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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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Box 1320
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories
Tel: (867) 669-2200 Fax: (867) 920-4735 Toll-Free: 1-800-661-0784
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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Friday, October 27, 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, Hon. Michael McLeod, Mr. McLeod, Hon. Kevin 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 morning, colleagues. Welcome back to the House. Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. Miltenberger...Mr. McLeod.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**Minister's Statement 45-15(5): Actions To Recover Barren Ground Caribou Herds**

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, surveys of barren ground caribou herds conducted this summer by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources confirms these herds are declining.

This is a very serious matter that affects many residents in the Northwest Territories. Last winter, few communities were able to access caribou and the harvest was greatly reduced.

A number of actions based on survey results from the Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-East and Bluenose-West barren ground caribou herds were taken this past year to address the decline. This included closing caribou management areas in the Inuvik region to resident and commercial hunting. Voluntary actions taken by wildlife co-management boards included monitoring aboriginal harvest.

These wildlife co-management boards have already met and are finalizing additional recommendations for the herds in the Inuvik, Gwich'in and Sahtu regions.

Actions were also taken in the North and South Slave areas based on information received from communities and biologists suggesting other caribou herds were also declining. These included reducing the allocation of tags for residents from five to two tags, allowing resident hunters to only hunt males and reducing tags to outfitters in the North Slave region.

The new Wek'eezhie Renewable Resource Board is also expected to provide additional recommendations for actions to deal with the decline.

Mr. Speaker, the resource development industry fully recognizes the decline in the herds and continues to work with the department and advisory boards to monitor caribou.

ENR is also taking several extraordinary steps to engage residents and other jurisdictions and agencies concerned with the management of these herds.

On November 1st and 2nd, a workshop is being held in Inuvik to look at the impacts caused by the declines in the herds. Workshop participants will also determine how to address hardships in this region, including the loss of country food.

A workshop is planned for Yellowknife in early December to review actions identified under the Bathurst Caribou management plan. All communities and stakeholders including industry, outfitter associations and resident hunter associations as well as other agencies involved in the development of the plan are being encouraged to attend.

An NWT Caribou Summit is being proposed for early in the new year. Aboriginal leaders, wildlife co-management boards, hunting organizations, industry, neighbouring jurisdictions will be all invited to the summit and will provide the opportunity for all partners to discuss the actions being undertaken and reach agreement to work together in a manner that recognizes aboriginal rights and addresses hardships created by low caribou numbers.

Environment and Natural Resources also continues to implement the actions listed in the NWT Barren Ground Caribou Strategy, which was released last February.

Mr. Speaker, elders say that caribou numbers increase and decrease naturally. In the past, people starved when caribou numbers were low.

Our caribou herds can recover, but not without making some sacrifices. We must realize that we cannot continue to enjoy the same levels of harvest we did when our caribou numbers were high.

Everyone has a role to play to help our herds recover and it's only by working together that this can be achieved. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

Ministers' Statement 46-15(5): NWT Arts Strategy Progress

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning. Mr. Speaker, last June I tabled the NWT Arts Strategy Progress Report, a document prepared jointly by the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment and the Department of Education, Culture and Employment.

Minister Bell and I committed to convening a consultation group, composed of NWT arts community representatives, to review the March 2006 NWT Arts Strategy Progress Report. We wanted the group to provide advice on actions that would support the goals and objectives of the NWT Arts Strategy.

This arts consultation group included both past members of the Arts Strategy Advisory Panel and new members who were selected to ensure the broadest possible representation by region, cultural group, art discipline and partner role.

I met with the consultation group at the start of their meeting with departmental officials on the 16th of September. The group highlighted the challenges currently being faced by the various participants within the arts sector and provided valuable feedback. They provided significant insight and several recommendations

on ways the GNWT could improve on existing supports and services.

Recommendations were made regarding arts education, financial support for artists, support for artists and arts organizations, and public access to and participation in the arts.

Mr. Speaker, this government recognizes and understands that the arts provide a meaningful economic benefit to the NWT and are an important source of income to many people, especially those living in smaller, remote communities. We know that art therapy improves health status and that arts programming in the schools promotes self-esteem and teamwork and contributes to a well-rounded education. The arts also build social capital, community empowerment and serve to reinforce cultural identity; key priorities of this government.

Mr. Speaker, the departments of Education, Culture and Employment and Industry, Tourism and Investment will utilize the results of this arts consultation in planning programs and services in support of the arts. We will continue to invest in the arts for the social, economic and cultural benefit of individuals and communities today and in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On Hay River Committee For Persons With Disabilities

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, about one in eight northerners live with some form of disability. Many of these people enjoy healthy, independent lives within our communities and make a valuable contribution to society through work, volunteer activities and family life. People with disabilities have the right to access service and facilities, but many are faced with physical barriers. There are stereotypes of what people with disabilities can do effectively and safely. Policies are developed without considering their needs. Treating everyone the same is not always fair. People with disabilities are entitled to expect some accommodations to be made when required to allow them to participate in community life.

Mr. Speaker, in our constituency, the Hay River Committee for Persons with Disabilities was formed approximately four years ago. They have become a referral point in a resource centre for people with disabilities. They now have an office set up and are hoping to have staff by the end of November. As soon as a staff person is hired, work will begin on assessing the priorities for people with disabilities and setting up programs to assist in areas of employment, independent living, information and support for families. They will increase their lobbying for better sidewalks and entrance to public buildings, and particularly the entrance to the medical clinic which right now is not a barrier-free building in Hay River.

Today, I would like to congratulate this committee on their achievements to date. In particular, I would like to recognize the outstanding voluntary service of a person who has been a strengthened force behind this committee, Mrs. Lillian Crook. Lillian has had a strong impact within the community. She shares her experience and knowledge to raise recognition and awareness about

the difficulties that disabled persons face in their daily life. So, Mr. Speaker, thank you to Lillian Crook of the Hay River Committee for Persons with Disabilities for the work that they are doing on behalf of others.

Later today, Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs as to the long-outstanding and long-ongoing discussion over tax relief for senior citizens and persons with disabilities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Affordable Housing Initiative

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the past couple of sittings, we have heard from a number of Members who are concerned with how the Novel housing proposal will play out. While not diminishing my colleagues' concerns, I would like to put a more positive spin on this proposal, Mr. Speaker. It is simple. I am in favour of any proposal that puts housing that is so desperately needed in the communities that I represent. I see the overcrowding. I see housing units that are no longer fit to live in and still being used because there is no alternative. Mr. Speaker, I have seen families forced out to larger communities because there is no place for them to live in their own communities. What is lost is the potential benefits of residents in the Mackenzie Valley and for this government.

The Housing Corporation will be able to replace a number of single family social housing units that have outlived their economic life with new and modern energy-efficient units. This will save money in the O and M costs that will be spent in fixing and maintaining other units. Families and communities with no market housing will have an opportunity to either buy a unit outright using conventional mortgage, or by accessing the subsidy program presently available to the Housing Corporation.

My colleague from Range Lake has pointed out on several occasions that these are well-constructed homes and you can't really call them trailers anymore. They are about \$200,000 anywhere in Western Canada. The other reality is once the initial pipeline construction is completed, there will be a lull in employment and business opportunities. The lull can be filled by work, preparing the building for moving the units to communities and renovating units for customers' specifications.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would like to say that the life of politicians can be difficult at times. As Regular Members, we are called upon to hold the government accountable and ask the hard questions. I believe that sometimes we judge the department or corporation too hardly on past activities. The Novel proposal is big. The potential benefits are great down the Mackenzie Valley, both economically and socially too far to dismiss. We need to ask the hard questions on the project. We also need to have some faith and work with the Housing Corporation to advance this for the benefit of all people in the Northwest Territories that we represent. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On North Slave Regional Officer In Behchoko

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to address the issue of the North Slave regional office. Most of these offices and especially the offices with the decision-making powers are located at the headquarters in Yellowknife, instead of in the region, Mr. Speaker. Services provided from those offices for Tlicho have been a concern for some time now. Mr. Speaker, the Tlicho region has been accorded regional status by virtue of land claims and self-government agreement with the recent TCOSA, Tlicho Community Services Agency, silver medal award for innovative management. That is a great achievement, Mr. Speaker. So far, the GNWT has ignored the fact that in terms of how it organizes its services.

Most North Slave regional offices are still located in the headquarters in Yellowknife. Decision-makers and managers still sit in Yellowknife ignoring Behchoko as a regional centre and as the largest aboriginal community in the Northwest Territories, Mr. Speaker. It is time for this Government of the Northwest Territories to acknowledge the importance of Behchoko as a capital of the Tlicho Government. Basically, such recognition will mean that Tlicho becomes a stand-alone region. It must come with the transfer of positions, Mr. Speaker, that are authorized to make decisions.

Mr. Speaker, presently the Tlicho residents are being disadvantaged. Responses to questions or requests take a long time. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

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

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker and colleagues. Mr. Speaker, requests forwarded to headquarters go through multiple levels of bureaucracy. Their message may change in this process. They are either delayed or sometimes lost in the system. This is not necessary and causes undue hardship, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this government should give the Tlicho region with Behchoko the same acknowledgment that it did with the Sahtu and the transfer of North Slave regional office function serving the Tlicho from Yellowknife to Behchoko.

As the Government of the Northwest Territories chooses to represent the Tlicho, it must have a senior staff manager permanently residing and located in Behchoko, not just a few officers and clerks. Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the honourable Premier at the appropriate time. Mahsi.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Recognition To Legislative Assembly Pages From Nunakput

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My Member's statement today is dedicated to young individuals in this Chamber who play a vital role upon us as Members and Ministers to conduct our business. Mr. Speaker, I am speaking of some who are enthusiastic, energetic, polite and are bright young Pages. This week's session, the Pages are from Nunakput, Nahendeh, Monfwi and Deh Cho.

---Applause

Mr. Speaker, having young students come from small communities to assist us in our daily business is appreciated, so I say thank you to the Speaker of this Legislature.

In speaking with the Pages from Nunakput, they are overwhelmed with this building and appreciate to see first hand how MLAs conduct their business. Mr. Speaker, students from small communities usually don't have the same opportunity as Yellowknife students. To have students come in from outside Yellowknife and assist us in the Chamber is an honour which I am sure my colleagues will agree to. Mr. Speaker, they are our next generation. I hope this great opportunity has inspired them to pursue a seat in this House. To the Pages, I say thank you. 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 Employment Of Affirmative Action Candidates

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would just like to use my Member's statement to express some of my concerns with the new Human Resources department. Mr. Speaker, although I am in full support of the amalgamation of the human resources and public services and the intent to develop a more balanced and representative public service here in the NWT, I feel that there are some important human resource issues related to why this government moved back to a stand-alone Human Resources department that are falling through the cracks as we move forward.

Mr. Speaker, I am still receiving many inquiries and concerns from public service employees, mainly of aboriginal descent, that are not receiving the level of consideration for advancement or employment in the public service as originally perceived after applications are filed or positions are filled. Mr. Speaker, I realize there are many other factors like education requirements, experience or residency issues that play important roles in determining who will be offered advancement or employment in the public service. But I also, once again, emphasize our government's responsibility to support and build on the existing under-represented sector of our public service as a whole; namely the northern aboriginal sector and the number of women in our government in management and the non-traditional occupations.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I have to point out a sad fact that, since the affirmative action policy was mandated in 1989 by this Legislature, there has never been and there still are no northern aboriginal persons in management in our own Legislative Assembly where the advocacy for equality is loudest.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot continue to tell our public service to do as we say and not as we do. We have to set a good example and raise the bar right here where it is most visible to northerners. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Territorial Dementia Centre Facility

MR. BRADEN: Mahsi and good morning, Mr. Speaker. As our population ages, the occurrence and incidence of Alzheimer's and other dementia syndromes is going to increase, Mr. Speaker, and so will the demands on our families, our communities and, of course, our health care institutions, to deal with this in a way that is not only adequate but helps give these people the dignity and the quality of life even as this terrible disease robs them of just about every memory and ability to cope that they have.

Mr. Speaker, it is estimated that, again, as more and more of us get older and older, almost one in 10 of us is going to suffer from this situation. In Yellowknife, from a survey about three years, there were at least 35 people in the earlier stages of dementia and another 30 in the moderate to severe stages. At present, Mr. Speaker, in this community, we are assisting these people. We are caring for these people in the long-term care ward in the Stanton Hospital and at the Aven seniors' facility, neither of which are designed for this kind of care or are really able to give these people the kind of quality of life that they should have.

Mr. Speaker, the Yellowknife Association of Concerned Citizens for Seniors has had this on their agenda for more than 20 years. They have tried to alert government to the growing need for this and it is desperate now, Mr. Speaker. This government has recognized that to some extent. It has assisted this organization with planning money, but one thing we have not done, Mr. Speaker, is that we have not committed our capital plan to constructing this essential part of our health care institution here in Yellowknife to serve not only this community, Mr. Speaker, but the whole territory. It is time that we make this commitment, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Health Care Difficulties Experienced By Constituent

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am going to again address the concern that I have over the treatment, or lack thereof, of a constituent of mine. I believe it is unreasonable and unacceptable that he has been allowed to suffer through almost three years of chronic pain, unable to work and unable to support his family. On Monday of this week, I had asked the Minister responsible, Mr. Roland, about how our government treats cases where an individual can't get a diagnosis here in the NWT. Given the fact that my constituent has been waiting almost three years and the department's answer is to force him to wait approximately another two years and, Mr. Speaker, that is five years of pain and suffering, it is completely unacceptable.

The Minister, in his response to one of my questions on Monday stated on page 886 of unedited Hansard, "I am aware that he hasn't been left out there on his own." Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is he hasn't got a diagnosis after three years. If someone was out there with him, what good has it done him? What I would like to see is a complete top to bottom review of his file to ensure that we can find out why he has not gotten the care he deserves and make immediate arrangements to have him receive

the help that he needs to acquire diagnosis and receive treatment.

How long does a resident of the Northwest Territories have to suffer before they can get the help? What are our standards? Do we even have acceptable levels for wait times here in the Northwest Territories?

Mr. Speaker, in a country like Canada, I find it unthinkable that a resident would have to take matters into their own hands and travel overseas to seek medical attention. In my mind, our health care system has failed my constituent for almost three years. By putting him on another wait list for two years, they are standing by and allowing this man to continue to suffer immensely. The proposed course of action as proposed by the department is just not good enough for my mind, Mr. Speaker. Our residents deserve better. Mahsi.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Broad Framework To Address Environmental Issues

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would first like to commend the Minister of ENR and his staff for all of their proactive planning and work to deal with the declining caribou numbers. I think it is good that they have done all of that work. I fully support the summit and bringing all of the folks together to look at the next steps, as well as I would support it as it comes forward. Of course, the use of some of their whatever circles may be left from the light fire season to help offset the cost of the summit, because I think this is an endeavour that we have to pursue.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to make the point today, in conjunction with the statement I made earlier to the opening address, that this is an example of why we have to take a broad look at the environmental impact in many areas, of why we have to take the environment from the second chair up to centre stage when we look at the planning that we have to do. There are issues tied into caribou that are going to tie into other species as well like the fish habitat where there is enormous pressure. There are fires that wreak havoc through the landscape, a natural process but it affects migration routes, access to feed and many other factors. We have development permits for access to exploration across the land to check out all of the resources we have there. We have roads going in where there were never roads before, Mr. Speaker, making hunting that much easier. All of these factors tied into, as well, the water and the underlying climate change issues tell me that it is absolutely fundamental that we start looking at all of these pieces not as individual events and issues, but how do they affect our capacity to absorb resource development and what is cumulative impact?

The caribou herds migrate. They don't respect borders. They don't know borders. That is foreign to them. They go from the north right to the South into the provinces over into the Yukon and Quebec. We have a circumstance with the caribou where we have to get our own house in order, but clearly we have to work with other jurisdictions but we need that broad frame. I will be making that case again and again in the coming months as we look at the planning. If we are going to do this right and we are going to look at the economic big picture, we can't do that

without this same look being taken on the environment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Impacts Of Housing Decisions And Direction

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to speak on the state of housing through the eyes of experience. Mr. Speaker, I spent 22 years working for the local housing authority. We have always had to live with decisions that were made in Yellowknife or in headquarters. A lot of times these decisions weren't very good. We were asked to perform miracles, to do a lot more with a lot less. I have said before, my cronies would have a field day up here.

The government nowadays has some money coming in. They are talking about a \$100 million investment over the next three years. They are talking about 530 units over the next three years. They have a unique opportunity here to make good decisions, to make decisions that the community wants and they have an opportunity to put some good houses on the ground because that's what they keep saying they are supposed to be doing is putting houses on the ground. They have an opportunity now over the next three years to put those words into action and we are going to hold them to it. We don't want them to botch something as important as this.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

MR. MCLEOD: The units are getting older and older and the maintenance crews are asked to do more and more, like I said, with a lot less. Is Novel the answer? I don't know. I wonder about that. We are talking about a huge investment here. Maybe it's time we went and asked the communities and listened to what the communities have to say.

Let's start making some of the decisions based on what the community wants, not what the Housing Corporation and government thinks is best for the community because what is good for one community in this region may not be good for another community in that region. So I would urge this government to talk to the communities...

---Laughter

...listen to what they have to say and let's start paying attention to the needs of the communities and not the needs of headquarters. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Impact Of Labour Shortages On Small Businesses

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I cited yesterday many reasons why so many of our small businesses are having such a difficult time. One of the main issues that I mentioned was the lack of labour, Mr. Speaker. We have a shortage of labour, skilled and unskilled, in every sector of our industries. I don't think it is just in Yellowknife, but in other regions where there is a lot of economic activity. Mr. Speaker, the problem is particularly severe for fast-food and fast service businesses where the employees are not able to compete

with the government or big corporations, although they do go out of their way to make their employment benefits package as attractive as well.

Mr. Speaker, the fact is that it is so difficult for them to find enough full-time reliable help that they are actually looking overseas to find help. In fact, it is not unusual for me to get a phone call to see if I could help them with finding help from the country of my ancestry, which is Korea. Not only that, Mr. Speaker, but the immigration office in Yellowknife is so under-resourced and not mandated fully to address and help those employers who might be looking to bring help from overseas.

Mr. Speaker, on the other hand, when I had the constituency meeting a couple of weeks ago, I learned from one of my constituents that, in fact, there is a surgeon and a pharmacist working as check-out cashiers at one of our box stores. I must say, Mr. Speaker, while I realize these stores offer a lot of products, I don't think surgery is one of them.

Mr. Speaker, I have to tell you that this issue deals with a lack of skilled labour or lack of any kind of labour, especially industry that is labour intensive, but also we have a lot of red tape and barriers that is getting in the way of professional people who are already in Yellowknife finding their jobs. I am not hearing enough from this government and the federal government to help the businesses deal with this issue. In the days to come, I would like to see some more direction and leadership from the Minister of Employment, who is also now responsible for Human Resources, to come up with a policy to address this situation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Non-Resident Employment At Northern Diamond Mines

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I start, I should apologize to my colleague Mr. McLeod for knocking my glass over.

Mr. Speaker, today I would like to discuss the issue about fly-in workers to the diamond mines. This is a growing concern of my constituents. This is a growing concern among northern communities. They are constantly asking, is this government doing enough to this problem? The socio-economic agreements between the diamond mines and the GNWT set out employment targets for northerners and aboriginal residents, Mr. Speaker. These targets for northern resident employment during the mine operations are set at roughly between 60 and 70 percent. It appears increasingly difficult to meet these targets the mine is setting. What are we doing? Are we doing enough?

The high cost of living contributes to people not wanting to live in the Northwest Territories, to make their homes here, to contribute to the communities. Incentives for northern residents have steadily decreased over the years, Mr. Speaker. Since the third-quarter, the 2005 population census told us that we have lost approximately 850 residents, Mr. Speaker. I have no doubt some of those are mine employees relocating. Why are they relocating, Mr. Speaker? Because the mining industry is reacting to these changes as all good businesses do. But one such adaptation is they are now providing free flights to their employees from the South to work in their northern

sites. Pretty nice, I will say. This is an attractive option for workers who do not live in the North, Mr. Speaker. It would be crazy for them not to take these options up. These are fly-in workers who are taking their earnings from our North, our only opportunity to get any benefit from these mines, and they are taking them south so they are not contributing to our North. Again, they are not contributing to our communities.

All socio-economic agreements have monitoring provisions in place. The Premier will know this, Mr. Speaker, because I will cite one in a second. The mining companies have agreed to consult with their northern partners to find ways to meet these set targets. The GNWT has an important role in monitoring these provisions. Mr. Speaker, tabled in the Fourth Session of the 13th Assembly in 1996, section 8.5 says, "If requested, the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development will call basically the diamond mine companies before an ad hoc committee or the Assembly if requested," Mr. Speaker.

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

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, the fact is, it is set out in the socio-economic agreements that we have the right to call these diamond companies to meet the Minister, to speak to the Minister on special issues written here discussing training, employment and business opportunities. It is to my understanding this clause has never been exercised to find out what is the problem and maybe what the GNWT isn't doing.

So, Mr. Speaker, I demand this government to exercise this clause 8.5 in the agreement and to call these mining companies before this Assembly, before committee, and work on a partnership to find a solution to this important issue to our northern residents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Members' statements. The honourable Member for the Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

Member's Statement On Recognition Of Legislative Assembly Pages From Fort Providence

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I want to take the opportunity to thank all of those involved in helping making this a successful week for two Pages from Fort Providence. I wanted to say thank you to Laitha Nadli and Dori-Ann Lafoin, who are with us, who have worked as Pages since Monday.

---Applause

Today is their last day. I hope it was an enjoyable and educational experience for both of them. I hope that they will have some great stories to tell and share with their teachers at the Deh Gah School and also for their families when they get back home. I also wanted to take the opportunity to thank the chaperone, Miss Suzie Schmid. Suzie is here from Germany and is on a one-year Work Placement Program as a teachers' assistant in the community of Fort Providence at the school there...

---Applause

...and also to the drivers, Patricia Bouvier and Greg Reardon, both from Fort Providence, for driving the students...

---Applause

...and also for coming to pick them up. Last but not least, of course, to the Legislative Assembly corporate service staff for giving us the opportunity to invite the students from Fort Providence and working with them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at this time I'd like to recognize one of my chiefs, Chief Charlie Football from Wekweeti is in the audience.

---Applause

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize the two Pages I have here from my region, Carricie Mantla and also Tyanna Steinwand. It is their last day today. I hope they enjoyed it. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to recognize a Page that we've had with us here during this session, Ms. Aimee Gauthier. Mahsi.

---Applause

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

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize my two Pages that I brought in from Paulatuk, and I thank the staff here in corporate services, Kayla Kudlak from Paulatuk and also Craig Ruben. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 205-15(5): Impact Of Labour Shortages On Small Businesses

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are in following up with my Member's statement and it's to the Minister of Employment. I think that we're all aware that here in Yellowknife the cost of living and the cost of doing business is very expensive and the booming economy sometimes works against small businesses who have to compete with the ever-reducing supply of labour and having to compete with big governments and big company packages sometimes. When they are looking to look overseas, if they have to, they run into more problems having really no service in Yellowknife to deal with this. I'd like to know what the Minister has done, if anything, in that regard in his office as Minister. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 205-15(5): Impact Of Labour Shortages On Small Businesses

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I listened with interest to Ms. Lee's statement and it is an issue that I understand is becoming more and more of a problem for northern employers finding suitable staff because of the overheated economy. To date, I have approached Minister Solberg's office on a couple of issues. One was to see if we could get some action on assisting the tourism operators who need Japanese staff; another to address an issue of a long-standing or outstanding application for Canadian citizenship for a doctor who is practicing in the North. We've had successful resolution of one of those.

I haven't been approached by fast-food service restaurants, but I would be quite prepared to sit down with them, discuss what their needs are, and then develop a plan of action to address this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 205-15(5): Impact Of Labour Shortages On Small Businesses

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If he is interested in hearing, getting advice from this side of the floor, Mr. Speaker, I could tell you that a fast-food chain in downtown are actually using personal referrals from an employee from Korea that worked there and she or he are being asked to look for people in Korea. I mean, they're using personal connections because they felt that they were getting no help from the immigration office and the immigration office here is really equipped with enforcement of bad immigrants, so to speak, not really there to facilitate people who want to bring in employees.

Another thing is, I know that there is a fast-food chain in the Range Lake area where they're looking at bringing 60 employees from the Philippines and they're not even bothering to go through Yellowknife office because they're so ill-resourced and ill-equipped. So I'd like to know -- and I'm sure this is not the first time the Minister is hearing that -- would the Minister be willing to look at talking to Minister Solberg and see if he would increase the resources in the immigration office in Yellowknife? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 205-15(5): Impact Of Labour Shortages On Small Businesses

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hadn't heard about this problem with the fast-food service restaurants, but now that I have heard about it I would be quite happy to find out what their specific needs are and then see how we can address that with Minister Solberg, yes.

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

Supplementary To Question 205-15(5): Impact Of Labour Shortages On Small Businesses

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With regard to the other side of the coin about the professional immigrants in Canada, not just in Yellowknife, who are not able to practice in their area -- whether they be engineers, doctors, pharmacists -- I mean it's good that the Minister

is looking at one file, but would he be willing to look at all of the qualification process in those professions, and nursing too, and dentists, and see if he could harmonize that process so that at least we're able to use the resources that are already here; human resources. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 205-15(5): Impact Of Labour Shortages On Small Businesses

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the big issues that Ministers across Canada are trying to address is how to measure prior learning and the whole field of prior learning assessment, and how to recognize the qualifications that immigrants to Canada bring to the table is not something that we're struggling with in our jurisdiction alone, but it is a problem all across Canada. I would be quite happy to continue to work on this file. One of the big issues that we have is we have a lot of professions that are self-regulating. It's been somewhat of a challenge to get some of those professions to come to the table to deal with prior learning assessment and try and ensure that we can see professionals from other regions or other countries come into Canada. But it is something that I'm prepared to keep working on.

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

Supplementary To Question 205-15(5): Impact Of Labour Shortages On Small Businesses

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As my final supplementary, there are so many different aspects of this and at the same time this is not new. I'd like to know if the Minister of labour and human resources, if the Minister will undertake reviewing this issue and come up with some sort of discussion paper or position paper for the communities to get engaged in. I think this is a very important area for the future of many industries here where we already have had a lot of people coming from all over the place looking for jobs and such. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 205-15(5): Impact Of Labour Shortages On Small Businesses

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd be happy to take a look at whether or not, I would undertake to attempt in the next couple of months to develop such a discussion paper that would deal with both immigration issues and challenges that we're seeing in the North as well as prior learning assessment for immigrants and other challenges that they may face and see if there aren't some ways in which we might work with the federal government to address those. Thank you.

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

Question 206-15(5): Territorial Dementia Centre Funding

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question this morning is for Mr. Roland, the Minister of Health and Social Services. Mr. Speaker, our government, this government, recently advised the Yellowknife Association of Concerned Citizens for Seniors that it has decided not to commit to funding for a new dementia centre in our three-year capital plan. We cited other competing needs, Mr. Speaker, and the bulging costs of construction that are affecting virtually anybody who wants to get anything built in the North these days.

Mr. Speaker, the need for this kind of facility is amply demonstrated. It is not, I would say, and many others are saying, it is not an option anymore. Mr. Speaker, when we return here in February we will be signing off on that three-year capital plan for the Department of Health. Will the Minister take a fresh look at the desperate need for this centre now and book this project in that three-year plan, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mr. Roland.

Return To Question 206-15(5): Territorial Dementia Centre Funding

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the department has worked cooperatively with the Yellowknife Association for Concerned Citizens for Seniors and we will continue to do so. The department has met with them on a number of occasions, has worked and provided money for the planning, have received a plan for a new facility which is far and above the initial discussions that were put in place. The department has been in contact with them since the news was initially given by the previous Minister regarding the facility itself. As our capital plan works, as we put our plans forward, it is reviewed by this Assembly, as the Member has stated. Any new plan or capital project that is to go into the plan follows the process and then gets ranked and we then deal with it as a budget. Of course, this department has committed to put that plan, put the project back in the capital plan from the Department of Health and Social Services side, but at this time it did not make the cut for the next go around, but we'll continue to pursue it as an important project to see if we can get it onto the plan. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 206-15(5): Territorial Dementia Centre Funding

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, what is it going to take to convince the government that this is not something that can continue to be sidelined? The costs of providing care for these people in facilities that are not designed for it is, that is a very real aspect of the fiscal side of this, plus the impact on these people and their families. Mr. Speaker, what else is there in this whole agenda that the government needs to see that will convince it that this must be treated as a priority and not an option?

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

Further Return To Question 206-15(5): Territorial Dementia Centre Funding

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as our process works, each department would put forward its capital plan and then it goes through a capital planning process which meets with seniors' capital planning committee, then through the deputy ministers and then forwarded to the FMB and Cabinet for a decision to build the business plan and present the Members in this House. The department has included it as an important facility. It did not make the cut through the process, so we'll have to go back to the phase and put it back in. It remains a priority for this government. Ultimately it comes down to the fact that as a government we don't have the dollars in the capital plan to address all our needs and then it becomes a matter of ranking. If this Assembly feels that there needs to be some other projects put off to make

room for this, that is something that can be considered, but at this time it has not made its way onto the capital plan. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 206-15(5): Territorial Dementia Centre Funding

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am well aware and I know my colleagues are well aware of the process. It is the struggle that we're all engaging in to get those most needed facilities, those most urgent to the top of the process and that's what we're engaged in. Now, Mr. Speaker, the YACCS organization has provided an alternative by which they would finance the construction of this facility as an option to the government itself financing it. Is that a proposal that is under active consideration along with our own financing, Mr. Speaker?

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

Further Return To Question 206-15(5): Territorial Dementia Centre Funding

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a number of options were looked at for this facility. Ultimately it still comes down to the fact that even if we enter into a leasing arrangement we have to account for those dollars in the leasing agreement and build that into the plan. Because it is a very specified facility for a very specific group of individuals and people and how that would be served, we would look at that as being a facility that we would rather own than lease. So I know it's been worked about, discussed. I have directed the department to contact the organization to look at the plan again to see what we could do to come up with an arrangement that would be something that might be able to fit in the plans as we go forward. A letter has just gone out recently from the deputy minister. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 206-15(5): Territorial Dementia Centre Funding

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, as we continue then to go along without a facility for these people and at least in the given future, there is certainly a desperate need now for these people and their families to provide home care, day programs, support for this extremely debilitating and devastating situation in their lives. Is our government going to look at establishing and enabling more of this kind of support to go along at least until we have a facility able to care for them, Mr. Speaker?

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

Further Return To Question 206-15(5): Territorial Dementia Centre Funding

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the department continues to do its best to provide a level of service for people who are in this area. It is very difficult for families who have to work with their own family members as well as adapting our existing resources to try and help out where we can and we will continue to do that within our existing resources to try and help those families who find themselves in this situation, as well as continue to work cooperatively with the YACCS group to try and come up with a solution that can hopefully meet the needs as we move forward. Thank you.

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

Question 207-15(5): Medical Treatment Wait Times

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I've shared some information, and again it gets back to my Member's statement, with a constituent who continues to suffer, not being given a diagnosis yet as to his condition. I have shared that information with the Minister of Health and Social Services. I'd like to again question the Minister on this case. The first question I have, Mr. Speaker, is does the Northwest Territories have a policy to deal with what we would deem acceptable levels for wait times for a diagnosis and subsequently a treatment? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 207-15(5): Medical Treatment Wait Times

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the acceptable wait times and reducing wait times is an issue that all jurisdictions are facing; in fact, working together with the other jurisdictions and the federal government to try to come up with a program that would reduce wait times people face throughout our systems. As for the Northwest Territories, I don't have the specifics and I'd have to get some detail on that, then I can provide that to the Member. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 207-15(5): Medical Treatment Wait Times

MR. RAMSAY: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the Northwest Territories doesn't have a policy that states quite clearly what acceptable levels of wait times are, then I'd suggest we get one immediately. Because my constituent has been suffering for three years, the Department of Health and Social Services' answer to that is to put him on another wait list to make him wait another two years. It's completely unacceptable, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, precedent has been set in other provinces across this country where if an individual has to seek medical attention outside the country they do so. When they come back, the cost of the medical treatment for that individual is covered by the province. I'd like to ask the Minister, could he have his staff at Health and Social Services look into this practice that takes place in other provinces? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 207-15(5): Medical Treatment Wait Times

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we already follow a similar pattern and process that other jurisdictions do. If a service is not available in our jurisdiction in the Northwest Territories, then we would set up a process where an individual can receive those services out of our jurisdiction. The majority of patients that move from the Territories, if we can't provide a service, would go through Alberta, sometimes into B.C. or other jurisdictions. As well, if there are not services available in Canada we would look at providing that service outside of Canada and being covered by our health care system. That is all within the system that is in place, and, again, the approvals have to be made and

referrals made by the doctors. In this case it's not like the individual's been out there without seeing a doctor. There's been numerous visits, numerous levels of checks. Unfortunately the wait times in some of these other facilities are high because they are very specific in nature and they're a high level of specialty, and it's something that we continue to try to work with and come up with a solution. There have been solutions made; unfortunately not to the satisfaction of this individual. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 207-15(5): Medical Treatment Wait Times

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister what steps he, as the Minister of Health and Social Services, can take for my constituent so that he doesn't have to continue to be on a wait list for a program in Calgary so that he can get some treatment. I'd also like to ask the Minister if in fact he can sit down with his staff at Health and Social Services to come up with a more effective game plan for the treatment of this individual. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. A couple of questions there. The Minister may answer one or both. Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 207-15(5): Medical Treatment Wait Times

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the process works for referrals from one doctor to another, one jurisdiction to another, it requires having a doctor in our jurisdiction make that referral. As Minister, the process as established through our professionals is something that I would endorse. As for the department meeting, myself sitting down with the department to look at this specific case, I've begun that process to look at this. Ultimately again, as I stated earlier in another round of questions, I would work with the professionals in this field to see what we can do. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 207-15(5): Medical Treatment Wait Times

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This individual's been in pain and suffering for three years. He's in the process of going to India, all the way to India, to get treatment for a condition in his back. Mr. Speaker, I want the Minister to make a commitment. It's been three years and I think it's an acceptable level of service if that individual has to take that step to go to India when he comes back that this government cover the medical portion of his visit to India so that he can get the help that he obviously can't get here in Canada. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 207-15(5): Medical Treatment Wait Times

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our process for dealing with patients who cannot receive care in Canada is one that's laid out. It's used by other jurisdictions as well. In this case there are programs available in Canada that can be accessed and I'm not willing to go into a blow-by-blow scenario of what's been done in this specific case. Much has been done and we

will continue to work with this case to try and bring some conclusion to it. But, as Minister, I will not intervene and direct our medical staff to send individuals to different countries and so on. I will still be using the established practice that is in place but, as I already committed previously, I will sit down with the department to see what we can do in this case to try and help expedite that. But it's not a case of not being referred. We have had doctors in our jurisdiction make the necessary referrals to try and help this patient along. Thank you.

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

Question 208-15(5): Affirmative Action Advisory Committee

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Minister responsible for Human Resources with respect to the Human Resources amalgamation. Just as I was stating in my Member's statement today, Mr. Speaker, my first question to the Minister is, the affirmative action policy since it was first mandated in 1989, there was a policy in there to put together an affirmative action advisory committee, which was an objective, independent committee that had a gender balance and a racial balance to oversee the operations of the affirmative action policy. I think if that committee was implemented when it was supposed to be implemented, Mr. Speaker, we wouldn't be here today talking about human resource equity or employment equity in the government. I think the percentage of indigenous aboriginal employees in the government hasn't changed over the past 10 years. It's been pretty constant and it's actually on the decline. The percentage of indigenous in management has also declined slightly over the past five years anyway.

I just want to ask the Minister, is there any appetite for the Human Resources department to set up an employment equity advisory committee that oversees the operations of the Human Resources department to ensure that the policies in that department are being followed up and that the representative workforce that this government is committed to establish is being worked on? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. The honourable Minister responsible for Human Resources, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 208-15(5): Affirmative Action Advisory Committee

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Being relatively new to the file, I know that I've talked to my colleague, the previous Minister, about the status of this and I understand that he'd gone to the standing committee with a proposal for moving to an employment equity process, but the committee isn't in favour of that. So clearly we're in a position where we have to take a look at the affirmative action plan and see if we can come up with something that Members of this House are supportive of, if we're going to make any changes. As things stand right now, the affirmative action policy is the one that governs the operations of this government and I will certainly look to work with Members of this House to see what we can do to improve on its results. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 208-15(5): Affirmative Action Advisory Committee

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't recall the committee, I don't know if it was AOC or maybe the Social Programs committee wasn't in total favour of it, but I know the affirmative action policy as it stands today calls for an affirmative action advisory committee to oversee the affirmative action policy and make sure that the government is committed to developing a public service that is representative of the population of the NWT; namely, women in management and indigenous aboriginals in government, in the public service. So I just don't see what's wrong with having a totally independent, objective body to oversee the operations of our Human Resources department are to ensure that the government is building our public service that is totally representative of the population. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Not sure if I heard a question. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 208-15(5): Affirmative Action Advisory Committee

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I was saying, the government had looked at the affirmative action policy and had agreed that it wasn't delivering on the results that were expected from it and had looked at other options, including moving to an employment equity position. That proposal was taken to the standing committee and proposed. We haven't actually heard formally back from the committee, but we had the sense that there wasn't support for it. If there's not support for a change in the policy, then we are looking at the existing policy. If there's a committee that's called for in the existing policy and that's what we're going to continue with, then I'll take a look at the policy and make sure that we're living up to its terms. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 208-15(5): Affirmative Action Advisory Committee

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Okay. Well, let's review the policy again and we'll go over what was mandated in that policy. I'm pretty clear that there was an advisory committee that was supposed to be established. That's all I'm saying. I don't see why we would sway from having an objective body to oversee the operations like that. Just with respect to Yellowknife alone, the population of Yellowknife comprises of roughly 51 percent of aboriginal population here and the public service here in Yellowknife only comprises 14 percent of indigenous aboriginals in the public service in a community which comprises 51 percent aboriginals, Mr. Speaker. That's probably why there's a lot of people out there that are always, you know, especially aboriginal northerners who are saying they're not getting the consideration that's based on their merit or experience or their education...

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

MR. VILLENEUVE: Yes. Can we look at setting up an employment equity advisory committee? Yes or no and why not? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 208-15(5): Affirmative Action Advisory Committee

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said, the government went to the Standing Committee on

Accountability and Oversight in September of this year with a proposal for employment equity. In other words, taking specific targets and providing resources to make sure we could move to meet those targets in certain areas. The government hasn't had a formal response back yet from AOC. Once we have that response, we'll be prepared to move to address the issue and we'll certainly take a look at the proposal that Mr. Villeneuve is now making. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 208-15(5): Affirmative Action Advisory Committee

MR. VILLENEUVE: With the new employment equity of programs, Mr. Speaker, is the government going to be applying any special measures to improve the rate at which our qualified members of a designated group are hired in the NWT? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 208-15(5): Affirmative Action Advisory Committee

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government believed that the employment equity plan that was put before committee would have improved the results over what we're seeing under the current policy. That was the position that was advanced. So yes, that was the goal to try and improve the results. Thank you.

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

Question 209-15(5): Affordable Housing Initiative

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement I talked about the Novel housing project. Mr. Speaker, the written questions to the previous Minister talked about five key points in terms of the comparative analysis of the Novel housing project. Number one, the Mackenzie gas project is a go or no go. Number two, it's under a full-scale review by the proponents. Number three, the Novel concept must be accepted by the proponents on a workforce housing initiative and competitive bidding process. I'd like to ask the Minister of the Housing Corporation in terms of time frame, in terms of we're going to look seriously at the third point in the points that the previous Minister outlined to a question that was posed to him. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 209-15(5): Affordable Housing Initiative

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my understanding that the proponent is ready to accept the Novel housing concept, but we are waiting for the federal government to give us word on whether or not they are partnering in this program. Without the federal government, this project just doesn't work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 209-15(5): Affordable Housing Initiative

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the response. That was my fourth point in this written

question. The federal government must agree financially to contribute to this and proponents must agree that to hand over these units upon completion of the Mackenzie gas project at no cost to the federal government. So my question to the Minister of the Housing Corporation, when will he know from this current government, when will he know that this deal must get done otherwise it's no go for this Novel concept? We're too late to get into the business of this Novel housing. So when will he expect to tell the people of the Northwest Territories the federal government's on board and we're ready to go with the Novel concept? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 209-15(5): Affordable Housing Initiative

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I haven't given the federal government a deadline of when I need them to reply because that's tied to when the pipeline project moves ahead and, as Members know, Imperial and their partners are just doing a costing of it right now and there could be some changes in their plans. But, Mr. Speaker, I have asked the Minister and I've told the Minister, tell us yes or no, are they on side with this one or are they not? Because if they're not going to partner on it then let us know and we'll stop spending our time and energy on this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 209-15(5): Affordable Housing Initiative

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you. I certainly support the Premier's strong voice and opinions to the Prime Minister in terms of this Novel. Quit wasting the time; similar to the resource revenue sharing and devolution agreements. It's a no go or it's a go. So, Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of the Housing Corporation in terms of this whole Novel concept, I understand from the previous discussions in the House with the Fort Providence bridge project that the Novel was going to be considered as a test in exposure of units of these types of Novel housing units. Are they still being considered elsewhere in the Northwest Territories in terms of testing out these ATCO homes in terms of the availability or strength of them? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 209-15(5): Affordable Housing Initiative

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, the Member's right. The Mackenzie Valley pipeline isn't the only show in the Territories. There's mining opportunities and so on. The bridge, as the Member has mentioned, is one other. Mr. Speaker, those are all possibilities and they're still being considered with the manufacturer of these convertible houses. The requirement, though, will be that we have an affordable package, and there are still some design issues. We have some requirements for double walls and double floors and so on that the manufacturer has to take into consideration. In the end this has to be a good quality house; it has to be affordable; it has to be a good deal before we'll consider it. But if there are new mining operations where there are camps, required workforce camps, then, yes, I'm still interested as long as we get a good, affordable, economical housing package out of it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 209-15(5): Affordable Housing Initiative

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, over the last couple of months I was in Tulita and I want to say that to the Premier in support of his government in terms of thanking him in terms of cleaning the uranium contaminated site. People are sure happy in terms of that move, Mr. Speaker. But I also found that the community of Deline is going to be doing some work in the uranium site up at Great Bear Lake and that they're going to put together a proposal I understand from Dolphus Tutcho, I'm sorry, from the community members in Deline that there may be a process where they could look at this ATCO Novel housing concept as a possible area that they would certainly look at as an opportunity to use. I want to ask the Minister, would he consider giving some discussions with his team in the Housing Corporation to talk to the people, especially the land corporations in Deline, in terms of this type of an opportunity? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 209-15(5): Affordable Housing Initiative

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I certainly will. I will be meeting with the Housing Corporation this afternoon in fact and I will raise this one with them. I understand this is a 40-person camp that we're looking at. It might be one that would work very well, so, Mr. Speaker, yes, the Housing Corporation will go ahead and start talking with the land corporations and others on this project. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 210-15(5): Seniors And Disabled Persons Tax Relief Program

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today as I said earlier, my questions are for Mr. McLeod, the Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs, and it's about the senior citizen and disabled persons tax relief program. The municipal council of a tax-based community can, by passing a bylaw, exempt the eligible property of a senior citizen or disabled person from part of the taxes where the senior citizen or disabled person is the owner or part owner of that home. The bylaw sets out the percentage of taxes to be exempted up to a maximum of 50 percent.

The Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs pays the municipality in an amount equal to the amount specified in the bylaw. The taxpayer has no tax liability with respect to the amount paid by MACA. According to a clause in the Senior Citizen and Disabled Persons Tax Relief Act, if a senior or a disabled person is a part owner of a home with someone who is not another senior or another disabled person then they are not eligible for the program.

So my question, Mr. Speaker, is this. In correspondence with the Minister in July 2005 he indicated that the legislation would be reviewed as part of a broader income security reform initiative which I believe is not yet completed. It was also stated that MACA would be undertaking an operational review to ensure the consistency of delivery throughout the Northwest Territories. I would like to ask the Minister, has this been completed and is there a system in place now that will

allow for seniors and people with disabilities to benefit from this program? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. McLeod.

Return To Question 210-15(5): Seniors And Disabled Persons Tax Relief Program

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the honourable Member from Hay River South has raised this issue on a number of occasions before and given the response of government we have undertaken a review of this whole situation and looked and talked to the different municipalities about how the concerns were in those communities and a review was undertaken. It was incorporated into a larger assessment that is being done and headed up by ECE. That process is in its final stages. We're expecting to see some of the recommendations and options coming forward along with some of the costing associated with it and we expect to have those for review by December. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 210-15(5): Seniors And Disabled Persons Tax Relief Program

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you. The Minister beat me to it by saying I brought this up before. I've got a very thick file on this subject here, Mr. Speaker, and the correspondence goes back to letters to Mr. Antoine in the previous government even. I mean it's been at least 10 years that I've been talking about this. This is a good program, the concept is good, but the actual working out of it is kind of untenable. It has for some people who are the would-be recipients of this support to take drastic measures. Like, in instances where one person who is on title is disabled and the other isn't, where they've actually taken the other person's name off title to get this. There's not enough support for seniors and persons with disabilities and therefore that's why this tax relief is so important. So I don't know what to say, Mr. Speaker. It's been so long. Will the Minister commit to recognizing that this is a priority? It may seem like a small thing on the government's agenda, but it's a huge thing for the people affected by it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 210-15(5): Seniors And Disabled Persons Tax Relief Program

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is an issue that's come forward as something that we need to deal with. The initial draft was done I think in 1988. It's been some time since the act has been replaced and it requires a review. We've done that and there are recommendations coming forward recognizing there are discrepancies between the general taxation area and municipal taxation. So there are a number of issues that we have to deal with, and the Member has highlighted some of them here, and we're hoping to be able to rectify the situation then and maybe look at something that if we're able to accommodate it by some time this spring. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 210-15(5): Seniors And Disabled Persons Tax Relief Program

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't really know what else to ask. I just was going to ask, for the benefit of the people in my constituency who are anxious to hear an answer to this question, I was hoping that we were going to hear something earlier than this spring. Let me be clear. Is that when the Minister is going to share with us the recommendations or is that when this matter might be resolved? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 210-15(5): Seniors And Disabled Persons Tax Relief Program

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, that's when we will have some decisions that we'll be able to announce in a number of different areas and this is one of the acts that is under review and we will be looking at the options and recommendations come December and we will have some decisions that we will take forward and be able to share in April, hopefully. Thank you.

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

Question 211-15(5): Dialogue With Diamond Mines Regarding Employment Targets

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm just following up with my Member's statement with questions to the honourable Premier. Mr. Speaker, my constituents are challenging me to find new ways to deal with the northern employment problem and I believe that we have the solutions and the tools right before us. They've always existed and, as I've highlighted earlier, is 8.5 in the BHP socio-economic agreement where we have the ability to call upon the diamond mines before us to have discussions regarding training, employment and business opportunities. So the tools have always existed. Now we have the ability to issue warrants to demand that they appear to answer questions, but I don't think we need to do that, Mr. Speaker. Again, the tools already exist. So I've highlighted this clearly. What I'm going to ask the Premier is, recognizing that this problem is a serious issue that northerners take with great concern, recognizing that we have the opportunity before us right now, will the Premier hear the call for action and take the opportunity to call the diamond mine presidents of operating mines before the Assembly process to deal with this problem in some type of partnership? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 211-15(5): Dialogue With Diamond Mines Regarding Employment Targets

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With each of the mines there is a socio-economic agreement with the GNWT. That socio-economic agreement requires that the mines submit annual, if not semi-annual, reports. Mr. Speaker, I think if the committees within our government have not already done so, and they may have, then I think it's incumbent upon us to take a look at those socio-economic agreements as a first step and then see where we want to follow up with the mine managers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 211-15(5): Dialogue With Diamond Mines Regarding Employment Targets

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pretty sure I heard a yes in there, but I'll ask it again to make sure that we get it absolutely clear on the record. Mr. Speaker, what I'm asking the Premier is, will he work with his resource Minister to call upon the diamond mines presidents to report before the Assembly process to have a question and answer period on this issue whatever process we need to access or vent through, of course? Would he agree to call them before this House and answer questions so we can finally deal with this problem face to face? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 211-15(5): Dialogue With Diamond Mines Regarding Employment Targets

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me say that my understanding is that the process would be, normally, usually, that we would call witnesses to committee, whether it was GED or AOC or whatever, and then they would respond to issues you've raised. Mr. Speaker, I'm not 100 percent sure about calling witnesses before Committee of the Whole, how that works within our rules but, Mr. Speaker, my suggestion that we try to do it through the committee structure first. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. But the answer is yes, we'll do it one way or the other.

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

Supplementary To Question 211-15(5): Dialogue With Diamond Mines Regarding Employment Targets

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll take that yes whatever way it came. Mr. Speaker, can the Premier agree to write this letter, and copy all Members of this Legislative Assembly, in a timely way so we deal with this problem? So would the Premier write a letter within the next 30 days requesting that the presidents of these diamond mines make themselves available for this Assembly to have this type of question period and discussion period to deal in partnership with this problem? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 211-15(5): Dialogue With Diamond Mines Regarding Employment Targets

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In order to follow the process as I understand it, I would ask that if there's interest by the Members that the chair of whichever is the appropriate committee make the request of us and then we would respond, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 211-15(5): Dialogue With Diamond Mines Regarding Employment Targets

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, I see this as a communication opportunity, Mr. Speaker. I see this as an opportunity to be seen to be dealing with this problem, because it is a recognized, serious problem in the Northwest Territories. That's why I'm asking the Premier. Now, it's stated in the agreement the resource Minister has the ability to call upon them, but I think a

letter from our Premier recognizing the gravity of this problem and his willingness to take leadership, because it affects multiple problems throughout our, sorry, multiple departments throughout our government. So, Mr. Speaker, would the Premier agree to write the letter on behalf of the Assembly to make an acknowledgement of how big of a problem it is and how we want to deal with it in a partnership? Would he do that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 211-15(5): Dialogue With Diamond Mines Regarding Employment Targets

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure that it's my place to write a letter on behalf of the Legislative Assembly asking someone to come and appear here. I'm the Premier for the government, but I can't assume over here. So, Mr. Speaker, again I'll say that I think the proper way of doing it is through the committees and I would urge whichever committee the Members feel is appropriate to do a letter to the Minister responsible, the Minister of ITI or myself, asking that we appear or that we invite the mine managers to appear there. Mr. Speaker, as far as having someone come into Committee of the Whole here, that's an issue that I think would have to be discussed among all of the Members. I would not want to take that upon myself without consulting with all Members. Thank you.

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

Question 212-15(5): North Slave Regional Offices In Behchoko

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to touch on my earlier Member's statement about the transfer of the North Slave office staff to Behchoko. Mr. Speaker, this government is contradicting itself when it recognizes the Tlicho Government but it does not have the regional offices with decision-making powers in the Tlicho region. Mr. Speaker, it's time this government sees these decision-makers to be in the communities. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. Can the Premier explain how over a year this government continues to ignore the self-government of the Tlicho by refusing to move these decision-making powers to the Tlicho region? How long do we have to wait? Mahsi.

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

Return To Question 212-15(5): North Slave Regional Offices In Behchoko

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an interesting proposal to have more of the North Slave region located in Behchoko. Mr. Speaker, it's something I'd want to think about. It's something I'd like to take a look at the load of the North Slave offices and various departments. I know their responsibility is certainly for the Tlicho people. It's also for the Akaitcho and for the North Slave, Metis in the North Slave and Yellowknife in some cases as well. So, Mr. Speaker, it's an interesting one. There's nothing saying everything has to be in Yellowknife. Certainly we'll take a look at it.

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

Supplementary To Question 212-15(5): North Slave Regional Offices In Behchoko

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm glad the department will certainly look into this matter. It's

very important to us in the Tlicho riding. We know the services for the region are not appropriate as long as they are delivered at headquarters in Yellowknife. It makes a difference having all the GNWT departments including the Executive represented locally by senior managers. So, Mr. Speaker, my question again to the Premier is how he will ensure that GNWT services for the Tlicho region allow for the building of relationships between the GNWT and the Tlicho Government and for the GNWT staff to be familiar with our culture of the Tlicho communities? Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 212-15(5): North Slave Regional Offices In Behchoko

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, our people are working on a protocol right now and there have been regular meetings between our departments that are involved delivering services in the Tlicho with the Tlicho governance. So, Mr. Speaker, we want to continue with that and I think it's something we're working on and something that means some dialogue both ways. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 212-15(5): North Slave Regional Offices In Behchoko

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we did make progress in this House a while back. I supported the government when the Department of Executive introduced the regional director positions so there could be a better link between the GNWT residents in the region and government headquarters. So can the Premier explain why even these regional directors of our North Slave region are located at the headquarters in Yellowknife? How can this position support the region if it is located in Yellowknife? Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 212-15(5): North Slave Regional Offices In Behchoko

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said before, I recognize the amount of work and time that's spent working with the Tlicho people, and also have to balance the responsibilities of the North Slave executive offices and other departments with the work they're doing with the Akaitcho and the Metis and the other people in this area. But, Mr. Speaker, I will take a look at it, I will take a look at what the workload is, and certainly we have no hesitation about moving offices to Behchoko if the work and the economics of it really work out. We'd have to look at office space and housing and so on as well. But, Mr. Speaker, I'm certainly not against that. Everything doesn't have to be in headquarters. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 212-15(5): North Slave Regional Offices In Behchoko

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's been an issue of the gravel road to the community of Behchoko and there was a huge concern and safety issue for the departments, I guess the executive or the senior staff to be in Behchoko, to be allocated. Anyway, I would like to ask the Premier, because that's not an excuse anymore, but if he's willing to work with us, that's good, I appreciate that. Can the Premier make a commitment in

this House to add these changes, whether it be capital plans '07 or business planning, to transfer these North Slave staff to Behchoko as a regional headquarter for the Tlicho region? I realize there is work that needs to be in place, but can we foresee that in '07? Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 212-15(5): North Slave Regional Offices In Behchoko

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, if there was office space there, if there was housing and there was no additional cost to us, then I'd want to talk to the staff about why this couldn't happen. Now, I have to respect that we just hired a regional director. I don't know his commitments in Yellowknife; that's where he was living, I believe, when we hired him. But, Mr. Speaker, as I said to the Member, I'll take a look at it and if everything is there and it costs us no additional money, then I'm not against it. Thank you.

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

Question 213-15(5): Approach To Transboundary Water Issues

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Minister of the environment and it's in regards to the many issues facing the Northwest Territories in terms of resource development, the enormous pressures from every corner in terms of on the environment, on water, on our wildlife. I'll just ask the Minister if he could indicate to us his sense of the role that proper stewardship of the environment has to play as the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Honourable Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. McLeod.

Return To Question 213-15(5): Approach To Transboundary Water Issues

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that question, I take it the grace period for this new portfolio is over. Mr. Speaker, I've taken a look at the number of issues across the board, I listened to the Member as he spoke the other day about the concerns for the environment, for the air, for the water, for a number of different things that are affecting our wildlife, and I also heard very clearly today when the Member mentioned there are issues that don't recognize boundaries. I've been having discussions with our staff in the last couple hours about how do we approach this, and I'm going to take the opportunity to take a good look at what work has already been done. I have seen some of the work in terms of plans and action plans that were drafted by the previous Minister. I think there's a lot of it that is very comprehensive. I am of the opinion that we can't operate with issues being looked at in isolation. We have to look at cumulative effects; we have to look at what's on the horizon in terms of development; and I would like to work towards developing a broad outlook of how we approach this thing so a big picture approach is taken. Having said that, we also have to look at what resources are available. So there's a lot of things that we're working on and trying to digest in short order, and we'll be keeping the Members informed as we progress. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 213-15(5): Approach To Transboundary Water Issues

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the most fundamental issues is the one of water that I spoke about earlier as well, and I referenced the Mackenzie basin board. I would like to ask the Minister, as he goes through his briefings and looks at the role of the board and the issue of water, whether he would consider as Minister of one of the involved jurisdictions, the other ones being Alberta, B.C., Saskatchewan, the Yukon, and take the lead in terms of bringing together the Ministers for the first time to talk about the issue of water as it pertains to the Mackenzie basin board? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 213-15(5): Approach To Transboundary Water Issues

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure if I've been a Minister of ENR long enough to say I will get the committee to take the lead. The issue of water is something that I am also concerned about as are the rest of the Northwest Territories residents. We have a number of transboundary issues that we have to resolve. We are talking with Alberta to try to come up with an agreement on how to deal with water. B.C. is another jurisdiction; Saskatchewan. There are a number of areas that we have to work out agreements. I'm not comfortable enough right now, with the amount of time that I've spent in this department, to commit to that. I certainly would consider it though, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Question 214-15(5): Territorial Treatment Centre Relocation

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, thank you. My questions this afternoon are again for Mr. Roland, the Minister of Health and Social Services. Mr. Speaker, it was about a year and a half ago that the government decided, surprised us all, actually, with a decision to relocate the Territorial Treatment Centre, a facility for children between the ages of eight and 14 who have severe behaviour disorders, to move this facility from Yellowknife to Hay River. In the meantime, or recently, Mr. Speaker, we were advised that there was a kind of a change in plans here. The government might be looking instead of renovating the Dene K'onia facility in Hay River to take this on that they were going to build a brand new facility. I wanted to ask the government what's the latest chapter in the Territorial Treatment Centre saga of renovation and/or new construction, Mr. Speaker?

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

Return To Question 214-15(5): Territorial Treatment Centre Relocation

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the treatment centre is, as the Member pointed out, a decision was made to relocate and look at one of our existing facilities in the community of Hay River for a renovation projection. We've worked with the Department of Public Works and Services on a cost analysis of that, and it was decided, after a second review of that, that we would proceed with a renovation of that facility and are continuing to work with the Department of Public Works

and Services to come up with some final options on that. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 214-15(5): Territorial Treatment Centre Relocation

MR. BRADEN: So, Mr. Speaker, could the Minister advise the House what is the timeline before us now as regards the relocation of this program? We've obviously seen considerable delays in the decision-making about this. In the meantime, the families and the staff are wondering what's going on, and so am I, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 214-15(5): Territorial Treatment Centre Relocation

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, it was hoped to have the start of the renovation or the project itself in the community of Hay River at some point in this fiscal year. As we're still in the planning process, we will continue that step. I'd have to get an update as to the actual timelines. I know we were trying to get something started as early as this fall, and I'm not sure where we are with those timelines. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 214-15(5): Territorial Treatment Centre Relocation

MR. BRADEN: Okay. So we still don't know exactly what the government's plans are with this, Mr. Speaker. I think in our deliberations on this, we had originally started out with a budget of \$3.2 million and I'm wondering if the Minister can assure the Assembly that even after all these delays and the costs of inflation and things in construction, are we still going to be able to see this project achieved for that budgeted amount, Mr. Speaker?

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

Further Return To Question 214-15(5): Territorial Treatment Centre Relocation

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the direction was given to live within the budget and that's the intent and that's the work that's being done, is to do the work that's necessary within the budget. We're waiting for our final layout as to what renovation will be taking place, and then I can come back to this House with further information. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 214-15(5): Territorial Treatment Centre Relocation

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, the TTC, the Territorial Treatment Centre, now presently being used located in my riding of Great Slave still has I think some viability potential as a facility of some kind in this community, and I'm wondering has the government looked at potential future uses for this facility? Or if it's going to require demolition, is this also included in the \$3.2 million budget cost for the transfer of this program, Mr. Speaker?

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

Further Return To Question 214-15(5): Territorial Treatment Centre Relocation

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the budget that has been identified is for the renovation of the facility that we've been discussing in the community of Hay River. The plan for the existing facility and future potential it may have, I have not been involved with to date. I can check with the department to see if there has been any discussion around that facility. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Time for question period has expired. Written questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to seek unanimous consent to return to item 6 on the agenda, oral questions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 6, oral questions. Are there any nays?

AN HON. MEMBER: Nay.

MR. SPEAKER: I hear a nay. Written questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

ITEM 7: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Written Question 25-15(5): Job Application Acknowledgment Notice

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Human Resources.

1. Could the Minister look into re-establishing a standard acknowledgment notice, either through e-mail or by post?
2. Could the Minister look at setting up a web page to let people know general information as to the status of jobs, such as:
 - a) open competition - accepting applications
 - b) competition close - screen
 - c) interviews
 - d) finish - appeal process

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Written Questions. Honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Written Question 26-15(5): Consultation On The Chronic Pain Policy

MR. BRADEN: My question is for the Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board.

On October 23rd, in response to Question 162-15(5), the chronic pain policy, the Minister responsible for the WCB advised that there would be consultations on this very important issue.

1. When will this consultation take place?
2. What groups or interests will be consulted?
3. Will the Minister provide a copy of questions, which will be the basis for the consultation process?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Written questions. Honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

Written Question 27-15(5): Out-Of-Country Medical Care

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Health and Social Service.

Can the Minister please state any and all cases where they had paid for out-of-country medical care for a resident of the Northwest Territories?

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. 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. Honourable Minister responsible for Justice, Mr. Bell.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS**Tabled Document 61-15(5): Legal Services Board 2005-2006 Annual Report**

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled Legal Services Board, 2005-2006 Annual Report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ITEM 14: NOTICES OF MOTION**Motion 8-15(5): Reducing Maximum Percentage Of Income Chargeable For Social Housing**

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, October 30th, 2006, I will move the following motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Monfwi, that this Assembly strongly recommends the Department of Education, Culture and Employment change the maximum percentage of income that can be charged as rent for social housing from 32 percent to 18 percent for non-market communities and from 32 percent to 25 percent for communities with a rental and private housing market; and further that the NWT Housing Corporation do a better job in explaining their homeownership programs and in adjusting these programs to meet the needs of potential clients; and furthermore that the NWT Housing Corporation examine the issue of rental rates for those units that are old or in poor condition and provide clear direction to the local housing authorities on how to calculate condition discounts in calculating rent; and furthermore that the issue of free rent for seniors living in housing owned by the NWT Housing Corporation be re-examined and addressed in the interest of fairness to all seniors; and furthermore that the Department of Justice recognize that a rental officer based in Yellowknife may not meet the needs of all territorial residents and consider the need for this office to have a regional presence. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. 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: Bills 13, 15, 16, 17 and 20, with Mr. Pokiak in the chair.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Good afternoon, committee. I'll call Committee of the Whole to order. We have a number

of items to discuss today. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Chair. The Members wish to consider Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Jury Act, and Bill 20, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act. Mahsi, Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): We shall resume after a short break.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Good afternoon. I will now call Committee of the Whole back to order. At this time I would like to ask the Minister responsible for changes with Bill 16, Mr. Brendan Bell. Does the Minister have opening remarks? Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: I do. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I am pleased to present Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Jury Act.

This bill makes amendments to the Jury Act to provide the sheriff access to names and addresses of people over the age of 18 from health care plan registration information for the purpose of compiling a list of jurors. These amendments are necessary because provisions of the new Elections and Plebiscites Act no longer permit the sharing of elector lists to compile juror lists.

As Members know, the right to trial by jury is fundamental to our system of justice. The sheriff must have reliable and current data to work with when compiling a list of jurors.

The sheriff's office lacks the human and financial resources necessary to create and update lists of prospective jurors through a door-to-door enumeration. The Government of the Northwest Territories already collects names and addresses of NWT residents through registration for the NWT health care plan. Health and Social Services can provide the sheriff with just the names and addresses of individuals over 18 years of age. All other information, including medical information, would not be provided.

This approach is used elsewhere in Canada. Five other jurisdictions use health care plan registration data to compile jury lists. The proposed amendment upholds this government's commitment to respect and protect the privacy of personal information, while also providing a cost-effective means to generate jury lists.

The Department of Health and Social Services worked with the Department of Justice in the development of this bill and supports the amendment.

I will be pleased to answer questions the Members may have. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Minister Bell. At this time I would like to ask the Minister if he would like to bring in any witnesses.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: I would. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you. Can the Sergeant-at-Arms please escort the witnesses in? Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): I'd like to ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to bring the witnesses in, please.

Thank you. Can the Minister introduce the witnesses, please.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Chairman, thank you. With me today, Colin Gordon, director of court services, also Janis Cooper, legislative counsel. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you. General comments. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a couple of aspects of this bill. I speak in support of it. So we're changing, I guess, the resource or the data pool for names of potential jurors from the voters list to the health care plan. Is this bill potentially going to be an improvement in this data, Mr. Chairman? Will the courts have potentially more names and more current names than the voters list provided, Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Minister.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Chairman, the voters list is not updated as frequently as this information will be, so we think we'll have more up-to-date, accurate information, so that should improve this, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Minister Bell. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So having access, then, to the health care plan lists, of course there's the aspect of security in there and the protection of people's actual health care records. To what extent, Mr. Chairman, is that information protected from any outside source, of course, including the courts? What are the provisions for security and protection of privacy for those lists, Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Minister.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Chairman, it's protected under our privacy legislation. The Department of Health won't be sharing that with us for this purpose. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Minister Bell. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: So the exact information that will be made available to the courts would be what then, Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Minister Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Chairman, names and addresses of people who are over 18. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Minister Bell. Mr. Braden. Thank you. Next I have Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Under the health care plan, is that list updated...You said it's updated more frequently than the elections one, which is probably every four years or so. I know under the health care plan it's for insured persons under the NWT health care. What about the non-insured health care beneficiaries? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Chairman, it's a good question; I'm not sure. Obviously, as I've indicated, the Department of Health was involved in the development of this with us. They've been consulting with Justice, so how the health care planning information works and how it's categorized is not something I have at my fingertips. But

perhaps the Minister of Health might want to provide some information in that regard. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Roland

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Sorry, Mr. Chairman, I'd have to hear that question again.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Minister Roland. I think the question was in regard to the non-insured health benefits. Just for Mr. Roland, I'll go back to Mr. Villeneuve. Thank you.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I know under the current list that's been introduced, it's for the persons under the health care plan that are insured. I'm just wondering what about the people under the non-insured health care benefits plan. Are they included in this list when it's submitted or when it's requested? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, all people who receive health care services in the Northwest Territories fall under the registries portion. So individuals who receive non-insured health benefits, it's a part of the program we deliver for aboriginal peoples but they still are registered under our health care system. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you. I'll save the next question for when we get into the detail, because we have in quotes here "insured persons" under the Medical Care Act. So all the insured persons under the Medical Care Act include the non-insured beneficiaries? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the way our program works is all individuals are required to register for health care services in the Northwest Territories. Those who receive non-insured health benefits receive over and above what other residents do receive. It's a staged program. So all people would be registered in the Northwest Territories and would end up falling under this category. I can get further detail to the Member if that's required. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: That's fine. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): General comments. Detail. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Okay. Clause by clause. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Jury Act. Page 1, Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Jury Act. Clause 1. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to ask -- probably the Minister of Health, I guess, could answer this -- section 1 of the Medical Care Act, does that include everybody who receives medical services in the

NWT, insured or non-insured, non-residential, whoever? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I understand the question, residents of the Northwest Territories that receive services and are registered under our health care plan would fall into this category. So the type of program that we draw down or the bill system we have -- and I think that's where the confusion may lie -- is it's the type of billing we have that would fall in this category. But all residents of the Northwest Territories that have applied for health care and even those people receiving non-insured health services, as I stated earlier, it's another program directed specifically to the aboriginal population in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Clarification, I guess. So everybody basically falls under section 1 of the Medical Care Act, right?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Chairman, section 1 of the Medical Care Act does define insured persons, and it suggests that they're people who are eligible for and entitled to insured services under this act or the regulations. As the Minister has pointed out, I believe everybody in the Territories is eligible for insured services. Some are eligible for non-insured services as well, over and above. So I think everybody is caught under this provision of the Medical Care Act. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Minister Bell. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Fine, thank you. I just wanted to make sure people know that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you. Clause 2.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): I'm sorry; clause 1.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 2.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 3.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Bill as a whole.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Does committee agree that Bill 16 is ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Bill 16 is now ready for third reading. At this time I'd like to thank the Minister and his witnesses. Thank you.

We are now going to go to Bill 20, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): At this time I'd like to ask the Minister responsible for the bill, Mr. Roland, to introduce the bill.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to introduce Bill 20, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act. This bill will increase the dividend tax credit on dividends received from large corporations, effective the 2006 tax year.

Dividends paid by public corporations and large Canadian-controlled private corporations have incurred double taxation under the existing federal and NWT Income Tax Acts. The higher dividend tax credit will reduce the personal taxes individuals pay on taxable dividends.

The proposed change will parallel measures announced in the May 2006 federal budget, which were introduced in the House of Commons on October 18, 2006. The impact of the federal amendment, together with the NWT amendment, will minimize the incidence of double taxation of dividends and make the total personal income tax and corporate income tax on earnings distributed as dividends more comparable to the income tax paid on interest and distributions from income trusts or other flow-through structures.

If the Legislative Assembly agrees, the NWT dividend tax credit for eligible dividends will be integrated with the federal measures and will be set equivalent to 11.5 percent of grossed-up dividends. This change will reduce the net tax a taxpayer in the highest bracket pays on \$100 of eligible dividends by \$6.37. A taxpayer in the lowest tax bracket will see a tax reduction of \$8.00.

A more comparable treatment of dividends, interest and flow-through disbursements will encourage organizations to base their legal structures on solid business reasons, rather than on tax considerations.

This legislation will take effect for the 2006 tax year and is dependent upon the federal legislation being enacted.

That concludes my opening remarks. I would be pleased to answer any questions Members may have. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Roland. At this time I'd like to ask the Minister if he'd like to bring in any witnesses.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): At this time can the Sergeant-at-Arms please escort the witnesses in? Thank you.

Thank you. Mr. Roland, can you introduce your witnesses, please.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, joining me at the witness table here to my right is the deputy minister of the Department of Finance, Ms. Margaret Melhorn; to my far left is Mr. Gerry Gagnon, manager of tax policy; and we have Rebecca Veinott, legislative counsel, Justice.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. General comments. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm not even really sure how to ask this question. I know this is, this whole taxation regime here is a pretty complicated part of the GNWT's or our Finance department's responsibility. I guess I just want to, I guess just for the common man out there to try and understand how this is going to work for them, I guess just to the public dollars that this

government raises through the NWT tax act, has there been any numbers that have been looked at as to how much the NWT actually loses in taxable income or corporate income tax as a result of not changing this or making this amendment, and how much do we foresee the GNWT benefiting from it? Just so people will know that we're doing it for the common good. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The tax policy area is quite I wouldn't want to say convoluted, but it is a difficult one to understand how it actually works from one bracket to another. So for that level of detail, I'll have Ms. Melhorn provide some detail.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Ms. Melhorn.

MS. MELHORN: The Department of Finance estimates that if this particular change were not made to our tax legislation, the revenue lost to the Government of the Northwest Territories would be in the order of \$1.3 million. By making this change, it in effect reduces the cost of the dividend tax credit, as a result of the change in the federal legislation, to half a million dollars. So the net revenue gain for the Northwest Territories is about \$800,000.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Ms. Melhorn. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Okay, and that's in the stats that we have today. That's the historical stats, I guess. I guess in your professional opinion, how much more attractive would it be for corporations to file their taxes in the NWT and making this change?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we've looked at this from our records, as Ms. Melhorn has pointed out, of potential loss to ourselves. We haven't done a projection on the possibilities of receiving more revenue. We're hoping that by doing this that in fact we will see some growth in this area; just the fact that we've made our program much more easier to understand and beneficial to individuals who would receive that in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So making this change, if somebody from the NWT has got stocks and bonds, shares on the Toronto Stock Market and they get some kind of a dividend out of that every year, with this change they're going to be gaining an extra...or \$8 is less of what they're going to have to pay on every \$100 that they claim? Is that the scheme?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the regime where we work under and the environment we work under today without this change, if someone was to receive a dividend from a corporation, the existing process would be that they'd be hit up in a sense, as I had stated in my opening comments, a double hit on taxation because of our federal/territorial rules. That's why a lot of corporations would set other things up. For example, income trusts. That scenario is a flow-through which then we would not, as a GNWT, receive

any of that possible tax. So that's the reason why we're doing this as well. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Fine. That clarifies my concern.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you. General comments.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Detail.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Detail. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Bill 20, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act. Page 1, clause 1

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 2

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 3.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Bill as a whole.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Does committee agree that Bill 20 is ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Bill 20 is now ready for third reading. At this time I'd like to thank the Minister and his witnesses. Can the Sergeant-at-Arms please escort them out? Thank you.

Thank you. We do have some other matters under item 19. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Mr. Chair, I move to report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The motion is in order; it is not debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. I will now rise to report progress.

MR. SPEAKER: Report of Committee of the Whole, please, Mr. Pokiak.

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Jury Act, and Bill 20, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, and would like to report that Bills 16 and 20 are ready for third reading. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Motion is on the floor. Do we have a seconder? Honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko. Motion is on the floor. Motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Third reading of bills. Honourable Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bell.

ITEM 21: THIRD READING OF BILLS

Bill 11: Tourism Act

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for

Deh Cho, that Bill 11, Tourism Act, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Motion is on the floor. Motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Bill 11 has had third reading. Third reading of bills. Honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Roland.

Bill 7: Pharmacy Act

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, that Bill 7, Pharmacy Act, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Bill 7 has had third reading. Third reading of bills.

Speaker's Ruling

Colleagues, before I go to the next order on the orders of the day, I would like to present my ruling on the point of privilege raised last Thursday in the House by Mr. Ramsay, the Member for Kam Lake. Mr. Ramsay claimed that his privileges as a Member of this House had been breached when the then-Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger, threatened the Member and his family. Mr. Ramsay further stated that the Minister's comments constituted an unjust damaging to his good name.

I, as Speaker, have to determine whether a prima facie case of privilege has been made; that is, whether on the face of it, the matter raised appears to be a matter of privilege, and whether the matter was raised at the first possible opportunity.

As stated in my ruling on Mr. Ramsay's point of order, I did not see or hear Mr. Miltenberger's actions or comments. In making my ruling I thus have taken into account the statements made by the Member for Thebacha and all Members in debate to Mr. Ramsay's point of privilege.

I do indeed find that the matter was raised at the earliest possible time, as there was a need to review the unedited Hansard before the matter could be raised by the Member for Kam Lake.

The right of a Member to discharge his or her responsibilities free from threat or attempts at intimidation is a fundamental aspect of parliamentary privilege. A threat to a Member's family and their livelihood, made by a Minister who is responsible for the operation of the very institution to which that family member works, could undoubtedly prevent that Member from speaking freely in this Chamber, and could be seen as a threat, intimidation or interference to that Member in the carrying out of his parliamentary duties.

In speaking to the point of privilege, Mr. Miltenberger offered what I believe was a sincere apology to the

Member for Kam Lake and this House for his alleged actions and remarks. However, neither he, nor any other Member who was present in the House that day, offered an alternative explanation as to the meaning and intent of his actions, nor did anyone contest the description of his actions provided by the Member for Kam Lake. At least five Members, in speaking to the point of privilege, confirmed that they had witnessed the actions of Mr. Miltenberger and perceived them as being an attempt to threaten or intimidate the Member for Kam Lake. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, I can thus only conclude that the description of the Member for Thebacha's actions as offered by Mr. Ramsay are accurate.

I, therefore, conclude that a prima facie breach of privilege has occurred. I would like to thank all Members who spoke to the point of privilege. I took all comments into account when making my ruling. It is now up to the House to determine how it wishes to proceed. Thank you, for your attention.

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 Monday, October 30, 2006, at 1:30 p.m.

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motion
15. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
 - Motion 8-15(5), Reducing Maximum Percentage of Income Chargeable for Social Housing
17. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 9, Write-off of Assets Act, 2006-2007
18. Second Reading of Bills
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 13, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No.2, 2006-2007
 - Bill 15, Elections and Plebiscites Act
 - Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, No. 3
 - Committee Report 5-15(5), Report on the Review of the Report of the Auditor General on the Workers'

Compensation Board of the Northwest Territories
and Nunavut

20. Report of Committee of the Whole

21. Third Reading of Bills

- Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Jury Act

- Bill 20, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act

22. Orders of the Day

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

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 12:55 p.m.

