets of challenges. I think the dynamic in Behchoko has changed over a number of years. I think the economy has grown and matured; I think there are a number of urban realities and challenges. I think eventually Behchoko will be a tax-based municipality because it already has the burden that a number of other

tax-based municipalities have. It has a number of people and growing and, in fact, I believe that the population estimates that we have that we've discussed don't adequately represent the actual size of that community.

I've talked to a number of people, the local leadership, Chief Lafferty, and many of the people who I consider to be authorities on the matter would tell you that there are certainly close to 2,000 people in that community. I've spent some time there, I've had a chance to travel around and I believe it, Madam Chair, but yet with all of the urban challenges in Behchoko, to travel in the smaller outlying Tlicho communities is to see the rural challenges and to see communities who are very traditional, as the Member has indicated, don't have the same access, are doing a very good job, in my opinion, of maintaining their culture, their respect for the land, maintaining their spirituality.

I think in this region the motto "Strong Like Two People" continues to come to mind. I think that is very much embodied in the current Member who I think has attributes that respect both of those needs in his community to create economic opportunities for his people, and yet to hold on and maintain the traditions of the past. I think we need to give this region every opportunity to do that. I think a seat for Behchoko is warranted, a separate seat, because I do think the challenges are so much different than those in the outlying regions of the communities, and it's for that reason and not because I think that Yellowknife needs another seat or is under-represented, it's for that reason and that reason that I certainly support an additional seat for Monfwi.

Having said that, I understand that to diminish the representation in Yellowknife is problematic and I think will inevitably lead to a court challenge that will determine that we need to see another Yellowknife seat. So my belief is that we can pay the money and go to court and end up with two seats, or we can do what I think is the right thing and give Monfwi a seat. I think in future there will be other regions that need seats, we have to respect that, but I do think that we should sit down and talk about limiting the size and growth of government, however, Madam Chair.

Let me say, I've also taken the chance and the opportunity to look at a lot of the jurisprudence. I am aware that our Court of Appeal, the Alberta Court of Appeal has talked about the difference between having a commission of elected officials sit down to decide how many seats they need and have, an independent commission do their work, and obviously, not surprisingly, they've put a lot of weight in an independent commission. I'd look at the membership of our commission, I know that they've done some good thorough work and that has a lot of weight with me. I give that, Madam Chair, a lot of credence. I can also say that in the Maritimes and a couple of other jurisdictions, the 25 percent rule of thumb is changing and other jurisdictions are looking, and there is some precedent for this, at a 20 percent rule of thumb. We may be moving in that direction. So, Madam Chair, let me say I think in future we do need to constrain the growth in government and we need to give maybe some more explicit direction to a commission, but we taxed this commission to go out and hear from people and do a job to the best of its ability. I think it has done that and I think the Tlicho people deserve an additional seat. Therefore, I will be supporting the recommendations of the commission to add two seats. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Next on the list I have Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to thank, as well, the commission members for the hard work and the job that they did on developing the recommendations contained in the report and it's very interesting hearing other Members around this room discussing this very important topic. I listened quite closely to what my colleague Mr. Lafferty had to say from Monfwi and appreciated what he had to say. From where I stand, and I don't want to go over a lot of ground most Members have covered, but from where I stand I think an important factor in all this is we try our best to stay out of court. I think we certainly could be challenged on a number of fronts. The bill as it's presented, obviously, with the redistribution of ridings in Yellowknife, Inuvik and Hay River, does bring Monfwi under the 25 percent, but I think I err more on the side of reality. I think the commission went out, they did their work and I tend to agree with some of my colleagues that Monfwi does deserve, in fact, another seat and I'd like to support that in happening. However, that also includes another seat for Yellowknife and I think the easy thing to do and the best thing to do, if you went out on the street, Madam Chair, and you talk to 100 people, probably 90 percent of them would say that we do not need any more MLAs in this Legislative Assembly and that would be the consensus out there. Now if we went with the status quo, ended up in court and ended up with four or five new Members for this Legislative Assembly, that to me would be more disturbing than just accepting the recommendations in the report and moving forward.

Mr. Lafferty mentioned in his opening comments that his leadership is looking at the recommendations and willing to accept the recommendations contained in the report. This, Madam Chair, I believe will keep us out of court and it will add another seat in Yellowknife, yes, but I think it's a fair and reasonable balance in allowing the community of Behchoko to have its own seat.

Madam Chair, I just wanted to close with that and look forward to further debate. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Next on the list for general comments I have Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to put on record my position on this bill as well. Madam Chair, I would like to start by thanking the commission and the commission members along with all the other Members for the work that they have done. I'd like to say, for the record, that I am not in support of the bill as it's written as it suggests keeping a status quo of 19 Members plus redrawing some of the borders. So I will not be supporting it unless it's amended to reflect the commission's report.

Madam Chair, let me just say that the reason why I take this position is because I believe that it is in the public interest that we are here to protect and in the interest of this Legislature for us to accept this recommendation. First of all, let me just talk about the deference to the commission I believe that this Legislature should pay attention to, because I think that we should be mindful of the fact that this commission is not just a regular advisory board where the work of our Legislature is helped by, in many, many different instances, we have lots of boards where Ministers appoint Members to and those

recommendations are subject to our acceptance or not. I would submit an argument that this commission is not such a board. It is a statutory board and the members of that commission were appointed by a legislative action in this House. It was done by a formal motion in this House and I believe there is a lot of distinction in that as opposed to some other appointment. This commission went out there to do the work that they were tasked with by a former motion of this legislature. They had very specific provisions in the Commission Act; as well, they had lots of other legislation and historical analysis they were asked to look at.

Madam Chair, I also believe, and I want to answer to some of the other suggestions made I believe that the commission looking into the issues that the Members are raising. I don't believe the commission's recommendations reflect strict population parity. I do believe that the commission looked at the regional remoteness, the regional government situations, the fact that some ridings have six or seven communities that the MLA in charge has to look after, because they were asked to look into that. Specifically, I believe, and I have attended a number of meetings that the commission had in the city, and I believe in the report it mentions the fact that it looked at the special committee report on sunset clause, for example, in the last Assembly where this Legislature dealt with districting. There were very strong recommendations made for the commission to look at issues other than population parity, because I tell you, Madam Chair, if the commission just looked at the population parity, it would have come back with more than just two seats, or it could have looked at nine seats possibly for Yellowknife out of 19. The fact that it didn't I believe speaks to the fact that the commission did not look at specifically to population parity and that the commission looked at all the other concerns the Members are raising here. So I think that it should be with great carefulness that this Legislature rejects the recommendation of the commission.

There are lots of things in hindsight we could have done if there were very strong opinions here that the House should not grow any bigger for budgetary reasons or financial reasons as presented here, then that should have been made clear, which I would argue was not. But I think that that was mentioned in some of the hearings and I do believe that the commission considered that and rejected that and it's the commission's right to do so. The commission could have reduced a smallest riding or amalgamated it with another riding. I believe that was in their books too. I believe they looked at whether 19 was best or we should go lower or higher, but I believe that they looked at that and they chose not to address the overrepresentations scenario, but looked primarily into the under-representation. So I have to say that my decision in this regard is strictly with the deference to the work of the commission.

Another thing that I want to say about the arguments being made here that we really don't have money to spend on extra MLAs and I think there's a strong argument to be made in that. I could tell you that in the constituency meeting that I had in June when this report came out, this was a topic of discussion and I would agree with all the Members who said that the general population in Yellowknife are not looking for an extra Member for Yellowknife. But I tell you, they guard very close to the idea of voting parity. I would argue that voting parity in

this regard is a Charter right. It's not an issue where it's a decision that could be made just on the political will. Some have suggested that it's for us to make a political decision, but I would argue that the Charter right of an individual voting person and their voting parity is not up to us to decide, it's not at our disposal. A person voting in Range Lake should not have one-third of voting power of somebody in Tu Nedhe. The fact that the commission decided that that's okay for the Tu Nedhe Member to be overrepresented, but the commission spoke that under-representation too far above 25 percent is not allowed. I believe that the commission and these Members did the work and that we should not disregard the committee recommendations lightly.

Let me just say also, to reject the committee recommendation because so many ridings are so close to 25 percent and because we know that this issue will not be visited again for another eight years, I would suggest that it would be quite irresponsible for this Legislature to not address so many ridings where it's either at 25 percent or over 30 percent. So I would suggest to you, Madam Chair, that my position is that I believe that the commission looked at all of the considerations that we are looking at and they made the recommendation that Monfwi should get an extra seat and that Yellowknife should get the voting parity. In that regard, I think that I will be strongly supporting that.

Somebody suggested that we should do this to avoid court challenge. I might just switch that around and say that I don't want to do the things in this House because I feel threatened by a court challenge. Although I think that should be a consideration, I think what we should consider ourselves is that it is more harmful for us as a legislator to give away someone's protected Charter right when we do we have a Charter that says that's wrong and the court will step in. So I don't know if anybody could see the distinction on that, but I believe that it is our job as a legislator to protect the Charter rights of everyone, and this is not talking about strict voting parity here, I mean I think the voters outside of Yellowknife are overrepresented and the commission said it's okay and the law has said it's okay, but how far do we go with that? The commission has drawn the line here and I think it's to our interest and in order that we do our jobs here, that we accept the committee's recommendation and move forward from that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Next I have Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. The things I'm going to say are really reflective of what I've heard in my community, the constituency of Yellowknife Centre. The fact is, I appreciate the work the commission did, but we also have to keep in context that they are an advisory group and they do not force us. They are an administrative body that we commissioned out of this House to go find research, come back and to substantiate what they heard into some formulation and then send it off as a proposal to the politicians. Now, in essence, the politicians are the ones that actually have to make the decision.

I'm concerned that I think the report, to some degree, although I sincerely do appreciate their work, I feel it's flawed in the sense of fundamental principle, because I don't think that they heard what the people were saying; they heard what the lobby groups were putting forward.

The reason I say that is because I read page 6 of the report and it talks about where they basically heard a strong voice of keeping status quo, and then they heard a strong voice from small communities outside of Yellowknife to give them more MLAs. They heard, you know, don't change anything that could cause the increase to Yellowknife. You know, they even point out the high cost of travel between communities. Now every one of those is significant on their own right and I wouldn't want to say that it isn't, but now we're getting into high cost of travel between communities. I mean, that is not for this report to be talking about. This report should be talking about fair representation, not what it costs to put gas in your car or to buy a plane ticket.

So I read this and I think, you know, to be honest -- and I say this with an enormous amount of respect for the Tlicho people, and the Tlicho Member knows that I mean this -- that I have a lot of respect for those folks, but my concern is they lobbied the heck out of this commission and they did a fabulous job. I mean we should commend them in a sense of they brought busloads of people. Well, from my community perspective, people I heard from thought it was going to be status quo. If they had any assumption that it wasn't going to be status quo, they would have brought trucks and busloads of people to lobby too and say well, wait a minute, there is a voter problem, and the voter problem that I see it as in a sense of in the House is Yellowknife is still under-represented by at least between one and two MLAs and that's because of our population throughout the Territories it isn't being fairly represented in this House.

The people I spoke to said one clear thing, which was they want programs, not politicians. So when we recognize that the cost is almost \$900,000, that's almost \$1 million we'll be putting into, potentially, MLAs. That causes people concern. So what did the fiscal Conservatives say? Did they want more politicians or did they want more programs?

The problem I have with this report is I was actually one to side with Mr. Miltenberger who believed that we should set from the very start to say no more MLAs. So stop at 19, do the hard decisions, but I don't think they seriously considered the two big factors of what to do with the smallest riding and how to deal with the weight of a vote.

Again, I still have to go back to the fact that Yellowknife is still being under-represented in fairness. I guess I kind of dismissed, to some degree, the fear-mongering people may have or may be suggesting or the private citizen saying if we don't adopt this, we will go to court for sure if we don't go their way. But we have to remember, that's the right of anyone. That's the great democracy we have and we share here. Sometimes we require judicial guidance to finally get the true answer or the right answer. I am sometimes challenged when I listen to some folks about what is the right decision, because what has changed in Yellowknife so significantly, what has changed in the Northwest Territories so significantly that we have to justify two more bodies? I have to point out, yet again, Yellowknife is still short over one Member. If we do 45 percent of the population in the Northwest Territories, it is not represented here in seats in the Legislature.

I am concerned that the lobby effort, again I recognize that had swayed the commission and the commission felt that they heard very strongly that a group of individuals wanted another MLA in their region. To be honest, what I think I

heard from the Member who represents that region here today, is the fact that people in Yellowknife and anywhere else still treat themselves as Tlicho citizens first. So, therefore, they call their Monfwi representative first, rather than their local MLA. I think that's truly a problem. I don't know how to help the Member in that regard. He's got to do and he does, by all means, do the best job he certainly can. I certainly wouldn't want to take away the person's opportunity to feel that that is the MLA they should call. I recognize that the Member works very hard for people of his nation no matter where they live. I think that's a problem and we have to figure out as a Legislature how to do this.

I go back to say that the commission is truly an advisory commission and there is nothing here that binds their hands and forces us to accept it either way. We could strike it down and say we need 23 MLAs. We could strike it down and say we want 20 or we want to go to 17, for goodness sake. So there are a lot of options. They are recommendations.

I will dispute one thing my colleague did say. Actually, I often hear that Yellowknife is the largest aboriginal community and we have a significant aboriginal population that makes Yellowknife a great place. That's got to be recognized, too.

So it's truly a challenge here to find the right way to make a final decision. I have very strong views from other sides of constituents in all fairness, Madam Chair, and I have to make sure that their concerns get out as well. The fact that this is one of the few opportunities that Yellowknife has to put more bums in seats here and finally show that there is fair voter parity in the Northwest Territories. The fact is that it is one of the few chances to open up this discussion to say we can have a more fair process. Will Yellowknife be under-represented if we go to eight seats and we have 21 in the whole Legislature? Yes, we won't solve the problem. If we really wanted to deal with the problem, the last court challenge would have said let's consider numbers only and they would have done it and we would have ended up with nine seats in a House of 19. I know they recognize the diversity of the North and the importance of balancing reasonable situations where you can be overrepresented. You have to recognize language, history and geographical lines and that's why they came up with seven out of 19. I respect that. Like I said at the very start, sometimes these things require judicial guidance and maybe that's where this has to go.

Madam Chair, to close this off in a fair way, I have a few very strong constituents that are advocating that we seize the opportunity to grab the extra seat for Yellowknife, only I wish a Member wouldn't have said that the communities would have voted against the courthouse because that would have been their chance. I wish this play between the small communities and the city of Yellowknife would stop. I like to think that the Yellowknife Members continually support the small communities when we can in a fair and reasonable way.

So, Madam Chair, I haven't totally made up my mind which way we will be going, with 19 or 21. I will be taking a few more minutes to listen to my colleagues and I will be making a clear and decisive decision when the time is required. Thank you, Madam Chair, for your time.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Next on the list I have Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess I will just start off by thanking the members of the commission for coming out with this report. I think it opens a lot of ideas in this House to how we can treat voter representation on a fair and even ground. I just want to say that the rebalancing of the Inuvik, Hay River and Yellowknife constituencies definitely will bring everybody under the 25 percent deviation, plus or minus, that we want. I don't believe that a bigger government is a better government. I have to agree with that on a lot of what all Members here were saying about some guidelines that should have been clear to the commission in what we were looking to get out of the commission, as opposed to building bigger government and spending more money.

The issue here is under-representation. The overrepresentation is not even an issue here. With the under-representation, all these communities that are pretty borderline on the 25 percent deviation, I don't think in the next five to 10 years there is going to be much change in any of these numbers. Percentage-wise, maybe three to five percent given the development of the Mackenzie gas project, and maybe the Deh Cho where they become more even and Monfwi will probably grow and Yellowknife might even shrink.

I think given these numbers that we look at here, they are all so close, so who is under-represented? Just because you are on that 25 percent threshold, does that really mean you are under-represented if everyone else is 22 or 23? I think we are all on the same playing field and it should be noted as such. Nobody is plus 35 or near the 30s. There is no real large split between the communities that we feel are under-represented. I don't think that adding more seats in this House is going to change these numbers by any significant improvement, as far as I can see.

Just with a note on that, like the other Member was saying, this is a Charter right, this 25 percent voter parity issue. It's also acceptable to be over 25 percent also, as stated in the commission's report. These are based on regional concerns. They are acceptable if they contribute to better government. I think across the board, everybody in the NWT is pretty well represented in this House with the 19 Members that we have here. I do fully understand and support that Monfwi really is on a borderline for under-representation based on the fact that the geographic layout of the territory is one that has the Member dealing with all the challenges that we in the House here, many of us only have to deal with some of those geographic challenges on one side of the coin; whereas, Behchoko being on the main road system and all the other communities -- Gameti, Wekweeti -- are fly in only or drive in in the winter, you know, presents twice as many challenges for any Member in this House. But again, I have to say that Behchoko is on the road and it's close to Yellowknife. Like one Member was saying, if they wanted this government to support them on some initiative that they feel to get done or changed or have implemented, they will come over here in busloads and fill the gallery and they're lobbying right there. Whether they have one, two, three Members sitting in this House, I don't think it's going to make their efforts to get represented here in this House any more or any better than what it is today. Just with the whole population dynamics, it seems like with the latest Stats Canada numbers our population is going down. So who's to say what's going to change in eight years? Maybe everything will even out even better

or look better in eight years, maybe it won't. Maybe we'll need an extra five seats in eight years, but that's to be seen.

With respect to any court challenges, we could get challenged on anything. Like other Members said, that's up to the public, that's their decision for them to make and I don't think it's something that we here should be backed into a corner and saying if you do this we're going to take you to court. With me that doesn't really change my opinion of how we can make decisions here in this House, because everything we do decide here is open to legal challenge no matter what it is.

So I just want to summarize by saying that I do support the Monfwi seat, but if it has to come with Yellowknife getting an extra seat because it is one of the recommendations, I'm not supportive of that. But I don't know why they didn't just make a recommendation to add one seat for Monfwi period and draw some new electoral boundaries in Yellowknife, Hay River and Inuvik. So I don't think all the options were really considered here, looking at what people were telling them. Like another Member said, everybody in the NWT feels like they're pretty well represented here as it stands and I just have to go with what the general public tells me and how I'm going to be voting on this bill. I'll have to support what Bill 14 is recommending. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Still on general comments then. Next I have Mr. Robert McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm glad to have this opportunity to make some comments towards this bill. I look at the numbers on here and I see an overall population of 42,810. That's one riding for a lot of MLAs south. If you look at some of the numbers here, 2,800, 1,700, the numbers are low and for us to say that they're under-represented, if they're under-represented they're not getting adequate representation and we're not doing our job. That's the way I look at it.

I fully respect the people from the Monfwi's lobbying to get another seat, but I have to say that if the people from the Monfwi would like another seat, then I think the people from the Sahtu need a seat, the people from the Deh Cho need another seat, the people from the Inuvialuit/Gwich'in need another seat. So that's the way I look at it, and I say that in all due respect. But we have to be realistic here and look at the numbers and see that the numbers are not that high. Eighteen hundred sixty-five people, I should know them all by their first name.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

MR. MCLEOD: It's not like we've got ten, fifteen thousand people to look after.

I look at the ridings of some of the Members here and I see the Member for Nunakput has a wide geographical riding. He has to go all over. Same with the Member for the Sahtu. He has a lot of communities he has to cover.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

MR. MCLEOD: I really can't see adding two extra seats. You know we go around and we say, well, we're not going to give you any more money for your transition house, or we're cutting your money for this. Oh and by the way,

we're adding two seats and \$1 million. People don't like that. I mean we're constantly saying we're going to cut programs and cut your funding or make them wait for their funding, and to add two seats...Now, I respect the work that the commission had to do. In the case of the riding in Inuvik, I don't really think that they've done their homework. I don't agree with the lines that they drew. There's an historical boundary in Inuvik that's recognized by the municipality and it's a boundary that the municipality uses in all their municipal elections. So in that regard, I don't agree with the line that they drew in Inuvik. There's going to be a whole pile of development going on on the other side of town. They didn't take that into consideration.

But the bottom line is, Madam Chair, I look at the numbers and the numbers aren't huge. For us to sit here, and I'm sure people out there are saying well, don't you guys have anything better to talk about? I look at the numbers here; 42,000 people, 19 of us. I don't think there's any need to add any more seats to anywhere and the argument that well, if they get one, we get one, I don't believe we're under-represented, I don't care what the numbers say, but I don't believe we're under-represented. If you're under-represented, then we're not doing our job. We don't need to have the government get any bigger. We're always on about the size of the public service and all the other increases in the government budget, and yet we sit here. The bottom line, Madam Chair, is I don't think we're under-represented.

I respect the fact that the commission went out there and they visited the communities. They lobbied harder in some communities than others. But I really don't believe we should even consider adding more seats. If they want to say well, we're going to take this to court because we're plus or minus 25 percent or whatever for the number, but the bottom line is we've got to be realistic here and look at the overall numbers and look at the number of constituents we have in each riding and leave it at that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you very much, Mr. McLeod. General comments. Next I have Premier Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I also want to express my appreciation and respect for the work that the commission members did in making their recommendations.

Madam Chair, in looking at this issue I've talked to many of my constituents and I've also thought long and hard about this issue. There are three main issues that I took into consideration. First of all, how many people can we represent? I had to look at some of the provinces and the federal government, the size of constituencies, and I have to say that the number of people that each of us represent, whether it's in Yellowknife or in some of the smaller communities, is quite low compared to what you see across the country.

A second question is how do we achieve a balance and ensure that voters in any constituency in the Territories are fairly and equitably represented?

The third one, in my view, is cost.

Looking at the issue of balance, I think it's important that voters, constituents, no matter where they live, have fair

representation. I recognize and I appreciate the challenges that MLAs who represent multiple communities have compared to those of us in Yellowknife, and I appreciate that the numbers in Yellowknife are probably higher than they are in the smaller communities. But I have to say that just adding more MLAs is not the only way of ensuring a balance in representation. I think if there's a problem with cost of travel, or time in travel and so on, then there are other ways of handling that. But there are ways of increasing the travel allowances for people who represent the smaller communities or a number of communities within their constituencies.

Looking at the number of people we can represent, as I say, it's low. I think we could theoretically represent many more than the two to three thousand people that most of us have.

My belief is that 19 MLAs can represent the Northwest Territories very well, but this isn't just a matter of numbers. I don't think we should be concerned about increasing the numbers simply because we want to avoid a court challenge. That's a wrong way of looking at it, from my view. We shouldn't be doing this just to stay out of court. If we're going to increase, then increase it because we genuinely believe we need more people in order to represent the constituents that we all have.

This comes to the issues of cost as being a main one for me. It costs a lot of money to add another one or two more MLAs, and I don't think it stops there. I don't think if we don't go status quo, we'll be looking at more than one, most likely; probably more than two additional MLAs. That costs money. Madam Chair, I can tell you that if that happens, then I suspect in the 16th Assembly there's going to be a move then to increase the number of people on Cabinet; more cost if we go that direction. Madam Chair, if we don't take the cost of government seriously in this House ourselves, then how can we criticize the government departments and the rest of government for growth? We're as guilty as anybody else is. So, Madam Chair, I have difficulty with the issue of cost.

Basically, my view is that 19 can represent very well, but if it's the will of the MLAs in here that we need more, then my position would be that we have to go to 21. We have to go to the report recommendations if it's more than the 19. I could not see increasing another one outside of a large centre like Yellowknife and then not doing anything in Yellowknife. I think that creates an imbalance and an unfairness that has already been tested. It's not out of fear of a court challenge, but it is because there was a lot of thought and work put into creating a balance and we should maintain that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Next on the list for general comments I have Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I guess I can speak from some experience from around this issue as I was around when Nunavut was created, and our Assembly in the pre-Nunavut days was larger and went down by 10 Members. We, in this House, had 24 Members at one time representing Nunavut and the Northwest Territories for just over 60,000. When Nunavut was created, 10 Members left and we had 14. We governed with 14 until the next Assembly. A boundaries commission was established to go out and look at the seats. There were questions looked at.

Ultimately, they came back with a recommendation of a couple of seats. That was voted down in this Assembly and a court challenge occurred, and that's what we find ourselves now operating with is that court challenge, because it has established the rules of 25 percent. That's the case we will use, because that's the case that was used in that particular outcome. Instead of going from two seats, we ended up with five seats. So we went from 14 to 19.

As my colleague Mr. McLeod had referenced, when you look at the numbers, take a step backwards and look at our numbers. When we went to the Northwest Territories and Nunavut went on its way, we were then down to just over 40,000 people. Forty thousand people and we then, faced with the adjustment of the court case, went to 19 Members. Today, we look at it, we're just about 43,000 people, just under 43,000 people with 19 Members. So realistically looking at the numbers, the Territories hasn't grown with any real significant numbers since we last increased our Members by five. I think that's something we have to look at.

I've heard comments around the table that this bill that's been presented by Mr. Pokiak, on behalf of the Board of Management, is status quo. Well, it is not status quo. It is in fact trying to deal with the issue of meeting the requirement that we are faced with as a Legislative Assembly, and that is meeting that 25 percent target. By redrawing the lines in our larger constituencies, we would come very close to those numbers if not on the mark; very close, which I think would protect ourselves in a more substantial way by doing what this bill requires of us. It's a rebalancing proposal, as I see it, that would redraw the maps of our constituencies to allow us to meet that target that has been established. I agree; we can't ignore it. So we have to make some movement to allow for that, for us to redraw the maps, but still leave our government at the existing size of 19 because I do believe that once we go to as we've seen and we have experience, if you adjust the seats and go to two, that has a domino effect, as my colleague from the Sahtu had mentioned. Then you have to look at the numbers again. That adds another seat and another constituency, redo the numbers again, and that's exactly where we found ourselves. When they redid the numbers for the two seats, Hay River had to be adjusted. When Hay River was adjusted, Inuvik's numbers were out. Inuvik had to be adjusted. When you looked at those numbers, Yellowknife had to get another seat. We'll find ourselves doing the same scenario in trying to meet that 25 percent target. So I think instead of 21, we could end up with 22 Members.

Again, I think as the people of the Territories spoke out on this, a large number of them spoke to the fact that they feel their government is of a large enough size. Believe me, when we went from 14 to 19, in my constituency we went back, I spoke against it, but still received a lot of flack about why did you grow government. Does it necessarily mean we have better services? Well, I think it's hard to deny that the larger centres, the regional centre, the capital, if we looked at the programs we provide to our constituents, the number of people drawing down those services come from the larger services by a vast majority. Whether it's student financial assistance, whether it's income support, housing dollars might be a little different in that area, it all depends on the type of program, but sheer numbers in communities affect the scale of programs that are drawn down.

I'll use similar arguments that I did back in 1999 when we were affected by this, is that as an individual, and whether it be Inuvik, Hay River or Yellowknife, you can go to a government office and you can get services almost right on that day. You may have to make an appointment and come in two days later. In many of our small communities, you're not going to get that appointment because there is no office. You may have to go to the hamlet that provides it on a contract basis. So will this make that any better? Not necessarily, because again the level of services we'll provide to constituents is not necessarily going to change. The debate in this House will, guaranteed, and is that always a good thing? I think our residents out there are probably questioning that fact today.

We also have to look at what will the future of this government look like. There are many self-government tables in discussions at this point. The Tlicho has become another government in the Northwest Territories. It has been enacted and has come in force. They are now self-governing, they will draw down that authority over time. What will happen in that situation? We have Deline, a community self-government, nearing the AIP stage. At some point, will they come to this Assembly and question this leadership as to why it makes decisions, or will they be questioning their own leadership in their own communities? Then we have to ask again what does this government look like and do we build it up to such a capacity that it has to feed on itself because, as we know, whether it comes to programs and services or political leadership, when you add a seat or add a program, to try to take it away is very difficult. It's easier to add than take away has been my experience. So I think we have to look at that scenario as we review this.

Needless to say, but I will anyway, I support the bill as it has come forward of rebalancing the seats, because I do believe that the 19 Members can represent the constituents of the Northwest Territories at a very adequate level. No matter if you add more Members to this Assembly, we are still going to be arguing about the fact of why we aren't offering better programs, why we aren't increasing programs to the elders or housing units and delivering the programs in a more effective way. The fact is we still won't have any more money out of it just because we add more Members to this Assembly. That's where we get into difficulty with our constituents, because they see needed money for programs and services being paid to ourselves. That's not necessarily an easy defence when you go to your communities and they ask about the programs that they want in their communities.

So I support the bill that is being proposed of rebalancing the constituencies in the Northwest Territories and learning to live with that. As experience shows, things may change in the future but once you have an established seat, it's hard to remove it unless you want to send the next boundaries commission out. That in itself still does not guarantee it will shrink.

I would support this bill as it's been presented and hopefully as we look at this and take a step back and look at the big picture, as my colleague Mr. Robert McLeod stated, when you look at the size of the people of the territory and the size of this government since division, we have not grown significantly and we can still do the job that is requested of us. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Next I have Mr. Menicoche.

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Madam Chair. Finally, I get to speak, Members.

---Laughter

Just reflecting upon Bill 14 that is before us maintaining the status quo and rebalancing, I have given it lots of thought and a lot of the recommendations that the commission reports, I am not convinced that they gave it more thought than just to write what they did. Basically, for me, when I look at the numbers, if I don't look at the recommendations but I look at the numbers, the numbers do not say that we need extra seats. That is the way I see it. Unfortunately, the numbers do not say that we need extra seats. Members around this House are saying the opportunity is for Yellowknife to get more seats. As a community MLA, that is how I see it.

This spring, I had a great opportunity to tour Alaska. Our first stop was Juneau, which is the capital. There are 40,000 people there and they have been the capital for a very long time. The biggest city is Anchorage. My numbers might be off, but I think Anchorage is around 40,000 people. The debate has been on for some time to move the capital over to Anchorage. Very often, the people in Juneau and outside of Anchorage, they are all saying you can move the capital to Anchorage, our state politics, the politics that matters for the people, get involved in the city politics. That's exactly the case that we have here. I find that often in this House, we get wrapped up in Yellowknife politics. The reason I see it so clearly is I get wrapped up in it and I get in the momentum and the swing of things. When I am all stressed out and we take a break, I go back to my riding and people really don't care. What they do care about is the programs that they receive. That's important. Why is that program cut? Why didn't you tell us about it? Why didn't you consult with us in this? It's the day-to-day things that matter. As a Regular Member, I spoke lots about housing. That's because that's what people care about. It's about roads, that's what people care about. When it comes to talking about more governance, that's not something we support. When we talk about something as mundane as name changes, they are saying don't worry about that. Take care of the real needs of the people today.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Real needs!

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: So I like to get back to the report itself. It is an...(inaudible)...report. Don't be surprised what our House does and doesn't want to do. Just like for the first time we heard a nay in the House the other day. It's not shocking to say no to a committee report. Assemblies, not only ours but throughout the world, do it all the time. They commission these huge reports and they don't accept the recommendations. They do it all the time. It's not that there is anything new here. We are not reinventing the wheel when we are presenting Bill 14, basically the status quo with a realignment.

I know that the honourable Tlicho Member and the Tlicho Government made a good case, a good presentation for better representation. I believe they will get it, but maybe not today. It's got to be put off until the next time.

I concur; we are not under-represented. When I think about the court case and talking with former Members of

that era, let's say, what happened then is there were gross cases of under-representation, there were gross cases of very large constituencies and then the tension and the judge that made a decision for all those extra MLAs took all that into consideration. Today, like I said, the first thing I went to was the numbers. I don't know how any court would rule against us saying that constitutionally people's voices are not being heard. I do not believe that for a minute.

So with that, I am not convinced that the courts will tell us that we are under-represented. I am not convinced that the court will rule in the favour of more MLAs. I am not convinced that we need to improve our legislative numbers. With that, Madam Chair, I conclude my statements. I will be supporting Bill 14 as it is. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Next I have Mr. Michael McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I guess, first of all, like everyone else, I should commend the commission for going out and taking the time to visit the communities and hear what the community concerns are. I am not totally convinced that all the factors were looked at when the report was compiled, the final report. However, we've had five commissions on electoral boundaries since 1978. The smaller communities, especially the smaller communities such as I have in my riding, have been very clear in terms of what they need to see, the concerns. It's always seen as a case that the commission doesn't seem to hear what they are saying. They put in the report that they heard the communities voice their concerns, but it doesn't seem to be factored into what the final analysis of what should be done. That concerns me.

The smaller communities have been saying consistently that they sometimes feel neglected because of their size, that the larger centres such as Yellowknife has easy access and a lot of the smaller communities are also saying that major changes within this government should not take place until all land claims are settled. That's something we don't seem to be factoring into our report. When we look at electoral boundaries and representation, I certainly take the view that it has to be fair and it has to be balanced. I can't say honestly that I feel I have the same voice as the city of Yellowknife when they have six more Members than I do. I have one crack at what I am going to say, whereas a larger centre such as Yellowknife can say it seven times in a row.

I would never convince anyone in my riding that Yellowknife needs another seat. I would be laughed at. My career would be over in politics, I am sure.

---Laughter

You also have to consider in the smaller ridings where we have a number of communities represented by one MLA, if that Member becomes a Minister, there is no one to cover for him or her. We also have to look at maybe one of the flaws in this commission was that we looked at strictly representation. I am concerned, of course, as I said before, that this report focuses too much on per capita and maybe not as much on what an MLA with more than one community has to go through. Maybe we should have packaged this up with the MLA compensation and benefits where we look at constituency budgets. There is really a difficulty when, I am sure the population factor is

something that has to be taken into consideration. Forty-eight percent of the population in one community, of course, we need to recognize that.

We also have to recognize there's a cost. It's \$450,000 for another seat, times two. That's a lot of money. A couple of other people have said that surely 19 MLAs can represent 43,000 people. I have to agree with that. It's really unfair not to take in all the concerns from the communities. If the report is focussed so much, the emphasis is so much on per capita, then why bother with commissions? Why bother having these people go out there? This is the fifth time now to look at what the boundaries should be. The only other time in recent history that we saw a change is when the courts forced us to make a change in the 13th Assembly. So in that sense, it is a waste of money. If we are going to look at strictly numbers, let's not go back out there and start getting everybody's hopes up that we are going to listen to everything because we aren't. We are only listening to numbers, as far as I am concerned.

I keep hearing around the room let's not feel threatened. I have heard, every time I have stated that I supported one side or the other, people say well, then, somebody in Yellowknife is going to take you to court. If it's the other way around, they say the Tlicho is going to take you to court. So how could I not feel threatened when the threat is hanging out there that we are going to end up in court?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Our history has shown that court has resolved these issues for us. My position is that we look at redrafting the boundaries rather than adding new Members. I don't know how stable that is going to be. I am sure it will be a challenge. I would also look at making a recommendation if you have to do this, that we certainly provide some kind of guidance, some kind of criteria for our commission members to look at. If the concern was the number of Members increasing, then we should look at giving them strict direction and criteria. So those are my comments. I would like to see it next time around come to with some clear direction, some direction as to capping the numbers is where we want to stay. We don't really want to go any more than 19. We should also package the commission's responsibilities that include looking at boundaries or rejigging the boundaries and also how the constituencies are supported.

I have tried so many different ways to have good representation in my riding. I have tried having a CA here; I have tried having a constituency assistant in one community and it doesn't work because the other communities feel that they are neglected. Right now, I am trying to have two part-time constituency assistants in two different communities and the other two communities are saying we have to have somebody there too. Our budgets don't support that. Those things have to be looked at. Maybe it's not all about votes in the House, but rather being able to have easy access to the MLAs or at least easy access through some of the staff from the MLAs so that communities are heard. Our responsibilities are different in the communities. My job is completely different from an MLA in a larger centre. We process income tax returns. We deal with old age pensions. We deal with child apprehension. You name it. If somebody is in corrections, they want to contact the MLA for referral letters. I think there is really no boundaries that we can set. I don't see how we can say that's outside the territorial government

responsibilities. We just have to accept that it's our job to help them, because there is no other service. If somebody can't get a lawyer, they come to the MLA. Even if there is a lawyer and they don't know the lawyer, they come to the MLA. So our responsibilities are very heavy in the small communities where there is not the same level of services and not the same access. So I will be supporting Bill 14 even though I think at some point it's going to be challenged, but I think that's our best attempt to try to keep the numbers at 19. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Next I have Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Madam Chair. I wasn't going to really speak on this because I went through this in the 13th Assembly. I will tell you back then is exactly what we see today happening with our rural and remote communities with programs and services, the have and have-not communities. It's exactly what we were afraid was going to happen when they had the court case.

I don't think you can say there is a difference between the larger centres and small communities. The little things the large centres take for granted like being able to get access to medical care, policing services, basic infrastructure and whatnot, most communities today cannot even get the basic services in a lot of our communities. We talk about policing a place like Sachs Harbour. We can have increased budgets for highway patrols, we can have police dogs that we budget for, yet we can't even find the fundamental basic services for people who are at a point where they are leaving our communities because the services they have there are secondary to what is going on in the larger centres.

Families are leaving our communities because of the quality of programs and services being delivered because of the adjustment of what was done in the 13th Assembly. You can talk about representation by population, but you also have to realize when you talk about the Charter of Rights and Freedoms that you are talking about a quality of life issue here that no one seems to want to touch but it is the reality of the North. The whole demographics of what happened in the Northwest Territories from the 13th Assembly where a majority of people in this House were from small isolated communities from Nunavut and the Northwest Territories. We were able to help people from Grise Fiord and ensure that they had the equipment to run their municipal services and programs. We were able to deal with the services that were being delivered.

Since this court decision, in which we gave seven seats to the larger centres, we have seen a decline in the services that we can deliver in a lot of our smaller communities because of capacity issues. Everyone is moving to where the opportunities are. The quality of education is better in the larger communities. The services are better in the larger communities. I know my colleague from Inuvik Boot Lake touched on the thing about medical services. In most of our communities, the only service you get is to be medevaced to Yellowknife or Inuvik. That's about as close to the medical services we are getting. To see a doctor, you might be lucky to get your name on a list to see a doctor once a month.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Yet we are spending major dollars with regard to larger centres by way of institutions

to institutionalize the majority of clients who come from the smaller communities; our jail facilities. There is talk about putting more facilities in place. If you want to talk about distribution of wealth, you should also talk about the possibility of distribution of governments. There are 5,000 employees in the government that are in the larger, regional centres which has an effect on the larger population base.

Mr. Lafferty touched on the representation of the number of aboriginal people that he represents that live here in Yellowknife. I have the same dilemma where we have over 200 enrolled members living in Yellowknife from the Gwich'in claim and the Inuvialuit people. They do come to me when they have issues. At the end of the day, it comes down to the cost of doing government. By having a bigger government, does that improve the quality of services and programs to the residents of the Northwest Territories? From what we have seen, no, it doesn't. What we have are have and have-not communities, since the court decision was made. For me, that's probably the most visual aspect of what has happened since we divided from Nunavut. The challenge to us is how can we turn this tidal wave around and find a system that works for all the people in the Northwest Territories, ensures that everybody has the same programs and services, ensures the lives of our residents are being upheld, it doesn't matter where you live.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: That was an issue we raised during the last time this court case went forward and it was raised in the context that small communities will become minorities in this Legislature and they will be losing the voice we had prior to division. It has lost the texture of exactly what this territory is supposed to be. The Northwest Territories has been known for its kindness and commitment to all people who come north. Yet the focus of governments and institutions seems to be focussing on the industries and the tourists that come from the South, but not really taking care of the people who really live here. The demographics of how that decision has affected us to govern in the context of representation and has deteriorated in the North from what it was.

I think we also have to realize that as northerners, real northerners, we do care for the little people in the North. If we have to make a choice between a sniffer dog and a highway patrol and putting in a police officer in Sachs Harbour or Tsiigehtchic or the smaller communities, that should be an automatic decision.

You talk about police services, the security and the well-being of our people. The fundamental right of every person should be the quality of life issue. Has it really improved the quality of life of all residents of the Northwest Territories since we had the last court decision? I would have to say no. It might have improved the quality of life for people in the smaller centres. You can definitely see that by looking at the economics.

With that, I will be supporting Bill 14. I think that we do have to go back and revisit the social and economics of what decisions have been made by your courts, the effects it has had on the people of the Northwest Territories, and see what it's done to improve the quality of life of all residents of the Northwest Territories when we have these court decisions.

Knowing we do have a decline in the population of the Northwest Territories is an aspect that has to be seriously considered before we make a decision unless we have some real numbers that we can make that decision with. We are having an outward migration from the Northwest Territories with all the economic development that is presently being seen by the information that is being provided. More people aren't coming here; more people are leaving. That alone should tell us that there is a decline in our population.

I do believe that we are beating the courts on their grounds of the 25 percent guidelines, which is 25 percent plus or minus. That was the basis of our last court decision. That is not good enough. I think we should seriously look at how we have representation in Canada and other places in the world. We have representatives in Ottawa in a Senator for Nunavut, a Senator for the Northwest Territories and Yukon, basically 23,000 people out of 30-odd million people in Canada. At this point, we do have to realize that we do have to look at the cost of government and the services of government and that the majority of the capital investment this government makes is to run a government. It's not to provide programs and services for the people.

With that...

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Order!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Ooh!

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Don't...Anyway, I don't have anybody else on my list right now for general comments.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Detail.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Okay. I'm sorry. Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Madam Chair. As the Member that introduced to the Assembly today or a couple of days ago, it was very interesting to hear what the Members here have to say with regard to the bill itself. Like I said earlier, I would like to thank the Electoral Boundaries Commission for coming out with the report on an important bill like this. I respect the Member for Monfwi with regard to his people wanting another seat in Behchoko and also with the recommendation for one in Yellowknife.

However, having said that, Madam Chair, I would just like to let the Members know that I will support the bill as amended. At this present time, I don't think it's necessary to increase the numbers to 21. I think we should leave it at 19. I think we can go down in the next four or five years and we can look at it again. All the comments raised by our Members here, they brought up some of the issues I would have been raising, so I don't want to mention all the stuff that's been raised. I respect, like I said, the Member for Monfwi and the Members from Yellowknife with regard to the recommendations out of the report, but I will support this bill, Madam Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. If there are no further general comments, then, Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and

Executive Council Act. We will stand down the clauses of the act and just go to schedule A. Mr. Hawkins.

Committee Motion 27-15(5): To Amend The Schedule To Bill 14, Defeated

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that Bill 14 be amended by striking out items 12 to 19 of the appendix and substituting items 12 to 21 as set out in the schedule to this motion.

Madam Chair, I seek unanimous consent to have the schedule to this motion deemed read and printed in Hansard in its entirety. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The Member is seeking unanimous consent to have the schedule to the motion be read and printed in Hansard in its entirety. Are there any nays? There are no nays.

Schedule

12. Behchoko

Consisting of all that portion of the Northwest Territories bounded as follows: Commencing at the intersection of the 116°05' meridian of longitude and the 62°53' parallel of latitude; thence east along the 62°53' parallel of latitude to its intersection with the 115°55' meridian of longitude; thence south along the 115°55' meridian of longitude to its intersection with the 62°49' parallel of latitude; thence west along the 62°49' parallel of latitude to its intersection with the 116°05' meridian of longitude; thence north along the 116°05' meridian of longitude to the point of commencement.

13. Monfwi

Consisting of all that portion of the Northwest Territories bounded as follows: Commencing at the intersection of the 65th parallel of latitude and the 120th meridian of longitude; thence south along the 120th meridian of longitude to its intersection with the 62°15' parallel of latitude; thence east along the 62°15' parallel of latitude to its intersection with the 114°20' meridian of longitude; thence north along the 114°20' meridian of longitude to its intersection with the 62°24'30" parallel of latitude; thence west along the 62°24'30" parallel of latitude to its intersection with the 114°31' meridian of longitude; thence north along the 114°31' meridian of longitude to its intersection with the 62°30' parallel of latitude; thence east along the 62°30' parallel of latitude to its intersection with the 114°26' meridian of longitude; thence north along the 114°26' meridian of longitude to its intersection with the 62°55' parallel of latitude; thence east along the 62°55' parallel of latitude to its intersection with the 112°30' meridian of longitude; thence north along the 112°30' meridian of longitude to its intersection with the Nunavut-Northwest Territories boundary (Lat. 65°30' N; Long. 112°30' W); thence northwesterly along that boundary to its intersection with the 116°00' meridian of longitude at the 66°40' parallel of latitude, approximately; thence south along the 116°00' meridian of longitude to its intersection with the 65th parallel of latitude; thence west along the 65th parallel of latitude to the point of commencement.

Excluding the electoral district of Behchokó.

14. Weledeh

All plans referred to in this description are deposited in the Land Titles Office for the Northwest Territories Land Registration District in Yellowknife.

Consisting of all that portion of the Northwest Territories bounded as follows: Commencing at the intersection of the 62°55' parallel of latitude and the 114°26' meridian of longitude; thence south along the 114°26' meridian of longitude to its intersection with the 62°30' parallel of latitude; thence east along the 62°30' parallel of latitude to its intersection with the centreline of Ingraham Trail Highway No. 4; thence southerly along the centreline of Ingraham Trail Highway No. 4 to its intersection with the westerly production of the northern boundary of Lot 40, Block 308, Plan 3953; thence easterly along that production and continuing along the northern boundary of Lot 40, the easterly boundary of Lot 10, Block 307, Plan 3953, and the easterly boundary of Lot 1090, Plan 2732, to the northwestern corner of a utility right-of-way, Plan 621; thence southerly along the western boundary of the utility right-of-way to its intersection with the centreline of 44th Street; thence southeasterly along the centreline of 44th Street to its intersection with the centreline of 52nd Avenue; thence southerly along the centreline of 52nd Avenue to its intersection with the northwesterly production of the southwestern boundary of Lot 3, Block 167, Plan 3767; thence southeasterly along that production, the southwestern boundary of Lot 3, the western and southern boundary of Lot 1, Block 91, Plan 3506, the southern boundary of Block 91 remainder, Plan 484, and its easterly production to its intersection with the centreline of School Draw Avenue; thence northerly along the centreline of School Draw Avenue to its intersection with the centreline of 44th Street; thence westerly along the centreline of 44th Street to its intersection with the southerly production of the western boundary of Lot 1, Block 93, Plan 482; thence northerly along that production, the western boundary of Lots 1 to 6 and southerly along the eastern boundary of Lot 6 to the northeastern corner of Lot 6; thence northeast in a straight line to the northern corner of Lot 1, Block 94, Plan 482; thence easterly in a straight line to the intersection of that line and the western shore of Great Slave Lake at the 62°27'20" parallel of latitude and the 114°21'18" meridian of longitude, approximately; thence east along the 62°27'20" parallel of latitude to its intersection with the 114°20' meridian of longitude; thence south along the 114°20' meridian of longitude to its intersection with the 62°15' parallel of latitude; thence east along the 62°15' parallel of latitude to its intersection with the 112°30' meridian of longitude; thence north along the 112°30' meridian of longitude to its intersection with the 62°55' parallel of latitude; thence west along the 62°55' parallel of latitude to the point of commencement.

15. Frame Lake

All plans referred to in this description are deposited in the Land Titles Office for the Northwest Territories Land Registration District in Yellowknife.

Consisting of all that portion of the Northwest Territories bounded as follows: Commencing at the intersection of the 114°26' meridian of longitude and the 62°30' parallel of latitude; thence south along the 114°26' meridian of longitude to its intersection with the centreline of Yellowknife Highway No. 3; thence easterly along the

centreline of Yellowknife Highway No. 3 to its intersection with the centreline of Old Airport Road; thence southerly to the northwestern corner of Lot 927, Group 964, Plan 1005; thence southerly along the eastern boundary of Old Airport Road to the southwest corner of Lot 919, Group 964, Plan 1005; thence easterly along the northern boundary of Cemetery Road to its intersection with the western corner of Lot 906, Group 964, Plan 1005; thence southeasterly along the southwestern boundary of Lot 906, Group 964 to the southern corner of Lot 906, Group 964, Plan 1005; thence westerly in a straight line to the southeast corner of Lot 40, Plan 2043; thence westerly along the southern boundary of Lot 40, Plan 2043 to the southeast corner of Lot 4, Plan 515; thence southerly along the eastern boundary of Lots 5, 6 and 7, Plan 515, Lots 8 and 9, Plan 1223, Lots 35 and 36, Plan 1340, Lots 11, 12 and 13, Plan 515, Lots 14-1 and 14-2, Plan 1191, Lots 15, 16 and 17, Plan 515 and Lot 42, a limit of Old Airport Road and Lot 1, Block 371, Plan 2249 to the eastern corner of Lot 1, Block 371; thence continuing southeasterly on a production of the eastern limit of Lot 1, Block 371 to its intersection with the shore of Frame Lake; thence southerly, easterly and northerly along the shore of Frame Lake to the northern corner of Lot 2, Block 122, Plan 2015; thence southerly along the eastern boundary of Lot 2, Block 122 to the easterly corner of Lot 2, Block 122; thence southeasterly in a straight line to the intersection of the centreline of 50th Avenue and the centreline of Reservoir Road; thence south along the centreline of Reservoir Road to its intersection with the centreline of Forrest Drive; thence southerly in a straight line to the northwestern corner of Unit 1, Lot 21, Block 133, Plan C-2277; thence southerly along the western boundary of Units 1 to 12 and easterly along the south boundary of Lot 21, Block 133, Plan C-2277 to the southeastern corner of Lot 21; thence southeasterly in a straight line to the northwestern corner of Lot 24, Block 133, Plan 3850; thence southerly and easterly along the western and southern boundary of Lot 24 and southern boundary of Lots 1, 2 and 26, Block 146, Plan 863 to the southern corner of Lot 26, Block 146, Plan 863; thence easterly in a straight line to the southwestern corner of Lot 27, Block 146, Plan 863; thence easterly along the southern boundary of Lots 27 and 25, Block 146, Plan 863, and the northeasterly production of the southeastern boundary of Lot 25 to the intersection of that production and the centreline of Con Road; thence northwesterly and northerly along the centreline of Con Road to its intersection with the centreline of 55th Street; thence northwesterly along the centreline of 55th Street to its intersection with the centreline of 51st Avenue; thence northeasterly along the centreline of 51st Avenue to its intersection with the centreline of 54th Street; thence northwesterly along the centreline of 54th Street to its intersection with the centreline of 50th Avenue; thence northeasterly along the centreline of 50th Avenue to its intersection with the centreline of 53rd Street; thence northwesterly along the centreline of 53rd Street to its intersection with the easterly production of the north boundary of Lots 28 and 29, Block 27, Plan 1388; thence westerly along that production, the northern boundary of Lots 28 and 29, Block 27, Plan 1388, and the northern boundary of Lots 24, 25, and 26, Block 27, Plan 217, to the western corner of Lot 26; thence northwesterly along the northeastern boundary of Lot 1, Block 118, Plan 634 and the northeastern limit of a road right-of-way, Plan 634 to the northern corner of that right-of-way; thence northeasterly to the western corner of Lot 11, Block 49, Plan 1940; thence along the northern boundary of Lots 11

and 12, Block 49, Plan 1940 and the easterly production of Lot 12, Block 49, Plan 1940, to the intersection of that production and the centreline of Ingraham Trail Highway No. 4; thence northerly along the centreline of Ingraham Trail Highway No. 4 to its intersection with the 62°30' parallel of latitude; thence west along the 62°30' parallel of latitude to the point of commencement.

16. Range Lake

All plans referred to in this description are deposited in the Land Titles Office for the Northwest Territories Land Registration District in Yellowknife.

Consisting of all that portion of the Northwest Territories bounded as follows: Commencing at the intersection of the 114°26' meridian of longitude and the 62°30' parallel of latitude; thence south along the 114°26' meridian of longitude to its intersection with the centreline of Yellowknife Highway No. 3; thence easterly along the centreline of Yellowknife Highway No. 3 to its intersection with the centreline of Old Airport Road; thence southerly to the northwestern corner of Lot 927, Group 964, Plan 1005; thence southerly along the eastern boundary of Old Airport Road to the southwest corner of Lot 919, Group 964, Plan 1005; thence easterly along the northern boundary of Cemetery Road to its intersection with the western corner of Lot 906, Group 964, Plan 1005; thence southeasterly along the southwestern boundary of Lot 906, Group 964 to the southern corner of Lot 906, Group 964, Plan 1005; thence westerly in a straight line to the southeast corner of Lot 40, Plan 2043; thence westerly along the southern boundary of Lot 40, Plan 2043 to the southeast corner of Lot 4, Plan 515; thence southerly along the eastern boundary of Lots 5, 6 and 7, Plan 515, Lots 8 and 9, Plan 1223, Lots 35 and 36, Plan 1340, Lots 11, 12 and 13, Plan 515, Lots 14-1 and 14-2, Plan 1191, Lots 15, 16 and 17, Plan 515 and Lot 42 and the northern limit of a short portion of Old Airport Road to the midpoint, said midpoint being the centreline of Old Airport Road; thence southwestwardly along the centreline of Old Airport Road to its intersection with the centreline of Range Lake Road; thence southwestwardly along the centreline of Range Lake Road to its intersection with the southeasterly production of the northeastern boundary of Lot 6, Block 560, Plan 2108; thence northwesterly along that production and the northeastern boundary of Lot 6 to the northern corner of Lot 6, said point also being on the southern boundary of Lot 971, Plan 1069; thence southwestwardly and northwesterly along the southwestern boundary of Lot 971 to the western corner of Lot 971, said point also being the northern point of Lot 6, Block 550, Plan 1971; thence southwestwardly and southerly along the northern and western boundary of Lot 6 to the southern corner of Lot 2, Plan 4052; thence westerly and northerly along the boundary of Lot 2 to its intersection with Lot 1048, Plan 2148; thence westerly, northerly, and easterly along the boundary of Lot 1048 to its intersection with Lot 1, Plan 3720; thence northerly, northwesterly, and along a northwesterly production of the western boundary of Lot 1 to its intersection with the centreline of Highway No. 3; thence westerly along the centreline of Highway No. 3 to its intersection with the 114°31' meridian of longitude; thence north along the 114°31' meridian of longitude to its intersection with the 62°30' parallel of latitude; thence east along the 62°30' parallel of latitude to the point of commencement.

17. Trappers Lake

All plans referred to in this description are deposited in the Land Titles Office for the Northwest Territories Land Registration District in Yellowknife.

Consisting of all that portion of the Northwest Territories bounded as follows: Commencing at the intersection of the 114°31' meridian of longitude and the 62°24'30" parallel of latitude; thence northeasterly in a straight line to the northern corner of Lot 48, Block 553, Plan 3870, said point also being on the southwestern boundary of Lot 6, Block 550, Plan 1971; thence southeasterly along the southwestern boundary of Lot 6, and the southwestern boundary of Lot 31, Block 546, Plan 1799 and northeasterly along the southeastern boundary of Lot 31 to the eastern corner of Lot 31; thence northeasterly to its intersection of the centrelines of each of Balsillie Court and Bagon Drive; thence northerly along the centreline of Bagon Drive to its intersection with the centreline of Hordal Road; thence northeasterly along the centreline of Hordal Road to its intersection with the centreline of Range Lake Road; thence northerly along the centreline of Range Lake Road to its intersection with the southeasterly production of the northeastern boundary of Lot 6, Block 560, Plan 2108; thence northwesterly along that production and the northeastern boundary of Lot 6 to the northern corner of Lot 6, said point also being on the southern boundary of Lot 971, Plan 1069; thence southwesterly and northwesterly along the southwestern boundary of Lot 971 to the western corner of Lot 971, said point also being the northern point of Lot 6, Block 550, Plan 1971; thence southwesterly and southerly along the northern and western boundary of Lot 6 to the southern corner of Lot 2, Plan 4052; thence westerly and northerly along the east boundary of Lot 2 to its intersection with Lot 1048, Plan 2148; thence westerly, northerly and easterly along the boundary of Lot 1048 to its intersection with Lot 1, Plan 3720; thence northerly, northwesterly, and along a northwesterly production of the western boundary of Lot 1 to its intersection with the centreline of Yellowknife Highway No. 3; thence westerly along the centerline of Yellowknife Highway No. 3 to its intersection with the 114°31' meridian of longitude; thence south along the 114°31' meridian of longitude to the point of commencement.

18. Kam Lake

All plans referred to in this description are deposited in the Land Titles Office for the Northwest Territories Land Registration District in Yellowknife.

Consisting of all that portion of the Northwest Territories bounded as follows: Commencing at the intersection of the 114°31' meridian of longitude with the 62°24'30" parallel of latitude; thence northeasterly along a straight line to the northern corner of Lot 48, Block 553, Plan 3870, said point also being on the southwestern boundary of Lot 6, Block 550, Plan 1971; thence southeasterly along the southwestern boundary of Lot 6, and the southwestern boundary of Lot 31, Block 546, Plan 1799 and northeasterly along the southeastern boundary of Lot 31 to the eastern corner of Lot 31; thence northeasterly to the intersection of the centrelines of each of Balsillie Court and Bagon Drive; thence northerly along the centreline of Bagon Drive to its intersection with the centreline of Hordal Road; thence northeasterly along the centreline of Hordal Road to its intersection with the centreline of Range Lake Road; thence northerly along the centreline of Range Lake Road to its intersection with the centreline

of Woolgar Avenue; thence southeasterly along the centreline of Woolgar Avenue to its intersection with the centreline of Kam Lake Road; thence southwesterly along the centreline of Kam Lake Road to its intersection with the westerly production of the southern boundary of Lot 2, Block 500, Plan 2144; thence easterly along that production, the southern boundary of Lot 2, the northern boundary of Lot 922, Plan 727, and the southern boundary of Lot 1002, Plan 1296, to a deflection point on the south boundary of Lot 1002; thence southeasterly in a straight line to the intersection of the 114°23'30" meridian of longitude and the 62°24'30" parallel of latitude; thence westerly in a straight line to the point of commencement.

19. Pud Lake

All plans referred to in this description are deposited in the Land Titles Office for the Northwest Territories Land Registration District in Yellowknife.

Consisting of all that portion of the Northwest Territories bounded as follows: Commencing at the intersection of the 114°20' meridian of longitude and the 62°26'38" parallel of latitude; thence westerly in a straight line to the intersection of the centreline of Con Road and the northeasterly production of the southeastern boundary of Lot 25, Block 146, Plan 863; thence westerly along that production, the southern boundary of Lots 25 and 27, Block 146, Plan 863, to the southwestern corner of Lot 27; thence westerly in a straight line to the southern corner of Lot 26, Block 146, Plan 863; thence westerly and northerly along the southern boundary of Lots 26, 2 and 1, and the western boundary of Lot 24, Block 133, Plan 3850 to the northwestern corner of Lot 24; thence northwesterly in a straight line to the southeastern corner of Lot 21, Block 133, Plan C-2277; thence westerly along the southern boundary of Lot 21 and northerly along the western boundary of Units 12 to 1, Lot 21, Block 133, Plan C-2277 to the northwestern corner of Unit 1, Lot 21; thence northerly in a straight line to the intersection of the centreline of Forrest Drive and the centreline of Reservoir Road; thence north along the centreline of Reservoir Road to its intersection with 50th Avenue; thence northwesterly in a straight line to the easterly corner of Lot 2, Block 122, Plan 2015; thence northerly along the eastern boundary of Lot 2 to the northern corner of Lot 2; thence southerly, westerly, and northerly along the shore of Frame Lake to its intersection with a southeasterly production of the eastern limit of Lot 1, Block 371, Plan 2249; thence northwesterly along that production, the north boundary of Lot 1 to the midpoint of the northern limit of a short portion of Old Airport Road, said midpoint being the centreline of Old Airport Road; thence southwesterly along the centreline of Old Airport Road to its intersection with the centreline of Range Lake Road; thence southwesterly along the centreline of Range Lake Road to its intersection with the centreline of Woolgar Avenue; thence southeasterly along the centreline of Woolgar Avenue to its intersection with the centreline of Kam Lake Road; thence southwesterly along the centreline of Kam Lake Road to its intersection with the westerly production of the southern boundary of Lot 2, Block 500, Plan 2144; thence easterly along that production, the southern boundary of Lot 2, the northern boundary of Lot 922, Plan 727, and the southern boundary of Lot 1002, Plan 1296, to a deflection point on the south boundary of Lot 1002; thence southeasterly in a straight line to the intersection of the 114°23'30" meridian of longitude and the 62°24'30" parallel of latitude; thence east along the 62°24'30"

parallel of latitude to its intersection with the 114°20' meridian of longitude; thence north in a straight line to the point of commencement.

20. Great Slave

All plans referred to in this description are deposited in the Land Titles Office for the Northwest Territories Land Registration District in Yellowknife.

Consisting of all that portion of the Northwest Territories bounded as follows: Commencing at the intersection of the 114°20' meridian of longitude and the 62°26'38" parallel of latitude; thence westerly in a straight line to the intersection of the centreline of Con Road with a straight line between the most eastern corner of Lot 25, Block 146, Plan 863 and the most southern corner of Lot 1, Block 149, Plan 863; thence northerly and northeasterly along the centreline of Con Road and 53rd Avenue to its intersection with the centreline of 54th Street; thence northerly along the centreline of 54th Street to its intersection with the centreline of 52nd Avenue; thence northeasterly along the centreline of 52nd Avenue to its intersection with the northwesterly production of the southwestern boundary of Lot 3, Block 167, Plan 3767; thence southeasterly along that production, the southwestern boundary of Lot 3, the western and southern boundary of Lot 1, Block 91, Plan 3506, the southern boundary of Block 91 remainder, Plan 484, and its easterly production to the intersection of that production and the centreline of School Draw Avenue; thence northerly along the centreline of School Draw Avenue to its intersection with the centreline of 44th Street; thence westerly along the centreline of 44th Street to its intersection with the southerly production of the western boundary of Lot 1, Block 93, Plan 482; thence northerly along that production, the western boundary of Lots 1 to 6 and southerly along the eastern boundary of Lot 6 to the northeastern corner of Lot 6; thence northeast in a straight line to the northern corner of Lot 1, Block 94, Plan 482; thence easterly in a straight line to the western shore of Great Slave Lake at the 62°27'20" parallel of latitude and the 114°21'18" meridian of longitude, approximately; thence east along the 62°27'20" parallel of latitude to its intersection with the 114°20' meridian of longitude; thence south along the 114°20' meridian of longitude to the point of commencement.

21. Niven Lake

All plans referred to in this description are deposited in the Land Titles Office for the Northwest Territories Land Registration District in Yellowknife.

Consisting of all that portion of the Northwest Territories bounded as follows: Commencing at the intersection of the westerly production of the northern boundary of Lot 40, Block 308, Plan 3953 and the centreline of Ingraham Trail Highway No. 4; thence easterly along that production and continuing along the northern boundary of Lot 40, the easterly boundary of Lot 10, Block 307, Plan 3953, and the easterly boundary of Lot 1090, Plan 2732, to the northwestern corner of a utility right-of-way, Plan 621; thence southerly along the western boundary of that right-of-way to its intersection with the centreline of 44th Street; thence southeasterly along the centreline of 44th Street to its intersection with the centreline of 52nd Avenue; thence southerly along the centreline of 52nd Avenue to its intersection with the centreline of 54th

Street; thence southeasterly along the centreline of 54th Street to its intersection with the centreline of 53rd Avenue; thence southwesterly along the centreline of 53rd Avenue to its intersection with the centreline of 55th Street; thence northwesterly along the centreline of 55th Street to its intersection with the centreline of 51st Avenue; thence northeasterly along the centreline of 51st Avenue to its intersection with the centreline of 54th Street; thence northwesterly along the centreline of 54th Street to its intersection with the centreline of 50th Avenue; thence northeasterly along the centreline of 50th Avenue to its intersection with the centreline of 53rd Street; thence northwesterly along the centreline of 53rd Street to its intersection with the easterly production of the northern boundary of Lots 28 and 29, Block 27, Plan 1388; thence westerly along that production, the northern boundary of Lots 28 and 29, Block 27, Plan 1388, the northern boundary of Lots 24, 25 and 26, Block 27, Plan 217, to the western corner of Lot 26; thence northwesterly along the northeastern boundary of Lot 1, Block 118, Plan 634 and the northeastern limit of a road right-of-way, Plan 634, to the northern corner of that right-of-way; thence northeasterly to the western corner of Lot 11, Block 49, Plan 1940; thence along the northern boundary of Lots 11 and 12, Block 49, Plan 1940 and the easterly production of Lot 12, Block 49, Plan 1940, to the intersection of that production and the centreline of Ingraham Trail Highway No. 4; thence northerly along the centreline of Ingraham Trail Highway No. 4 to the point of commencement.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Firstly, Madam Chair, let me thank my colleagues for not naying that one. That would have meant I would have had to read 10 pages in of fine print.

Madam Chair, in plain language, this motion that I've put on the floor is suggesting to go back to the recommendation made by the commission, which is suggesting 21 seats in total. Again, Madam Chair, is says one additional seat to Yellowknife and one additional seat to the Monfwi region. That's what this motion means, like I say, in plain language. I'll be supporting this motion. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. To the motion. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Of course, I too will be voting in favour of this amendment. Madam Chair, I will not repeat my comments earlier, but to reiterate what I believe was a good recommendation made to this Assembly by the boundaries commission. It reflects that there are changes going on within our society and our communities and our demographics, and that it is incumbent on us to recognize those and strive to do the best we can to ensure that the idea of proportional representation is done to the best of our ability with the obvious considerations that we have, which we already gave to the commission, of language, of geography, of culture, of distance. These are valid things.

Madam Chair, a resident of Yellowknife recently wrote to Members of the Assembly and has given us a very strong endorsement of the principle of proportional representation. I'm going to quote very briefly from his letter, Madam Chair. He says that, "opponents of a more populously proportional distribution assert that seven Assembly Members are adequate to serve the needs of the Yellowknife's constituents. This is not the issue. The

issue is that when the most basic expression of the democratic will is called, and that is a vote by a Member in the Assembly, that people are foremost represented according to a distribution of votes justly reflecting their proportion of numbers in the total population." That is the issue that we're here to defend and that is why I'm going to support the amendment, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Braden. To the motion. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will be very brief, but I'm thinking that I was not very clear on one aspect, which was that the feedback that I'm getting from my constituents are that there is no need for new Members and I understand that position. It's just that if there is any addition in another area, that the voting parity for the Yellowknife residents have to be increased comparably. So for that reason, I am supporting this motion, as I've said already.

Also, I really believe strongly that this is not an argument about whether or not 19 people represent 42,000 people well, or whether Yellowknife needs seven Members or anything like that. It's not about us here. It's about the voting residents and their relative voting parity, so I just want to clarify that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Lee. To the motion. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to state that we are leaders and I will not support this motion. We have 19 people. We spoke. For the people I represent, my people in the Sahtu, each time we get on the plane to fly to our small communities we put our life on the line, for our family, for our children and for our people. That's the issue here; providing services and programs for our people. So, Madam Chair, I will not support this motion. The Sahtu region does not see the need for increasing politicians in the Northwest Territories. They want to see an increase in programs and services in the communities. I would ask that you do a recorded vote on this. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Question is being called. Mr. Yakeleya has requested a recorded vote. All those in favour of the motion, please stand.

Recorded Vote

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Handley, Mr. Dent, Mr. Bell, Mr. Ramsay, Mr. Lafferty, Ms. Lee, Mr. Braden, Mr. Hawkins.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): All those opposed to the motion.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Menicoche; Mr. Krutko; Mr. Roland; Mr. McLeod, Deh Cho; Mr. Pokiak; Mr. Villeneuve; Mr. Miltenberger; Mr. Yakeleya; Mr. McLeod, Inuvik Twin Lakes.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Mercer. Anyone abstaining, please stand. Colleagues, the motion is defeated.

---Defeated

Turning our attention now back to Bill 14, schedule A. Mr. Lafferty.

Motion To Extend Sitting Hours, Carried

MR. LAFFERTY: Madam Chair, I move that this House sit beyond the daily hour of adjournment for the purpose of continuing consideration of Bill 14. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The motion is in order. All those in favour of the motion? All those opposed. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 14, schedule A. Mr. Lafferty.

Committee Motion 28-15(5): To Amend The Schedule To Bill 14, Defeated

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I move that Bill 14 be amended by striking out item 12 of the appendix and substituting items 11.1 and 12 as set out in the schedule to this motion.

Madam Chair, I seek unanimous consent to have the schedule to this motion deemed read and printed in Hansard in its entirety. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The Member is seeking unanimous consent to have the schedule to his motion deemed read and printed in Hansard in its entirety. Are there any nays? There are no nays so that is accomplished and we will distribute the motion here for the benefit of Members.

Schedule

11.1 Behchoko

Consisting of all that portion of the Northwest Territories bounded as follows: Commencing at the intersection of the 116°05' meridian of longitude and the 62°53' parallel of latitude; thence east along the 62°53' parallel of latitude to its intersection with the 115°55' meridian of longitude; thence south along the 115°55' meridian of longitude to its intersection with the 62°49' parallel of latitude; thence west along the 62°49' parallel of latitude to its intersection with the 116°05' meridian of longitude; thence north along the 116°05' meridian of longitude to the point of commencement.

12. Monfwi

Consisting of all that portion of the Northwest Territories bounded as follows: Commencing at the intersection of the 65th parallel of latitude and the 120th meridian of longitude; thence south along the 120th meridian of longitude to its intersection with the 62°15' parallel of latitude; thence east along the 62°15' parallel of latitude to its intersection with the 114°20' meridian of longitude; thence north along the 114°20' meridian of longitude to its intersection with the 62°24'30" parallel of latitude; thence west along the 62°24'30" parallel of latitude to its intersection with the 114°31' meridian of longitude; thence north along the 114°31' meridian of longitude to its intersection with the 62°30' parallel of latitude; thence east along the 62°30' parallel of latitude to its intersection with

the 114°26' meridian of longitude; thence north along the 114°26' meridian of longitude to its intersection with the 62°55' parallel of latitude; thence east along the 62°55' parallel of latitude to its intersection with the 112°30' meridian of longitude; thence north along the 112°30' meridian of longitude to its intersection with the Nunavut-Northwest Territories boundary (Lat. 65°30' N; Long. 112°30' W); thence northwesterly along that boundary to its intersection with the 116°00' meridian of longitude at the 66°40' parallel of latitude, approximately; thence south along the 116°00' meridian of longitude to its intersection with the 65th parallel of latitude; thence west along the 65th parallel of latitude to the point of commencement.

Excluding the electoral district of Behchokó.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Madam Chair. Madam Chair...(English not provided)

Madam Chair, I'd just to rephrase what I've said in my language about the importance of having an additional seat for Tlicho, as I presented here in motion format.

Madam Chair, with respect to what Members are saying around the table here and the vote that came into play, I understand the status quo position, especially from the outlying communities and the stress for the funding going to the communities. But at the same time, we, as the Tlicho Government and I representing Monfwi, try to work around the status quo of 19 Members. We met with the Akaitcho leadership back in September. We made some progress in that area, and the next level was another meeting with Akaitcho and the Tlicho, the chiefs and the grand chiefs, and we did meet in that area just a couple weeks back, discussing further how we can approach this issue. We presented to the Akaitcho leadership and the Yellowknife chiefs, both chiefs, were fully supportive of our initiative, and the same with Fort Res. Fort Res was somewhat being supportive, but he had to consult with his constituents and another chief from Lutselk'e.

So at that time, we left the table feeling that there was confidence in the room. But at the same time, Madam Chair, when we came back there was some discussion that took place and this issue was before us. It was a pressing issue and I had to get some confirmation from the chiefs in Yellowknife, but, unfortunately, there wasn't any agreement between the Akaitcho leadership.

So that left us with an option of going on our own to present this motion for a Tlicho seat. I stress in my language the importance of having a seat for the Tlicho riding, because I speak for the elders, I speak for members, the youth; it's not my words. Those words are the guidance and direction I'm given from my constituents. The leadership are currently in a Tlicho Government assembly in Behchoko and they'll be hearing stories tomorrow how this turns out with the motion.

But like I said, the status quo, like I've told some Members, we really need to focus in the smaller communities that we're representing. I've already stated my opinion in an earlier statement. I've touched on various issues. So I'd just like to leave it at that, just finalizing that this important motion is before the Members

and I hope the Members will consider it. I'll leave it at that. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Next I have Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. This whole process has been very interesting. I'm sure that anyone who is watching us perhaps via some of the communication, or will take the time to look at Hansard and the record of the debate this afternoon, will tell that there has been a lot of strategy and a lot of different options looked at to arrive at where we are going today. Part of that for me, Madam Chair, was working with Mr. Lafferty to see where potentially our two communities could work together or support each other in achieving the recommendation from the boundaries commission. As Mr. Lafferty indicated to the Assembly or to committee earlier, there was, indeed, support from his leaders to do that, and I know that from my communities this is reciprocated. However, the amendment that was just defeated here shows that there was not enough support across the Legislative Assembly for that, and I respect the decision of my colleagues and their communities in taking that position.

Madam Chair, I further respect Mr. Lafferty's move now to go forward and attain the single new seat for his riding that his people have asked him to work for. But it is with deep regret that I would say that I have to vote against that amendment, and the regret truly is that we cannot see our mutual concerns, mutual interests, satisfied here. In sort of straightforward terms, Madam Chair, the signals that I've got from my colleagues here in the Legislative Assembly this afternoon mean that even if Mr. Lafferty's amendment passes, I am prepared to make another amendment to seek a new seat for Yellowknife and I really don't think that will pass. So what I'm doing, Madam Chair, is reverting to the status quo, to the bill as presented, and that will be my position. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Braden. To the motion. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I want to say to the Member for Monfwi, I have a great deal of respect and admiration for the job that he's done in the last while, trying to get an additional seat for his riding in Behchoko, and I have a great deal of respect, as well, for the leadership in the Monfwi riding and the Tlicho people. However, Madam Chair, I regret that I will not be able to support this amendment because I, too, have a constituency to represent in the city of Yellowknife and without another seat for Yellowknife, I cannot support any additional seats outside of Yellowknife, Madam Chair. That will be my stance on this.

I don't know if I have too much more to add. I think the discussion we're having here today is a good one. It seems a little bit backward to me, though, Madam Chair, in that I believe we probably could have saved ourselves some time and energy if we had just went to the bill as presented to us here today. But again, we're dealing with the amendment and, sorry, Mr. Lafferty, I can't support the amendment. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Next I have Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just for the record, I just want to state my position on this motion. I would also like to thank the Member for Monfwi, and I'd also like to thank the Member for Great Slave. I know they have been working very closely to get a consensus in this regard. I mean we all worked on it, but I'd like to especially mention them.

I think we're having very good discussions here and I have to tell you that given the will of the House that just has been shown where the motion to accept the commission's recommendation has been defeated, I think that the picture is quite clear, that the will of the House is that we will stay status quo, which is what is reflected in Bill 14. So having seen that outcome, I think now my position has to be that I will stay with the status quo and agree with Bill 14.

I'd like to state, once again, that my instruction and guiding principle here on this bill is instruction I've received from my constituents and the general will of Yellowknifers. I think most Yellowknifers agree that they do not want to see government grow or that Yellowknife needs another seat. However, if there is any increase outside of Yellowknife, there has to be a comparable increase to secure voting parity.

This motion I cannot support and I regret that I cannot support that. I would support it if the motion included an amendment to change the seating for Yellowknife and make voting parity possible for a Yellowknife riding, but that's not the case. So as it is written, I cannot support it and I would like to personally send my appreciation to Grand Chief George Mackenzie, Chiefs Lafferty, Nitsiza, Football and Gon, for having really done their job of letting the commission know that Tlicho are known for their advocacy and I think it's a good thing. It makes their positions known on every issue wherever they go. They've done the same here and I regret that we were not able to entertain that, but I'm going to go with the will of the House and I will be voting down any motion that's not in support of this. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Next on the list I've got Mr. Dent to the amendment. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It has been an interesting discussion this afternoon and I know that there's been a lot of weight on the cost of more Members in this House. I know my constituents have told me that they agree that they're not anxious to see the cost of representation go up. I know somebody today said more Members won't bring in more money. I think that was probably the Minister of Finance...

---Laughter

...but he's absolutely right; they won't. But what we're talking about here is not just about representation. My colleague Mr. McLeod made some very strong arguments about how people in the smaller communities, representatives from the smaller communities have a much tougher time talking to their constituents and representing them. They have a different function in many ways than MLAs from Yellowknife do. I appreciate that; I respect that; and I agree with him that if that isn't being addressed through the MLA Compensation Commission, we need to find some way to address that, whether it's improved travel expenses, or improved constituency assistant expenses for other Members. I'm sympathetic,

because I agree that we all need to be able to have reasonable access to our constituents. We need to be able to do our jobs.

But what we're talking about here today is not about representation. I know that's tough to think about, but the Constitution of Canada doesn't say that we're supposed to have representation based on how easily we can get hold of our constituents, or how easily they can get hold of us, or on how we do our jobs. It's not about people's voices being heard even, or access. What it really is, is the Supreme Court has said that the first issue around representation is around relative parity of voting power. That means that my vote in this House is supposed to be relatively equal to that of every other Member, and if it's not the courts have said that there's a problem.

Now, this House has made very clear today that there is no interest in increasing the numbers in our next Legislative Assembly as we go forward. I think that we probably should have accepted the recommendations of the commission, but given that that has been rejected, I know that it would be very, very risky for us to agree to increase in a constituency outside of Yellowknife and not increase within Yellowknife, because then you would be really affecting the relative parity of the votes. Therefore, even though I, too, have travelled in the Tlicho region and I have been lobbied by people in the communities of Whati and Gameti to support an extra seat for the Monfwi region, because of the importance of the relative parity, I have to apologize to the Member for Monfwi, but I, too, will have to vote against this amendment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Next on the list I've got Mr. Hawkins. To the amendment, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will have to be voting against the amendment presented as a motion by the Member for Monfwi. I appreciate his concern and I tried to highlight it in the context of my statement earlier, which is I think he's in a very difficult position because people from the whole Tlicho Nation are expecting him to deliver results, although again I have to underscore that they don't all live within the boundaries or the prescribed boundaries of the Tlicho Nation. So I appreciate the extra workload he carries.

I actually thought the most interesting presentation put on the table today was by the Member for Deh Cho, Minister McLeod. It was really unique that someone would bring a different dynamic to the argument which would be talking strictly about the basis of being able to do your job and how difficult it is, and sometimes that can't be recognized in the sense of just voter parity and the sense of numbers. I thought that was a very interesting point of view.

I had to support the earlier motion because it was about correcting the line of voter parity and collecting the disproportional representation. I see Mr. Lafferty is trying to do that in his own way, although I give him credit for that.

Although I don't really have much more to offer, Mr. Chairman, I do say that voting against this still emphasizes that this Assembly believes in programs over politics and I think that's a very important statement.

If there was one last thing I'd say, which is the Tlicho people need to realize that their Member, Mr. Lafferty, he's almost like that old toy you could box with and he kept bouncing back and fighting this issue and saying he needs the support and representation. Regardless of how people sort of said that they would vote or wouldn't vote, or what they could support, or what balance they would or wouldn't, the bottom line is Mr. Lafferty kept trumpeting this issue even though it looked like it was miles and miles against him. So to his credit this amendment is before the House and the folks should realize that he has fought significantly hard to get this on the table. So, Mr. Chairman, to that, thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. To the amendment. Anything further?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Question has been called. All those in favour? Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Chairman, could we have a recorded vote?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. The Member has requested a recorded vote on the amendment. We will have a recorded vote. All those in favour, please stand. Mr. Clerk.

Recorded Vote

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Villeneuve, Mr. Lafferty.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Those opposed, please stand. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Miltenberger; Ms. Lee; Mr. Yakeleya; Mr. Braden; Mr. McLeod, Inuvik Twin Lakes; Mr. Hawkins; Mr. Menicoche; Mr. Krutko; Mr. Roland; Mr. Handley; Mr. Dent; Mr. McLeod, Deh Cho; Mr. Bell; Mr. Pokiak.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. The vote was two in favour and 14 against. The motion is defeated.

---Defeated

Thank you, committee. We will go back to the main clauses of the bill. Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, No. 2. Clause 1.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 2.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 3.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Bill as a whole?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Does committee agree that consideration of Bill 14 has now been considered?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that we report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): I will now rise and report progress. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

I will rise and report progress.

MR. SPEAKER: Could I have report of Committee of the Whole? Mr. Ramsay.

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, No. 2, and would like to report that Bill 14 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, Mr. Ramsay. The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. Do we have a seconder? The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question is being called. 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 12: Garnishment Remedies Statutes Amendment Act

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that Bill 12, Garnishment Remedies Statutes Amendment Act, 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 12 has had third reading. 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 Wednesday, October 25, 2006, at 1:30 p.m.

1. Prayer

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2. Ministers' Statements ---ADJOURNMENT
 3. Members' Statements The House adjourned at 18:15 p.m.
 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
 - Bill 15, Elections and Plebiscites Act
 - Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Jury Act
 - Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, No. 3
 - Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Education Act
 - Bill 19, An Act to Amend the Archives Act
 - Bill 20, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act
 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
 20. Report of Committee of the Whole
 21. Third Reading of Bills
 - Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, No.2
 22. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Wednesday, October 25, 2006, at 1:30 p.m.

