



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

5th Session

Day 20

15th Assembly

HANSARD

Wednesday, November 1, 2006

Pages 631 - 666

The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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Published under the authority of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Wednesday, November 1, 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): Good afternoon, colleagues. Welcome back to the House. Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Bell.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 53-15(5): New Safer Communities And Neighbourhoods Legislation

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to provide Members with some of the details of a proposed new law that will promote community safety.

As Members know, drug houses and bootlegging operations can have a serious impact on a neighbourhood or an entire community. The proposed Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act, also known as "SCAN," would create a means to take action on properties where illegal drug or alcohol sales, prostitution, illegal gambling or inhalant use occur on a regular basis.

Under this new legislation, investigators look into complaints from individuals who express concerns about activities taking place on or around a property. If the investigation shows evidence of illegal activities that disturb the safety and well-being of the neighbourhood or community, the property can be closed, occupants can be evicted, and evidence can even be turned over to the RCMP for use in a criminal investigation.

This legislation is not new, Mr. Speaker. Similar laws are in place in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Nova Scotia and Yukon, and they all have the same goal: to stop harmful activities in their communities. The legislation does not provide a social safety net to people who are evicted due to their illegal activities. This sends a strong signal, especially to drug dealers and bootleggers, that we do not support their activities.

A question we have been asked, Mr. Speaker, is whether this legislation really makes a difference or simply moves the problem to another location. Other jurisdictions report that shutting down operations does make an impact. If the people engaged in the illegal activity move to another property, or even another community, they can be tracked and evicted again. Through this process, illegal operations are disrupted to the point they can no longer continue.

This type of enforcement is not possible under existing NWT laws. The criminal process focussed on individuals and the illegal activity can continue even after an arrest is made. SCAN investigators can complement the work of

the RCMP. Their investigation can also contribute to a criminal file.

The Department of Justice is discussing this new approach with other agencies and we need to explore how

we would design effective legislation for the NWT. The RCMP have indicated their support in exploring this new way to combat illegal activities. Discussions are also taking place with other government departments and agencies who will also have a role or an interest in this legislation; agencies involved in housing, social services, child protection, legal registries and community services, to name a few.

The Department of Justice is also beginning public consultations this month. Later today, at the appropriate time, Mr. Speaker, I will table a copy of the consultation document. This paper will be distributed to a wide range of agencies and groups. Information is also available on the department's website, including an online survey, and officials will be visiting a number of communities to talk about how this legislation could work. We are fortunate to have the director of the Saskatchewan Investigation Unit join us in some of these community visits to describe how the process is working in that province. If consultations show support for this legislation, I will bring forward a bill during the February-March session that could see investigators working by the middle of 2008.

Mr. Speaker, we know that illegal activities are affecting our communities, and it is clear that Members are interested in examining this new approach to community safety. Healthy, safe communities have been central to the vision of this Assembly, and over the past three years, we have all been working towards realizing that vision. The proposed law would provide NWT residents with an opportunity to take action; to help make their communities safer by reporting suspicious activities in confidence to an investigator.

I invite Members to provide their comments on this proposed legislation. At the appropriate moment today, I will table the consultation document on the proposed safer communities and neighbourhoods legislation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. Menicoche.

Minister's Statement 54-15(5): Implementation Of New Digital Driver's Licence

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that the Department of Transportation is now issuing the new secure digital driver's licence and general identification card to residents of the Northwest Territories.

---Applause

Following the events of September 11, 2001, the Department of Transportation participated in a North America-wide initiative to develop and implement national standards with respect to driver's licences. The driver's licence is now the identification document of choice throughout Canada and the United States. I am pleased to say that our new licence and identification card fully conform to these standards.

With the introduction of the digital driver's licence, new procedures and security were implemented. Specific types of identity and residence documents are now required from clients when applying for a new driver's licence or general identification card to ensure a safe and secure system. The department has also introduced the option of obtaining a licence for one or three years, in addition to the five-year term that is currently available.

To date, approximately 4,000 driver's licences and 150 general identification cards have been issued with the Honourable Anthony Whitford, Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, receiving the first new licence.

Mr. Speaker, as you are aware, a number of years ago the Department of Transportation stopped sending out notices to drivers that their licence was about to expire. This was part of a cost-cutting exercise. I am pleased to announce that the Department of Transportation has reintroduced the program.

---Applause

Renewal notices are now being mailed out 45 days prior to the driver's licence expiration date.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that the Department of Transportation has brought about some significant changes that will ensure the continued acceptance and recognition of the NWT driver's licence as a secure form of identification throughout North America. I would like to thank Members of this House for their support of this initiative. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On Family Support Network

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this Assembly and this government has done a number of things over the past few years to lend support to families in distress. Mr. Speaker, we have passed the Family Violence Protection Act and we are engaged in a number of programs such as those that assist communities in avoiding and eliminating elder abuse.

Mr. Speaker, one of the consequences of relationships is that occasionally families break down. I am not here to judge or lecture about this, but to look at what government can do to help in these circumstances. Mr. Speaker, what aspects of our social services network come into play and where can they be relied on to help?

We have, of course, a network of mental health workers across our communities. We fund a number of different agencies that are involved in front-line family counselling. Mr. Speaker, although they are distinct and separate from the legislative division, there are the courts. Regrettably, in many cases when families break down, they are a last resort for couples seeking to resolve difficult relationships. This is the last avenue available to these people, Mr. Speaker.

So when the situation gets to that extent, I would really like to look for ways that agencies such as our courts, our social services organizations, can enable those families to maintain relationships, to continue on with lives and not to have barriers and roadblocks put up by bureaucracies, by administrations and by the courts as they implement the laws that we put before them.

This is a plea that I have heard from a number of people, a number of constituents, that we see in our communities. Mr. Speaker it's especially evident with the number of children in care in many of our communities. This is an area that we cannot allow to slide, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Contributions Of Dog Mushing Teams

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the riding of Kam Lake is home to over 50 dog mushers and 600 highly trained athletes, the sled dogs. Most of these mushers act as ambassadors for the city of Yellowknife and for the NWT throughout Canada, the United States and Europe during the winter racing season.

Not only do dog mushers represent a healthy lifestyle, they also bring in substantial tourist dollars to our city and our territory. In the winter, the two things most tourists want to do while here is view the aurora and go on a dogsled ride.

Some mushers were born into the lifestyle while others have chosen it. By profession, mushers are an eclectic mix. They are municipal and GNWT employees, self-employed businesspersons, artists, accountants and military professionals, just to name a few. For many mushers in Kam Lake, dog mushing involves the entire family. Through dog mushing, children are taught the value of hard work, commitment to a passion, the love and respect for the dogs, how to work towards a goal and the appreciation for an amazing land and environment.

The history of the North and the history of dog sledding are very closely connected. The North was opened up by dog teams. For years, dogsleds were the main form of transportation around the North. In this respect, our present day mushers are a daily celebration of our northern history. Many current mushers still use their dogs to haul wood in the winter and some continue to trap with their dogs keeping traditions alive and passing them onto the next generation.

Many of the Kam Lake mushers take the time out of their busy schedules to offer educational talks about dog mushing to local schools and groups. This helps alleviate some of the misconceptions that exist about dog mushing. These types of outreach and community efforts by mushers are changing public perception.

The Northwest Territories should have an annual sled dog appreciation day to honour the history of dog sledding here in the Northwest Territories. Dog mushers represent a piece of living history here in our city and in our territory. Please join me today in applauding the dog mushers in my riding of Kam Lake and in the rest of the territory for all the efforts that they make in promoting the sport of dog mushing not only here at home, but around the globe. Mr. Speaker, with any luck, there will be some snow soon so the mushers can hit the trail. Mahsi.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Delivery Of Social Housing Programs

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In our duties as MLAs, we have to listen to the people that elect us and what we are hearing now, and I am sure a lot of us on this side are hearing, is that the transfer of administration of housing assessments from the Housing Corporation to ECE is definitely not working, Mr. Speaker. We are getting feedback from the constituents that this is not working for them. It's not working for the LHOs and I am sure it's not working for ECE, through no fault of their own. I am sure the offices have 16 or 17 other subsidy programs to deal with without putting their full attention to the assessments for housing tenants. It's causing them a lot of grief, Mr. Speaker, to have to continually go back and forth and have to wait three weeks for their assessment.

A good example is, I was up in Inuvik this weekend and spoke to another tenant of the local housing authority. They said the same thing. They have to wait three weeks to get their assessments done. This is not right, Mr. Speaker. This is a program that's definitely not working. The government wants to have one-stop shopping, but I think the one-stop shopping is for the employees of the government, not the tenants. It's a shame, Mr. Speaker, that they have to go back and forth and are told to wait.

Local housing authorities, I am aware, are giving out more termination notices than they ever had to before, because the money is just not coming from ECE on time. Mr. Speaker, this government has to be big and admit to themselves, and to everyone, that this program is not working. They have to be big enough to admit they made a mistake and maybe it's time to go back to the way it was before, which worked for everyone. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. I would just like to remind Members that they should not be speaking on an item that is up for discussion on the Order Paper for later on today. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Member's Statement On Victims Of Sexual Abuse

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to talk about abuse, particularly sexual abuse. I understand just a little bit about the far-reaching and devastating effects of sexual abuse. Perpetrators, or sexual predators, are devious and subtle. It's important in achieving their goal that they appear credible or ordinary. They don't have a flashing sign to warn anyone as to their intentions. They prey on victims who are vulnerable, naive and often defenceless. They find ways to lure their victims that are deceitful and cunning. The tactics include playing to a weakness that they see in their victim, but if the victim lacks healthy affection, self-confidence or the protection of their parents, they use false pretences and hidden motives to satisfy their desires to achieve their plans.

Once past the point of return and involved, the victim feels trapped, confused, fearful and guilty. They question if they deserved this unnatural and destructive attention. Their self-respect and self-worth are destroyed. If the perpetrator is an adult and in a position of trust, they are afraid to tell anyone because no one would believe them and they will be the victim of ridicule. They buy into a conspiracy of silence. They keep their pain and their doubts to themselves, internalizing all those negative emotions.

In the absence of self-esteem and self-confidence, in a state of confusion and turmoil, victims often engage in risky promiscuous or acting out behaviour reinforcing and compounding their feelings of self-loathing. Their behaviour brings on the disapproval and judgment of the very people who would be their allies, defenders and protectors. Pretty soon they've convinced everyone, including themselves, that they are no good. Their normal, healthy interactions with peers, family and friends are diminished. The pain and shame turns inside them until they seek relief, even if temporary, by dulling their senses by abusing drugs and alcohol. Some reach the depths of contemplating suicide and they sense hopelessness.

Now an adult, they realize they were unable to comprehend or process what was happening to them. The abuse, although perhaps the root cause, may seem less relevant now and too painful to deal with in light of the failed relationships, the dysfunctional and self-destructive behaviour that may have lead to inappropriate or even abusive conduct on their part. How to heal, unravel the damage, and deal with the injustice becomes the pursuit of a person who now sees the abuse for what it was.

An opportunity presents itself to tell their story. It will take courage, but maybe there is justice, maybe there is vindication and maybe there is healing. After all, what has happened didn't only happen to them, it was immoral and it was criminal. They see the role of the courts of an impartial judge, so they muster the strength to tell their story knowing and understanding that it will be scrutinized in painstaking detail and will necessarily cause them to revisit the very issue that they have tried so hard to bury.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to 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, Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, colleagues, and thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, sexual abuse has ravaged families and communities in the Northwest Territories. Our government has an obligation to do everything in its power to support the victims and survivors of abuse. There is no place for adding to the offence that they have suffered by allowing for the reinforcement of the very stereotypes that have kept them suffering in silence. Protection and fairness in our institutions must be upheld in word and action. Children and victims of sexual abuse must be protected under the law without regard for age, race or culture. Victims have the right to be heard without interference. They need to know that there are people who care and understand, who will stand with them and who will not be silent. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Birthday Greetings To Morris Lockhart Of Lutselk'e

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House on many occasions to bring a lot of times bad news, but today I've got some good news, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd just like to pay tribute to a very respected elder in my constituency and send my and this

Legislative Assembly's birthday wishes to Mr. Morris Lockhart of Lutselk'e who turns 96 years young today.

---Applause

Mr. Speaker, the newspaper ad stated that Mr. Morris Lockhart turned 98 years old today and I just want to clarify that back in the early 1900s birth registration records were not always accurately kept up, thus creating discrepancies in the birthplace and actual age of many of our elders, many of whom often tell us that they have two birthdays: one on the day that they're actually born and the other on the day that the government said they were born.

Morris Lockhart was born in 1910 in the Hoar Frost River in the treeline of the barren lands. He was born in a teepee with an open fire, back when the weather was a lot colder and life was a lot tougher and there was no such thing as a wood stove. Morris said he didn't see canvas until he was 10 years old. Morris was educated at a very early age by his father, Baptiste Lockhart, who taught him how to hunt and trap and live off the land, and, above all, live a healthy lifestyle.

Morris lived in a time during the outbreak of disease among aboriginal peoples and he remembers bringing soup and food to many of the sick people. Morris lives strictly on food from the land and he never drank tea or coffee. Because of his healthy eating habits and physical lifestyle, Morris is living proof that one can maintain all of his original teeth without ever having a cavity, losing a tooth, or ever visiting a dentist in his life. Until today, Morris lives in his own house and he does all his own chores. Morris still has a good memory, still plays the fiddle and he still jigs, and he was still winning jigging contests up until he was about 85. The only physical problem that Morris experiences is a loss of hearing.

Morris is well respected by the people of Lutselk'e, and the young and the old often come to him for advice, wisdom and knowledge. Morris's family extends into six generations, from his youngest granddaughter being one year old to his oldest granddaughter being 50 years old. Morris Lockhart is a great-great-great-great-great-grandfather who continues to live a very healthy and productive lifestyle and is a perfect example of aboriginal healthy lifestyle living. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Homelessness In Small Communities

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my Member's statement is going to refer to homelessness in the communities. Mr. Speaker, I had an opportunity to travel to Nunakput riding between the week of September 10th to the 15th with the former Minister of the Housing Corporation, Mr. David Krutko. During the public hearings, Mr. Speaker, there were many concerns raised with regard to the condition of the units, the overcrowding of the units, the rent scales, the allocation of units or, more specifically, regarding rental arrears. Mr. Speaker, with the transfer of the funds from the Housing Corporation to ECE, it has raised confusion to the tenants. Mr. Speaker, with the confusion comes along eviction notices to the tenants. Once a tenant becomes evicted, they become homeless and with the homelessness they feel hopeless without any unit to live in.

That is why many tenants are frustrated, Mr. Speaker. They wonder why government provides social housing when they end up getting evicted. They are wondering how we, as Members, can assist these people.

Mr. Speaker, the people who receive eviction notices eventually end up homeless, as I say. I think it's now the time to do something about it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Expansion Of Fort Smith's Economic Base

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Fort Smith sits on the bank of the Slave River and is the regional centre for the South Slave and has been the regional centre for a long time. Being a single-source economy has caused some concern in the community and I wanted to indicate today that there is concern, but there are a lot of good things happening in the community; more to be done, but there are a lot of good things.

There's been a continued commitment by the government, like there has been with most communities, and there's been a greater government presence through position increases ever since 1999. The new college housing will be opened up this Friday. The new pool will be opened hopefully in January. Seniors' housing is now under construction and the health centre renovations are being planned for. On our doorstep, Mr. Speaker, we have the Taltson expansion being discussed and actively pursued; and while it poses some concern, the feasibility study on the Slave River dam is also underway, which could have a huge impact whichever way it goes. We are surrounded by exploration on all sides as people look across the North for all the resources that may be out there.

But clearly there is more to do as we look to expand our economic base. We want to look to Wood Buffalo Park, we want to look to expansions in tourism, among other things, and part of the key to that is to have greater involvement of ITI in the community. Part of that involvement means taking it off the highway where it is distant from the people it serves and have it set up on a storefront operation where they're in closer contact with the Thebacha business centre and other business services that are currently in the downtown core.

The Minister and I have had the discussion about how do we move on this and I'd like to thank him for his commitment to in fact look at that relocation. That's a key piece as we look at trying to revitalize some of the sectors of the economy like tourism that have struggled in recent years with 9/11 and other concerns that have impacted the tourist trade, as well as the need to engage Wood Buffalo National Park.

So to the people of Fort Smith I'd like to say we have a lot of good things to be thankful for. Clearly there are things we'd like to do. But overall we're moving in the right direction and, along with the help of ITI, we intend to pursue some of these other factors that will allow us to do a better job for the people. I will have questions later today in question period for the Minister of ITI. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Whati Hydro Proposal

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Arctic Energy Alliance helps communities create their own energy plans. This helps them to use energy more efficiently and use more renewable energy and less fossil fuels. The Arctic Energy Alliance says that community energy plans create more local jobs, save money, and funds new energy projects.

Mr. Speaker, in Whati, the Arctic Energy Alliance helped the community to develop plans to shut down their noisy diesel power plant in the middle of town and replace it with a small hydro operation. The community of Whati partnered with Ecology North in 2002 to create this community energy plan. When it was completed in 2004, it set a new standard for community energy plans throughout the Canadian North.

Whati's main focus is on building a runoff river hydroelectric plant, Mr. Speaker. They plan to construct it in 2007. Mr. Speaker, the community of Whati really benefited from their work with the Arctic Energy Alliance and came away with a lot of positive objectives, such as gaining more local control over energy management by becoming a partner in energy generation and delivery to the community.

Mr. Speaker, another object of the community is to produce extra electricity at a reasonable price to meet future needs for 20 years, Mr. Speaker, encourage local business development of possible export to nearby locations. Mr. Speaker, these are all very commendable objectives, however, the community has to pay to build the runoff river hydro power plant. The community has very many competing capital needs, Mr. Speaker, and cannot afford to pay them for all the cost factors. Mr. Speaker, if the government is really serious about helping communities be energy efficient, that we spoke about in this House on numerous occasions, cost effective when they need to, then they need to support the implementation of these initiatives and not just the planning. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On High Cost Of Living In Small Communities

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we in the Sahtu, like other isolated communities in the North, struggle with the high cost of living. Let me give you an idea of what this means for people in my riding. For example, Mr. and Mrs. Public lives in a small isolated community. They work part time, live off the land seasonally, have five children ages between five and 15, only one store in town, food and products are flown in by air, the people are relying more on income support, husband or wife works at odd jobs if he or she can find it. Now, Mr. Speaker, Uncle Orville from Colville, a skilled hunter and trapper who lived off the land to survive many, many years ago and unfortunately now he needs help to sustain himself in his old age, yet can still jig like Mr. Morris Lockhart can. The government strongly supports the four essential food groups in eating healthy foods. The same program for most traditional harvesting of healthy

foods like caribou, fish, moose and, of course, nowadays you need gas for your boat and skidoo to get these foods. In Colville alone, the cost of gas is \$1.51 per litre, camping fuel is \$3.43 per litre, and diesel fuel to keep Uncle Orville warm costs \$1.60 per litre. Mrs. Public goes to the grocery store and, my goodness, a five-pound bag of potatoes costs \$12.99. Enfalac for her grandchild, one can, 370 grams, costs \$17.99. So now Uncle Orville and Mrs. Public are sitting in the dark with no food, but they think at least we can have a drink of water. Furthermore, the cost of potable water is also up there in price. The government encourages people to wash their hands, keep clean, and the Canada/NWT food guide promotes the idea of washing the fruits and vegetables. This is not realistic for big families living in single units. People in the communities are also asked to reduce their energy consumption. The high cost of living. What do you think the people are doing outside of Yellowknife and their regional centres when the government supports healthy living and promotes eating nutritionally from the four essential food groups? People in the high cost of living are paying the price. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Stanton Territorial Hospital Sleep Centre Programs

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to bring to the attention of the new Minister of Health and Social Services about a long running issue dealing with the sleep apnea testing and treatment programs, including home oxygen and respiratory therapy treatment programs. Mr. Speaker, covering the cost of continuance positive airway, known as CPAC machine under the EHB program is one thing. This is already covered under the non-insured health benefits program and the previous Minister of Health and Social Services committed to doing this under the EHB and I urge the new Minister of Health and Social Services to follow up on this immediately.

Mr. Speaker, another important issue in this regard is the diagnosis and treatment of sleep apnea condition in general. The long-awaited RFP for provider for this has come out this week and this is a move in the right direction as it follows the guidelines of the National Health Insurance Benefits program as issued. But, Mr. Speaker, the government is still going in the wrong direction in regards to the home oxygen program and respiratory therapy program, which is crucial to treating sleep apnea.

Mr. Speaker, there are hundreds of people in the Northwest Territories who need respiratory therapy, including home oxygen program, and instead of working with professionals available in the North to set up the programs and guidelines, the government has chosen to hire an expensive consultant to say that the government should spend upwards of \$500,000 doing it in house when there is a critical shortage of staff at the Stanton Hospital and this service can be provided by the private sector. In fact, there are businesses doing this right now. Not only that, Mr. Speaker, many patients are put in jeopardy by services being provided without a comprehensive policy in line with the National Health Insurance Benefits policy.

Mr. Speaker, the situation needs urgent attention by the new Minister, because it is being mangled up by the interference and hodgepodge decisions being made by the department in Yellowknife and its insurance office in

Inuvik. Mr. Speaker, in the days to come I will be calling on the new Minister to clean up this mess once and for all and let the private sector take care of this program under the properly drawn policy guidelines in line with accepted national standards. 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 Negative Impacts On Migrant Workers

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to talk again about the \$240 million that leaves the Northwest Territories annually with our fly-in workers who live in the South and fly here to work in the North. This is an extremely important issue, Mr. Speaker, in my riding because the NWT is losing revenue in real estate, municipal and territorial taxes, and goods and services; may the Finance Minister not forget, especially in federal transfer payments. The situation hurts northern businesses and limits the offshoot benefits these resources were supposed to provide northerners, Mr. Speaker.

We wouldn't be the first in Canada to act on this concern. Quebec has a highly regulated system with additional rules and restrictions applying to bidding on contracts and working on projects. Quebec also has more rules on where in the province a worker is allowed to work. As well, Quebec law effectively requires that all construction workers in Quebec must belong to a union or hold a prerequisite Quebec competency certificate, Mr. Speaker. This law has been upheld in Supreme Court.

Mr. Speaker, we talk and talk and talk about our BIP program, but it still lacks weight, teeth and effectiveness, Mr. Speaker. Although the mines are allowed to fly in workers, Mr. Speaker, it is truly hurting our northern economy. We need a fair agreement that we are simply being ignored with. As I've said before, we are losing numbers daily. Houses go up for sale. People are flying for free to work, Mr. Speaker. Something does seem wrong with this attitude. Maybe we need to insist that tradespeople who don't live here in the Northwest Territories have to get a special certification or belong to a northern union before they can work here, Mr. Speaker, because the jobs designed in those socio-economic agreements were designed for northerners living here. If you want to call them fly-in workers, you want to call this fly-in worker certification a head tax, so be it, Mr. Speaker. It's time that we're seen as doing something.

Mr. Speaker, I believe we need to finally exercise clause 8.5, as I said the other day, in the socio-economic agreement. I really believe that we need to finally go toe to toe with industry, drag them in here kicking and screaming, and finally deal and consult with this issue and find out why are northern people being missed out on opportunities, why are we allowing pretend northerners to live down south and work in the North and, finally, why are we missing out on local business opportunities to our people who really live here? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

Member's Statement On Condolences To The Families Of Ernest Francis And Gary Koe

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, I would like to send condolences to the Francis and Koe family of Fort McPherson as they have suffered a sudden loss of family members. Last night, Mr. Ernest William Francis and Mr. Gary James Koe were snowmobiling and fell through the ice. This is a tragic loss to the family, the friends, and the community of Fort McPherson.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to encourage community members to help the families by assisting them in their time of need, by visiting, cooking food, and talking with them, and also comforting them in their time of loss. Mr. Speaker, our thoughts and prayers are with the families during this time. Mahsi cho.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITIONS OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've got a number of people in the gallery today that I'd like to recognize. First I'd like to start with some constituents, also dog mushers that I have here with me today, Mr. Warren Palfrey, his wife, Kate, and John St. Louis. Welcome.

---Applause

Also, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize my brother who is in the audience, Duane Ramsay.

---Applause

Mr. Marc Bogan.

---Applause

Mr. Bogan happens to be on a hunger strike now for four days. Mr. David Pritchard.

---Applause

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to recognize Mr. Richard Edjericon and his wife, Debra, who are with us today. 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'd like to recognize Laura Etagiak, a former resident of Tuktoyaktuk who now resides in Yellowknife. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also would like to recognize a former constituent, the former chief of Ndilo and maybe a former Conservative now, Mr. Richard Edjericon and his wife, Debbie.

---Laughter

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to recognize a constituent, Mr. Marc Bogan, and with him Mr. David Pritchard and Duane Ramsay, advocates for fathers' rights in family custody situations, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'm pleased to recognize Mr. John Hill, who is the chairman of the Public Utilities Board. Mahsi.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was also going to recognize in the gallery today Mr. John Hill, the chairman of the Public Utilities Board and a former constituent of mine from Hay River.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize former chief Rick Edjericon, my constituent, and his wife, Debbie, and any other Weledeh people, as well as all the guests. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Although Mrs. Hache is not a constituent of mine, she is the executive director for the Centre for Northern Families and that is in my riding, and she's also been here every day just as Members have been slogging it out with the issues. She's been in our gallery every day working hard. Arlene Hache, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. If we've missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to the House. Hope you're enjoying the proceedings. It's always nice to have an audience. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 237-15(5): High Cost Of Living In Small Communities

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I talked about the high cost of living in the communities that I represent. I want to direct my questions to the Premier of the Northwest Territories in terms of I'd like to know what this government is doing in terms of dealing with the high cost of living and dealing with the high cost of food especially, and fuel in small communities such as Colville Lake that could identify with some of the prices that we pay up there. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 237-15(5): High Cost Of Living In Small Communities

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government has been very aware of this issue. It was one of our initial objectives as a government and continues to be a high priority.

Mr. Speaker, it's not easy to reduce the cost of foods and energy and so on, but we are looking at a number of long-term things, including the highway extension program for up the valley. Mr. Speaker, in the short term there are other things that we have done. We have set up a committee that is looking at the cost of living and seeing if there are ways that we can reduce costs, particularly energy costs. Mr. Speaker, we continue to seek advice from constituents throughout the territory on how we can save these costs, reduce the costs. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 237-15(5): High Cost Of Living In Small Communities

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Premier made comments to the long term-goals of reducing costs and highway extension. I think that's going to be a long, long time down the road here. So in terms of what can the Minister do in terms of the short-term initiatives to reduce the high cost of living in the communities of the Sahtu, would the Minister look at the issues of the food program? In Country Canada it showed a documentary of Grise Fiord and, in there, the community or government brought down the prices by subsidizing the basic foods and increased the luxury costs by giving that a balance. Would the Minister consider that option? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 237-15(5): High Cost Of Living In Small Communities

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We will continue to look at the Food Mail Program. I recognize that it is a federal program, but we will look at how it's administered. Mr. Speaker, I have personally had meetings with the Northern Stores and their people on the cost of food and how they go about using the Food Mail Program. We will continue to try to be creative on that one and try to figure out ways we can help.

Mr. Speaker, as well, we do regular updates on our food baskets through income support and through trying to ensure that the subsidies that we're providing are done in a way that meets people's needs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 237-15(5): High Cost Of Living In Small Communities

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again I would like to ask the Premier in terms of supporting the community by bringing in a subsidy that subsidizes bread, milk, butter, the basic foods on the food core supplementary guide, and increase the luxuries -- pop, candy -- we can balance it out so that people in Colville Lake will not have to pay \$17.99 for one can of Enfalac. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 237-15(5): High Cost Of Living In Small Communities

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, certainly in terms of people on income support I think that we're working to try to keep costs and keep the subsidy we provide within reason. Mr. Speaker, in terms of looking at it in a broader sense and picking out those four main foods, that's something that we'd be willing to look at. We'd have to see what the cost would be to our government to do something like that, but, Mr. Speaker, as we said before, we want to be creative in how we continue to make living affordable in the small communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 237-15(5): High Cost Of Living In Small Communities

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Not all people in the Sahtu are on income support. We have people who work hard, people who are paying the high price, making a living to provide for their families. Again, would this government seriously look at subsidy programs in the communities like they did in Grise Fiord in Nunavut where the government came and helped the people subsidize the high costs of food? The Food Mail Program is a federal program. You know how the government is, especially with Ottawa, it takes a long time. Maybe even for ourselves. Would the Premier again look at this issue here that would make our lives more affordable and accessible, bring the cost of living down, and give something to the people in our communities that do not have the luxury of other centres like Yellowknife or Hay River or Inuvik? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 237-15(5): High Cost Of Living In Small Communities

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, yes, we will look at it. Mr. Speaker, saying that, and again without putting in a lot of thought into how this would work, I would also like to look for the cooperation from the stores to work with us on that and keep the price of those basic, healthy foods down, even if it means they have to increase in some other areas on things that are more optional or aren't essential. So, Mr. Speaker, yes, we'll look at it, but again I would hope that the stores would work with us on that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 238-15(5): Relocation Of Regional ITI Office

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of ITI and follow my Member's statement. I'd just like the Minister to confirm the commitment to work with the community and, of course, ITI and ENR, to arrange for the relocation of the ITI office off the highway to the downtown core. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 238-15(5): Relocation Of Regional ITI Office

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, Thank you. We're doing a number of things in this regard and I thank the

Member for the question and can indicate that he has, a number of times, approached me about the possibility of more of a one-stop shop for business programs in the community. It seems to have quite a deal of support in Fort Smith and I think that's important. I recently met with our BDIC together with my ITI officials to talk about how we might change some program delivery. We recognize it can't be done boilerplate across all communities. Some communities have different needs. The BDIC indicated that they were interested in looking at Fort Smith as an example or potential pilot. So I believe that there are discussions underway between ITI officials and the BDIC to talk about how there could be some collaboration. I can't say what the outcome will be, but I think the location they're looking at is the current Community Futures building. We do know or believe that ENR will need additional space and may need to take some of the ITI space out on the highway, but we're waiting for that to be confirmed and documented in terms of their actual needs. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 238-15(5): Relocation Of Regional ITI Office

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the mayor, the Metis president, the chief of the Salt River First Nations and myself are all in support, as I believe is the business community in Fort Smith, so the answer wasn't clear to me. Is the Minister confirming that yes, we're going to work towards this in the coming months and maybe the next business planning cycle to make it happen? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 238-15(5): Relocation Of Regional ITI Office

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, we are talking about a couple of options. We're not sure if the approach will be to move all of the ITI staff to the downtown location with Community Futures. We may relocate some of the staff who deal principally with business development, with loans. There are a number of approaches, but I've asked the stakeholders in that community to get together and discuss best options. Some of the options, obviously, as the Member indicated, would require money and so would have to be brought forward in the business planning process. We're currently in a GNWT facility and if we were going to go out and fit up capital downtown in private space, leased private space, there would not only be capital costs, but there would be additional O and M costs. Now, we may be coming to that conclusion anyway, as ENR needs additional space, but it may be just a matter of which department incurs the bill. So I think it's important for us to work with ENR to know how much space they need and understand what the community thinks the best model is for program delivery. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 238-15(5): Relocation Of Regional ITI Office

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm aware that ENR was contemplating some renovations which didn't make sense if we were going to arrange this move. I'd just like to ask the Minister if he could give me a timeline when he expects the report back from the community groups. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 238-15(5): Relocation Of Regional ITI Office

HON. BRENDAN BELL: I know that there's been a preliminary meeting of ITI regional staff with the BDIC. I'd ask my staff here in Yellowknife to get that report and also suggest that we needed another meeting, a follow-up meeting to sit down and talk some details. So I expect that that's happening in the next couple of weeks and I think we could have something, a recommendation back before Christmas. Important if we're going to be spending money, obviously, to get this into the business planning process. I recognize that, so we're going to move as quickly as we can. I think that there's a lot of merit in this. There's merit in having a consolidation of our business programming, but I think there are more than just GNWT people here that could be brought together and co-located. So we want to talk about all the various different options and we'll try to move forward as quickly as we possibly can. I understand the urgency. Thank you.

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

Question 239-15(5): Whati Hydro Proposal

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in my Member's statement about the need to be energy efficient, the replacement of diesel-generated power is most necessary in the community of Whati. Whati community leadership have done a lot of work towards this new initiative; a cleaner and environmentally friendly initiative. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I have a question to the Minister of the Power Corporation. What energy conservation initiative is the corporation pursuing with respect to energy efficiency? Mahsi.

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

Return To Question 239-15(5): Whati Hydro Proposal

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have been working in conjunction with the federal government to look at green funds that were available to the previous government. We were looking at assisting the community of Whati on a pilot project in regards to the mini-hydro initiative. We're also working with the community of Lutselk'e on the mini-hydro initiative also. Again, that was in conjunction with federal money that we were able to access from the planning of those projects. Again, we are still looking at working with the communities to move these projects forward. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 239-15(5): Whati Hydro Proposal

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister if the Power Corporation has any plans in the long term to get rid of the diesel generators in most NWT communities and replace them with hydropower. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 239-15(5): Whati Hydro Proposal

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are looking at the possibility of expanding the Snare hydro system by extending the power from the

Snare hydro site to the community of Whati. Again, we are looking at a possible capital investment of about \$5 million to do that. But the work has been done in that area. We did the estimates and that's roughly what the cost is going to be to take on that initiative. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 239-15(5): Whati Hydro Proposal

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the Minister indicated, there is a planning in place for Whati and Lutselk'e working on this hydro. I'd like to know from the department what stages they are at with the planning process, specifically for the community of Whati. Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 239-15(5): Whati Hydro Proposal

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Again, Mr. Speaker, the project that is being taken hold of by the community of Whati is a community-based project. We are assisting them in regards to getting money for their planning and whatnot, but again we are, our plans presently are looking at the expansion of the hydro lines from the Snare Cascades to the community of Whati. That's the only planning we've done. The majority of the work on the mini-hydro has been done specifically by the community.

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

Supplementary To Question 239-15(5): Whati Hydro Proposal

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to get a commitment from the Minister. If he could come to the community of Whati with his department and possibly fellow colleagues on this new initiative of Whati hydro, when could that take place? Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 239-15(5): Whati Hydro Proposal

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will commit to the Member of making that happen. Again, time wise, we're probably looking at December or January this year.

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

Question 240-15(5): Negative Impacts Of Migrant Workers

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I proposed in my Member's statement today, I propose the solution to deal with some of the migrant worker problems that we have. I suggested that maybe we should be creating certification or something of that measure. Mr. Speaker, to further highlight, just for a second, we're losing \$240 million in wages and that doesn't take into account lost business opportunities and any further resource money. So my question to the Minister of ITI is, what has he done to undertake this problem to deal with migrant workers? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 240-15(5): Negative Impacts Of Migrant Workers

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the question from the Member. Obviously all of us in the House think the North is a desirable place to call home, but recognize that maybe one of its disadvantages certainly is the cost of living here compared to other jurisdictions. We know that we've got to take some steps to do what we can to bring that cost of living down, not only in the bigger centres but in all of our communities, small communities, taking a number of steps looking and developing this energy plan that talks about how we can get affordable energy to people. But it's broader than that, Mr. Speaker. I along with the Minister of Education have tasked our officials to come back to us with a discussion paper on these issues. Obviously there are no easy answers, but we do need to propose some solutions to this problem that appears to be growing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 240-15(5): Negative Impacts Of Migrant Workers

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is a very strong issue coming out of my riding. There are deep concerns that we're not getting a grip on this problem. Is the Minister of ITI familiar with the Quebec regulations, as I proposed in my Member's statement, to deal with construction or trades workers and being able to direct where and when they are able to work? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 240-15(5): Negative Impacts Of Migrant Workers

HON. BRENDAN BELL: No, not specifically, Mr. Speaker, but this is one of the things that will be considered in this work. Obviously we'll do an interjurisdictional survey to talk about what other jurisdictions are doing. We know obviously, Mr. Speaker, as well, though, that there are mobility provisions in the Charter. It's very difficult to tell people in this country, who are free to move around, where they have to live. So I think the most important approach, as opposed to taking protection of steps, is to create incentives and make sure people want to live here. Reduce the cost of living, make sure land is available, affordable energy. But, Mr. Speaker, all of these issues I'm sure will be raised in the discussion paper. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 240-15(5): Negative Impacts Of Migrant Workers

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, I may want to remind the Minister that this type of Quebec proposal is Charter proof. As I pointed out in my Member's statement, it was taken to the Supreme Court and upheld. So I don't think we need to do any new work on that issue. All we have to do is find the guidelines of how it works there and maybe sort of slide them and do a northern adjustment, if I may say. I am in favour of incentives, but we can't necessarily say that's the only way of dealing with this. So I'm going to ask the Minister, last week I proposed for us to open up and deal with section 8.5 in our socio-economic agreements. Is there also any way we can open up these agreements so that

we can have any type of discussion and renegotiate the terms? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 240-15(5): Negative Impacts Of Migrant Workers

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, I don't believe it's a lack of willingness on the part of the mines to use local labour. It's obviously more cost effective for them to use people locally, they know that people who live here are more likely to stay here for a long term and there are huge costs to having staff turnover at mines or any other operations, Mr. Speaker. I think they have an incentive to work with us. They've been very cooperative. We have been discussing some of these issues and will continue to do so. You heard the Premier's answers last week in the House. We will have no problem asking mining officials to come before standing committees of this House on a number of occasions. They've offered to do just that. I have a request on my desk from DeBeers to come and talk about their socio-economic agreement progress. It's one year since the signing of the Snap Lake agreement now. They've got a number of highlights and done some really good things. So they're more than happy and prepared to come and talk to us. But I think we need to do this industry wide. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 240-15(5): Negative Impacts Of Migrant Workers

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the Minister of ITI realizes this can't be an NWT problem alone. We've got the Yukon on one side of us and we've got Nunavut on the other side, and it can't be cheap flying those 737s all the way to Yellowknife and then maybe even beyond to those diamond mines. It can't be cheap to do that. So, Mr. Speaker, has the Minister taken the initiative to speak to our territorial counterparts in both the Yukon and Nunavut about maybe developing a northern strategy to deal with this problem once and for all? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 240-15(5): Negative Impacts Of Migrant Workers

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, we speak continually about these issues. We do, though, have unique pressures here. Obviously with the diamond mining industry and burgeoning oil and gas industry we've got some pressures that the Yukon and Nunavut aren't facing currently. I think they will be in the future. They have tremendous economic potential and I think they will be able to realize that. Broader than that, we have discussions about these issues at western Energy Ministers, western Canada facing some of the same challenges, although given they have more capacity than we do to deal with some of these issues. But a very hot labour market right across western Canada, industries are poaching people from each other. It's unsettling, it's expensive and certainly a difficult way to deal with this issue, Mr. Speaker. So yes, it's of great concern to us as a government, to the people of the Northwest Territories. The commitment that I can make here is that we will certainly bring forward this discussion paper to committee and have some discussion about the potential solutions and possibilities that we might pursue. Thank you.

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

Question 241-15(5): Shared Parenting Legislation

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On June 8th of this year I had asked questions of the Minister of Justice in regard to what work was being undertaken to address the issue of equal shared parenting. Mr. Speaker, statistics show that 46 percent of marriages in Canada are ending in divorce. Mr. Speaker, a lot of these divorces also have the custody of children involved in them. Mr. Speaker, these can impact the lives of children for decades and decades after the fact. In June I had asked the Minister to advise this Assembly if he had had any discussions with the federal Minister of Justice, Mr. Vic Toews, in regard to advancing shared parenting legislation and I would like to ask the Minister today if indeed that discussion has taken place. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 241-15(5): Shared Parenting Legislation

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I met with Minister Toews and as well Minister Day, and the Member has as well, and did have occasion to raise it with some of my provincial colleagues, some discussion around this also with Minister Toews. In terms of legislation they're developing, I think it's premature whether to say they'll be able to come forward with anything. They are discussing this informally with other jurisdictions, but certainly they recognize, as we do, that the court process is very adversarial and oftentimes makes it very difficult for relationships to continue after these oftentimes quite vicious custody battles are waged in front of the courts. They recognize that as obviously not the best solution and are interested in doing something about that. What that will be remains to be seen, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 241-15(5): Shared Parenting Legislation

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, children need both parents in their lives. I think that's undeniable and under our current system in legislation there's just far too many cases of parents, and fathers specifically, being denied access to their children. I'd like the Minister to let this House know what exact measures is the government taking to see to it that fathers are not denied access to their children and what forms of mediation is available for divorcing couples so that neither parent is ever denied access to those children? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. A couple questions there. I will allow the Minister to answer one or both. Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 241-15(5): Shared Parenting Legislation

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A number of questions. The Divorce Act, a federal act, doesn't stipulate anywhere that fathers are at a disadvantage, but I think we know, Mr. Speaker, that there should never be a case in terms of custody where one parent or the other receives a better advantage just because they happen to be mother or father, Mr. Speaker.

That's not the way this should work. But I think the larger issue is one of the adversarial nature of the process right now and the need to look at another vehicle like mediation. We do have a mediation project that we're interested in pursuing here in the NWT. It hasn't been underway for very long. I think we're getting some encouraging results, Mr. Speaker, but it is important that we continue to discuss these and other options for trying to remove this from the very litigious and adversarial nature of the process that we see today. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 241-15(5): Shared Parenting Legislation

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister if he could make a commitment to take a look at our family law practices here in the Northwest Territories to ensure that there's fair methods of mediation and that both parents are being treated fairly. I'd like to ask the Minister if he would make a commitment today to perhaps set up a joint committee -- it could be some Regular Members of this House and the Minister -- to go over some long outstanding files to ensure that there is fairness and that both parents are being treated fairly and the children are being treated fairly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 241-15(5): Shared Parenting Legislation

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of merit and a lot of value in pursuing more mediation options and I'd certainly be prepared to come forward to the standing committee and sit down and discuss some possibilities going forward and have a discussion of these issues. I think it's important, so, yes, I will make the commitment. What vehicle that ultimately takes I suppose will be determined by the discussions that we have. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 241-15(5): Shared Parenting Legislation

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the Minister if he could put a time frame around this. I think it's very important that we get this movement off the ground as soon as possible so that people aren't out there suffering and children aren't allowed to suffer by not having visitation of both parents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 241-15(5): Shared Parenting Legislation

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm certainly available in November to come forward after session here to sit down with committee and discuss these options. I agree we need to make sure that in these custody situations the parents who don't have custody have as much access to their children as is possible, Mr. Speaker. Obviously we have to make sure that the interests of the children are paramount, but I agree with the Member that a child's interests are best served by having both parents. Thank you.

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

Question 242-15(5): New Seniors' Facility For Inuvik

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to tour some of the communities around the North and one of the places that I like to go when I tour these communities are the seniors' homes. I'm quite surprised at the quality of some of the seniors' homes out there. That brings me to ask the new Minister of Housing, I'd like to know what we would have to do to begin studying the possibility of getting a new seniors' home in Inuvik. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 242-15(5): New Seniors' Facility For Inuvik

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can assure the Member that there already is a study going on to look at how we can take some of the allocation of affordable housing and convert it into seniors' housing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 242-15(5): New Seniors' Facility For Inuvik

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister for that. I'd like to ask him when we can expect the study to be completed and when would we be able to have a concrete decision? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 242-15(5): New Seniors' Facility For Inuvik

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I'm not 100 percent up to speed on each of these units. I can tell the Member, though, that we are looking at the old seniors' home, converting it into a facility for single people, and then taking the money we would have used for single units and building five senior units. Mr. Speaker, the money for this is spread over the current year, the next fiscal year, the 2007-2008 year, and the 2008-2009 year. So it would certainly be within the next couple of years that we would see a new building underway. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 242-15(5): New Seniors' Facility For Inuvik

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Premier again for the response. I'd like to ask the Premier if he would commit to coming up to Inuvik and touring the seniors' home with me and meeting some of the seniors that are interested in starting their own seniors' home. I've heard from a couple of elders and they've said that we hear we're getting a new seniors' home. So I'd like to ask the Premier to commit to coming up to Inuvik, meeting with myself and some interested seniors. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 242-15(5): New Seniors' Facility For Inuvik

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be in Inuvik on November 27th to 29th to meet with both the Gwich'in and the Inuvialuit leaders and at that time I'd be

pleased to meet with seniors with the MLA as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 243-15(5): Renovations To Diamond Jenness Secondary School

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. We've been hearing lots of talk about capital projects, capital infrastructure in the education area. We've had some setbacks, I believe, in the territory through some unfortunate circumstances with respect to our schools. However, Hay River has an old school. It hasn't had any renovations or work done to it for a long time. It's 30 years old; the Diamond Jenness Secondary School. Back in March I got a letter from the Minister indicating that there would be a technical functional evaluation done on the school to determine what needs to be done in terms of upgrades or renovations to the school and I would like to know the status of that technical functional evaluation of Diamond Jenness. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 243-15(5): Renovations To Diamond Jenness Secondary School

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have been advised by my colleague, the Minister responsible for Public Works, that the technical review and a look at the condition of the school have been undertaken. It's completed and we will have to meet to discuss what needs to happen from here. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 243-15(5): Renovations To Diamond Jenness Secondary School

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Then I'd like to ask the Minister, what's the prognosis for some major capital dollars for the Diamond Jenness Secondary School in Hay River? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 243-15(5): Renovations To Diamond Jenness Secondary School

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The technical review outlines a number of areas that have to be looked at. It would take a substantial amount of dollars to undertake all of what would be proposed. So we will have to look at where that can be fit into the capital plan. As Members of this House are aware, we are struggling every year with the capital plan with far more requirements for capital works than we have money to look after. So we will do our best to work this into the capital plan on a timely basis.

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

Supplementary To Question 243-15(5): Renovations To Diamond Jenness Secondary School

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister confirm that Hay River's capital

needs are not going to be negatively impacted by things such as faulty construction and fires and some of the misfortunes that have befallen some of our other capital infrastructure in the education area. I'd like the Minister to confirm that these things are not going to set Hay River back in terms of our needs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 243-15(5): Renovations To Diamond Jenness Secondary School

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We try not to, or we try to proceed with our capital plan as it's set out. We hope that we would be able to, within the next few years, work the renovations to Diamond Jenness into that capital plan. Every year the capital plan is looked at, we have to take a look at how many dollars we have available and balance that off against the critical needs that we have. So it's not a question of one project impacting on another. It's more the overall size of the capital plan and that relates to how much of an operating surplus this government has. So all projects are balanced each year according to what money we have and it will be my intention to try and move this project forward on a timely basis.

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

Supplementary To Question 243-15(5): Renovations To Diamond Jenness Secondary School

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you. I would just like to ask the Minister if he could confirm that the upgrades required to the function and needs of the Diamond Jenness Secondary School are a priority of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 243-15(5): Renovations To Diamond Jenness Secondary School

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The technical report that we received from Public Works indicates that there are some parts of the project that we need to take a look at fairly quickly. They indicate that it is an issue that we need to ensure is looked at on a priority basis. It will be put into the capital plan and dealt with as all of our projects are. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 244-15(5): Performance Bonuses For Senior Officials Of The NWT Power Corporation

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation. Just in the wake of the last briefing that we had with the Power Corporation and their reorganization that they're planning to go forward with, I just wanted to talk about this old issue of the executive compensation and at-risk plan for the executives that received bonuses in the last year. I'm sure there have been bonuses in previous years before that, but it's just come to light because of the amounts that have been dished out in 2005 which equated to a little over half a million dollars, with 12 employees receiving approximately \$26,000 of that portion. My first question to the Minister is, with the executive compensation and at-risk plan that they have for the 40-plus executives at the Power Corporation who all

work in offices, mind you, Mr. Speaker, what risks are they up against? I know front-line workers, linemen and all that face risks every day, but what risks do these guys incur or are faced with every day that allows them to receive the compensation packages, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 244-15(5): Performance Bonuses For Senior Officials Of The NWT Power Corporation

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in regards to the way the compensation is calculated, with regards to these 41 individuals, presently they are not part of a union. They don't receive overtime, but they are responsible for ensuring that the corporation runs according to the objectives that were set forward by the Cabinet. We instruct the corporation to meet certain goals in regards to how they perform and based on their performance that's how we calculate their compensation. But again, I'd just like to remind the Members in the House, the compensation is based on a set of objectives that have to be met each year by each of the different individuals, but also it's measured by how much they achieve. It's based on the compensation. So you have to achieve these objectives before you receive any compensation. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 244-15(5): Performance Bonuses For Senior Officials Of The NWT Power Corporation

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you. So, in a nutshell, not meeting performance objectives is the risk they take. Is that what the Minister is saying? Because really I just don't see any real risks that these executives are up against. They set targets. They are at what risk? By health, by losing money, by getting a salary cut if they don't make these performance targets or just not receiving a big fat bonus? Is that the only risk that they have on this at-risk compensation package, Mr. Speaker? What are the real risks? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 244-15(5): Performance Bonuses For Senior Officials Of The NWT Power Corporation

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the risks that the Member talks about, we all have objectives that we establish in regards to environmental liabilities to ensure we don't have any major spills or whatnot to ensure basically we have a power source, we are able to generate power without having major power outages as we have had. Again, we have to also ensure that we consider exactly how they perform their duties in regards to communicating with the communities, the public. We have to ensure that we have a customer service base that we are able to measure, ensuring that the customers are satisfied with the service. So there are ways that you can measure it in regards to how you determine if someone should be compensated. Again, there is a list of items that those individuals have to meet in order to receive their compensation.

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

Supplementary To Question 244-15(5): Performance Bonuses For Senior Officials Of The NWT Power Corporation

MR. VILLENEUVE: Okay. Let's just get away from the compensation, the at-risk items for awhile. Before these compensation bonuses go out to employees of the Power Corporation, and I know they paid out overtime over and above their budget to employees, and that is not questionable here, Mr. Speaker, but just the bonuses themselves, do these bonuses need the approval of the Public Utilities Board before they actually go out and before the cheques are written? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 244-15(5): Performance Bonuses For Senior Officials Of The NWT Power Corporation

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, no, they don't have to be approved by the Public Utilities Board, but it is an item that is brought forward when we do and write an application to show the Public Utilities Board that these expenses we do incur and on the basis of how we incur them. So it is laid out there by way of a public forum that we have to present the cost to operate the corporation, but also we spell out what those costs are. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 244-15(5): Performance Bonuses For Senior Officials Of The NWT Power Corporation

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am assuming I can go to the Public Utilities Board, pull out the financial statements for the NWT Power Corporation since 1989, since this compensation package came into effect, and I would be able to tell how much bonuses were paid out over the last 15 years without...I know these bonuses are probably all just hidden in one line item, salaries and benefits. Can the Minister tell me if these bonuses are a separate line item in the financial statements of the NWT Power Corporation that people, the public, can go there and see, okay, well how much bonuses are people receiving? Are they in line with the cost of living? Are they in line with the other organizations in other jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 244-15(5): Performance Bonuses For Senior Officials Of The NWT Power Corporation

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this practice is not unique to the Northwest Territories Power Corporation. It is practiced throughout the corporate community and that is the way that they compensate people that provide this specific service, especially in the managerial areas. We do that similar process with deputy ministers within this government. We have a system in place that you are compensated from the basic knowledge if you perform to those objectives that are set for you. Again, this isn't a common practice to ourselves; it is a practice throughout the industry. Thank you.

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

Question 245-15(5): Systemic Biases In Family Law

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the honourable Brendan Bell and they follow on the footsteps of questions that my colleague Mr. Ramsay was asking in relation to family law, divorce and the consequences for children. Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Justice Mr. Bell has considerable opportunity to work with his colleagues from other provinces and territories and the federal government, of course, on a number of legal issues, I wanted to ask whether the issue of divorce and separation law and, of course, the consequences for children come up for debate. Are they on the radar screen, Mr. Speaker, at the FPT level?

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

Return To Question 245-15(5): Systemic Biases In Family Law

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, it has been maybe a month since I attended FTP Justice in Newfoundland. I had the chance to raise this issue with a number of my colleagues. It was not formally on the agenda to be debated. I think there were three or four main topic areas. Members will remember much of it around the new government's tough on crime agenda. It is very much a situation where the federal government determines the issues of the day to be debated and discussed, but I do know the federal Minister has this on his personal radar and is interested in talking about possibly some changes that could alleviate some of the concern. A number of other provincial jurisdictions have similar concerns. How we go forward, I think, Mr. Speaker, we can discuss that. I could certainly write letters to my provincial colleagues and ask them if they would like to seek to get this formally on the agenda. But I do believe there is an interest in resolving some of these issues, primarily getting these issues away from the courts and into mediation where they can be probably more constructively dealt with. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 245-15(5): Systemic Biases In Family Law

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of some constituents and concerns that were brought before me where the courts do have to get involved and that is a reality that we have to face, that the courts are not subjected to the kinds of bias that has surfaced in so many areas. Mr. Speaker, divorce law, of course, is the jurisdiction of the federal government and, when couples and relationships break down and they go to court, there is so often a win-lose scenario. We have talked about mediation and helping to avoid that. I wanted to ask the Minister where the law itself is federal but we have a social support services network here. What can we do to influence the outcomes so that they are not so confrontational, not so win-lose, Mr. Speaker?

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

Further Return To Question 245-15(5): Systemic Biases In Family Law

HON. BRENDAN BELL: As I said, Mr. Speaker, I think alternative dispute resolution mechanisms are important; they are critical. As I have said earlier, I believe the problem is not so much with how the law is written, but the

problems creep up when the law is applied. I think we need to do what we can to ensure counselling is available in our jurisdiction. But, as I say, anything we can do to try to deal with these issues before they come to the courts I think is the most constructive approach. By the time you are that far down the road, the parties have been back and forth and it is very adversarial. Sometimes the damage has been done at that point, Mr. Speaker, so I think the best approach is to try to deal with these things outside the courts. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 245-15(5): Systemic Biases In Family Law

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our society, the dynamics of our economies, communities, and our family relationships are changing very rapidly. We have some enormous potentially disruptive economic projects ahead of us. Our physical environment is changing very rapidly: education rates. So many things are changing around us, Mr. Speaker, yet we have a body of family law and policy that may not be up to the times and may not be up to what we are going to be facing and dealing with. Mr. Speaker, is it time for us to look at a comprehensive review of our family laws, policies and practices with a special eye on it for systemic biases, Mr. Speaker?

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

Further Return To Question 245-15(5): Systemic Biases In Family Law

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, that is certainly a valid suggestion. I know that this government has been doing some work with the federal government behind the scenes to look at ways that they could seek to change the system. I believe the government before this one also had an interest in advancing some of those principles and making some reforms. Mr. Speaker, I think the best approach, though, is to gauge the level of interest from our provincial colleagues and talk about how we might move forward with this. A comprehensive law review obviously takes a lot of time. It is federal jurisdiction. So I think, in the meantime, we need to do some things to make sure that we have mediation options available for couples and parents going through these issues. Law review may be where we need to go. I think it is best to gauge the interest of the other jurisdictions in that. We certainly can't drive it alone. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Final supplementary. Thank you, Mr. Braden. Before we go on, colleagues, I would like to draw your attention to the visitors' gallery, and the presence of Ms. Lena Pedersen. She holds the distinction of being the first woman elected to the Legislative Assembly.

---Applause

She was elected back on December 21st of 1970 and represented the constituency of Central Arctic. Welcome to the Assembly, Ms. Pedersen.

---Applause

Oral questions. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Question 246-15(5): Sleep Apnea Treatment Programs

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are to the Minister of Health and Social

Services and this whole area of sleep apnea, sleep disorder and the treatments for such conditions. I must admit, it is a pretty complex area. I understand that the Minister has had this portfolio for a week. I am hoping that this will just open a dialogue for bringing attention to him of this matter and to get some commitment from the Minister that he would be active in sorting out some of the policy areas, Mr. Speaker. As I stated in my Member's statement, this is a condition that affects about...Well, I could tell you, Mr. Speaker, that this a condition that affects about five percent of the population. There are a lot of people in the North who need to go through this testing and who could benefit from it. In fact, probably in the long run, it could save the government a lot of money if they are adequately treated. The coverage of the various equipment is one issue, but the other issue has to do with the service provider. Mr. Speaker, I have indicated that the government has put out an RFP to find a provider, a vendor, contractor to provide the service and it just came out this week. I understand that is under the guideline of the national health insurance policy, which should be the way. But my problem is, I understand this is only partial. This is interim and the government is looking at doing this in-house at the expense of about \$500,000, based on a report that really has a credibility question that suggests that this has to be done internally when there are private providers who are already providing that at almost no cost. I would like to ask the Minister to commit to this House that he will look at this issue and make sure that the government will set up a policy and make sure that the government follows that national health insurance policy and that he would look at the most cost-effective measure in delivering this program. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 246-15(5): Sleep Apnea Treatment Programs

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, we will work with the NIHB policies, of course, because if we don't, then we don't receive payment back from the federal government. So that is a commitment that we will meet. As for the area of sleep apnea and the work that was done, I wouldn't discredit the report outright. I have yet to get a briefing as to where that piece of the work is at. So I will commit to reviewing that file, looking at it, ensuring that we are making the best decisions when it comes to how our resources are used. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 246-15(5): Sleep Apnea Treatment Programs

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would urge the Minister to look at this report carefully and its recommendations, because my information is that, Mr. Speaker, the report is suggesting that the government should spend up to \$300,000 to deliver programs for 200 patients when already the services are being provided for almost nothing by the private sector.

Mr. Speaker, another area is to do with the respiratory program and home care oxygen program. There are lots of people in the North who need to get extra oxygen to have daily life. There is supposed to be an RFP coming out to find a provider for that, but the government has not come out to say that that guideline, the RFP policy, will be

based on the national health insurance policy as well, which it should be. That is very important that there are standards for that. Could the Minister make a commitment to look into that and make sure that we follow the proper national standard? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 246-15(5): Sleep Apnea Treatment Programs

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, I will commit to having a look at that and getting information as to where that sits. Again, as I stated earlier, we will be following the policies that are established out there. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 246-15(5): Sleep Apnea Treatment Programs

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is information to be verified, but the information I have is that the EHB office, extended health benefits office in Inuvik, has suggested that they would look at, under this RFP, providers who may not meet the guidelines of NIHB which requires registered respiratory technologists and registered nurses. Even if they are not administering it, they have to have somebody on staff and the EHB has suggested that that might not be the case. Could I ask the Minister to look into that to make sure that the EHB office is following the proper guideline? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 246-15(5): Sleep Apnea Treatment Programs

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I committed earlier, once I get up to speed on this file, I will review this situation and gladly work with the Member on this specific area. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 246-15(5): Sleep Apnea Treatment Programs

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The CPAP machine, which is the equipment used to help people breathe, is accepted as coverable equipment under the NIHB I understand. I am not an expert in this area, but it is not being covered under EHB. As I stated in my Member's statement, the previous Minister committed to including that. Could I get the Minister to just make a commitment to look into that issue and come with a directive? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 246-15(5): Sleep Apnea Treatment Programs

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am aware that the requirement for the specific machines out there are tied to existing or a problem as well, a medical condition. It would be reviewed by internal medicine and then forwarded if the requirement is there, and would fit under the policy that way. Again, I will get up to speed on this whole area. I will gladly work with Members. Thank you.

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

Question 247-15(5): Water Treatment Plant In Sachs Harbour

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are to the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Mr. Speaker, last May, I inquired about the water treatment plant in Sachs Harbour. During our visit this fall during our pre-budget consultation, some of the Members had an opportunity to see the water intake line lying on the ground and also the water treatment plant is all taken apart. Apparently, they did some work this summer, but I just found out today, Mr. Speaker, that they are still having problems with the water treatment plant in Sachs Harbour. Apparently, they cut an ice hole in the lake again to discharge the waters. I would like to ask the Minister of MACA, can he give the assurance to the people in Sachs Harbour what kind of work was done this past summer to rectify the problem for this fall when we are getting to late fall now? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 247-15(5): Water Treatment Plant In Sachs Harbour

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am just trying to confer with my colleague from Public Works. This issue has been ongoing for some time, the water system in the community. We have looked at a number of different options including replacing the line. We have conferred with Public Works on the best method to go forward. We have agreed to install a backwash system or auto flush system that will keep the system from freezing up. We will see how that works for the duration of this winter. Failing that, we would have to look at other methods of correcting the system. That may include replacing the line. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 247-15(5): Water Treatment Plant In Sachs Harbour

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Apparently, the installation of the backwash system is not working, as we continue delivering November 1st and it is already not working, Mr. Speaker. What will the department do with the Department of Public Works to make sure that the people in Sachs Harbour have access to the water and the water treatment plant, and when will it be done? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 247-15(5): Water Treatment Plant In Sachs Harbour

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We looked at this issue in a number of different ways. We have sent cameras through the pipe. We have had a number of people that are expert in the field look at it. We think the auto flush system is the way to go. We are quite comfortable that we will solve the issue. We will continue to monitor it. We will continue to have people on the ground and see if there are any problems with this new methodology of solving the water issue. Failing that, we will have to look at changing the intake pipe on this system. That would be very costly. So we would like to try this new method or add this new component to the water system for that community. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 247-15(5): Water Treatment Plant In Sachs Harbour

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I would like to say one more time that, as of November 1st, today, it is still not repaired. Apparently, that system is not working. Right now, when they have to drill a hole in the water lake in Sachs Harbour, it takes a while. They have to do that every morning when they first get there. It takes time to do that. With the new system that they installed, it was supposed to fix that problem. Apparently, it is not working. When can he assure that these people in Sachs Harbour will be able to access the...(inaudible)...and do their discharge and assist the people over there? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 247-15(5): Water Treatment Plant In Sachs Harbour

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We'll have to commit to getting back to the Member with an update. We were not aware that the system was not operating at this point. Our information indicates that the system was installed in September and it had some minor upgrades that had to be done and that the system is supposed to be working. So we'll have to commit to the Member that we'll take a look at the situation, along with Public Works, and we'll report back to the Member as to how things are. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 247-15(5): Water Treatment Plant In Sachs Harbour

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that, Mr. Speaker. One last question I'd like to ask the Minister of MACA. Since last fall, I know there have been charges going back and forth to Sachs Harbour and I understand that maybe that project is over budget. I'd like to know what the final cost is to get it repaired. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 247-15(5): Water Treatment Plant In Sachs Harbour

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would have to consult with Public Works. Public Works is the lead in this area for this project. Although it's a MACA project, the project management is being done by a different department. So I'd have to gather that information and provide it to the Member. Thank you.

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

Question 248-15(5): Performance Bonuses For Senior Officials Of The NWT Power Corporation

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to follow up on my colleague Mr. Villeneuve's line of questioning about the bonuses paid to Power Corporation officials over the summer. It was \$547,000 and I think to most residents here in the Northwest Territories that came as a bit of a surprise, considering the fact here in Yellowknife many of my constituents were faced with daily, if not every second day, power outages costing businesses in my riding thousands and thousands of dollars. So I'd like to ask the Minister, what exactly does

he base performance on when doling out that kind of cash to the Power Corporation officials? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Honourable Minister responsible for the Power Corporation, Mr. Krutko.

Return To Question 248-15(5): Performance Bonuses For Senior Officials Of The NWT Power Corporation

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are several areas that are looked at. Again, this decision wasn't made by myself as the Minister. The decision was made by the board. Again, we do look at different areas when they make that decision. The question about system availability, that's one of the areas that they look at. They look in regards to the efficiency of the business; and also look at the operational side; and also look at staff turnover; they look at issues in regard to hazard spills, like I mentioned earlier; and also employee satisfaction. Again, this bonus was based on last year's evaluation. I have to agree with the Member. I have raised this issue with the board in regards to the number of outages, but also you have to realize in the communities of Yellowknife, Hay River and others, they basically do provide power at a wholesale to the distributor which the distributor is basically Northland Utilities. Thank you.

AN HON. MEMBER: Ohhh.

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

Supplementary To Question 248-15(5): Performance Bonuses For Senior Officials Of The NWT Power Corporation

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the Minister this question: Considering the fact that many businesses here in my constituency are losing money -- and I'm talking about restaurants and other service-related industries -- when the power goes out, they lose money. How are they expected to recoup the money that they've lost because the power goes out every second day? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 248-15(5): Performance Bonuses For Senior Officials Of The NWT Power Corporation

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, in regards to Yellowknife power outages, again we will take some responsibility for that in regards to power outages because of the hydro line system that we have. Again, once the power basically reaches Yellowknife, it's the responsibility of the provider, which is Northland Utilities. They are presently in the process of overhauling the system here in Yellowknife where they're upgrading the system, and, because of these upgrades, that is where a majority of these problems have occurred. But again, Mr. Speaker, one of the main components of determining a person's compensation is the system availability, and that is one of the areas that they have to basically determine their evaluation on. With that, again, the bonuses are based on last year's review. So that will be a very driving component that will be seriously looked at in regards to how people will be based and determined exactly how they will be compensated. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Time for oral questions has expired; however, I'll allow the Member a supplementary question. Mr. Ramsay.

Supplementary To Question 248-15(5): Performance Bonuses For Senior Officials Of The NWT Power Corporation

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I've been living in this community for 27 years and every year that I can remember, the power goes out during the summer. It's a right of passage for the summer. The power goes out every second day and sometimes two and three times a day. So I think we certainly have a problem in that area. I'd like to ask the Minister if he could tell this House exactly -- and he mentioned it to my colleague Mr. Villeneuve -- he said that remuneration for the president of the Power Corporation was based on a comparable, competitive scenario. I'd like to ask the Minister exactly what are we paying the president of the Power Corporation and where did he come up with that figure? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 248-15(5): Performance Bonuses For Senior Officials Of The NWT Power Corporation

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, again, the area of the bonus is based on the scenario that these individuals do not receive overtime. These individuals, the 40-some individuals we're talking about here, are basically non unionized employees. These are basically employees that are working at our regional offices throughout the Northwest Territories and headquarters in Hay River. So again, the bonuses are based on a formula that's determined on the basis of how much time and also how they have performed over the year. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 248-15(5): Performance Bonuses For Senior Officials Of The NWT Power Corporation

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to have to get my hearing checked; I didn't hear the Minister come up with a number. With the bonus, how much did we pay the president of the Power Corporation last year? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 248-15(5): Performance Bonuses For Senior Officials Of The NWT Power Corporation

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again, there's a range that's determined on exactly how people are compensated. But in regards to this particular item, under ATIPP legislation, that is a contract between the Government of the Northwest Territories and this individual. So, thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Time for oral questions has expired. Written questions. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

ITEM 7: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Written Question 34-15(5): Non-Custodial Fathers' Visitation Rights

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

What type of policies/regulations does this government have to ensure that non-custodial fathers have the freedom to visit their children?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Written questions. Returns to written questions. Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 8: RETURNS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Return To Written Question 18-15(5): Behchoko Local Housing Authority

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Lafferty on October 20, 2006, regarding the Behchoko Local Housing Authority.

1. Has there been layoffs at the local housing authority in Behchoko since September until present? If there was, how many?

Three casual maintenance staff, hired by the housing authority board in spring of 2006, were laid off in the first week of September 2006. These positions were over and above the LHO staff complement. Funding for these positions was in excess of the maintenance salary budget. In addition, one vacant position -- administrative secretary -- was deemed redundant by the LHO board in September 2006.

2. How many more layoffs are we expecting within the local housing authority in Behchoko?

There is the possibility of one more layoff occurring. In April of 2005, a term tenant relations officer assistant position was created, over and above the Behchoko Housing Authority's staff complement. This position was created on the understanding that the position could be funded through increased rent collections from 60 percent of assessment to 90 percent of assessment. Rent collections increased to approximately 73 percent of assessment in fiscal 2004-05 but decreased to 61 percent of assessment in 2005-06. At an October 1, 2006, meeting in Yellowknife, the Housing Corporation and the Behchoko Housing Authority board agreed to retain the TRO assistant's position on a temporary basis, subject to improved rent collections.

3. With these proposed layoffs, are there any impacts on the local members living in the community, those that speak the Tlicho language? How many are impacted?

Of the 12 budgeted full-time positions and one unbudgeted position in the Behchoko Housing Authority organizational chart, 11 positions are filled by incumbents who speak fluent Tlicho.

4. Was there any consultation between the Housing Corporation and the local housing authority of Behchoko on these proposed changes? When and how many meetings took place?

Ongoing consultation between the Housing Corporation's North Slave district office and the LHO manager and board took place regarding the 2005-06 deficit and \$100,000 in additional funding provided by the NWT HC to cover unbudgeted maintenance expenses undertaken by the LHO during the months of August and September 2006. A meeting was held on September 6, 2006, to outline the serious deficit situation and to develop an action plan for financial recovery. A second meeting was held on October 1, 2006, to seek input on the contents of the action plan. The North Slave district director has

subsequently written to the LHO to confirm the action plan that was agreed to.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Return To Written Question 29-15(5): Offshore Tour Packages - GST Advantages

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by the Member for Great Slave on October 30, 2006, to the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, regarding offshore tour packages - GST advantages.

The goods and services tax, GST, and the harmonized service tax, HST, Visitor Rebate Program not only entitles international visitors to a refund of the GST or HST they pay on short-term accommodation and goods they buy to take home, it enables tour operators and convention planners to price the packages they sell in foreign markets exclusive of GST/HST. The result is an average six percent price advantage that allows them to compete against other countries that do the same with their tourism offerings.

- The Tourism Industry Association of Canada, of which the Government of the Northwest Territories Tourism, NWTT, are members, is lobbying the federal government to retain the Visitor Rebate Program and has plans to bring the issues up again at the annual Ottawa tourism meeting with members and bureaucrats on November 21, 2006. Provincial/territorial tourism associations will be in attendance.
- The NWTT brought this issue to the attention of the Western Arctic Member of Parliament at his constituency meeting in Yellowknife last month.
- The GST/HST Visitor Rebate Program will be an issue that all federal, provincial and territorial Ministers will collaborate on at the upcoming Ministers of Tourism meeting in early December when they meet with the Honourable Maxime Bernier, the Minister responsible for Tourism.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Returns to written questions. Replies to opening address. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mr. Speaker, with your indulgence, I'd like to return to item 5 on the Order Paper, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 5 on the Order Paper, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Are there any nays? There are no nays. We will return to item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Villeneuve.

REVERT TO ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, colleagues. I would just like to recognize the Dene National Chief and the Assembly of First Nations Regional Chief, Mr. Bill Erasmus, in the gallery...

---Applause

...and the former chief of the Detah First Nations, Jonas Sangris.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize Sandy Sanderson, a childhood friend and now an employee of NAIT who works in student services, I believe, with NAIT. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Replies to opening address. Petitions. Reports of standing and special committees. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Tabling of documents. The honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 66-15(5): Progress Report On The Strategic Plan, Volumes I And II

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled The Government of the Northwest Territories Strategic Plan, 2006 Progress Report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Tabling of documents. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

Tabled Document 67-15(5): Interactivity Transfers Exceeding \$250,000 - April 1, 2006 To September 30, 2006

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Pursuant to section 32.1(2) of the Financial Administration Act, I wish to table the following document entitled Interactivity Transfers Exceeding \$250,000 for the period April 1, 2006 to September 30, 2006. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Tabling of documents. The honourable Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. McLeod.

Tabled Document 68-15(5): 2005-06 Annual Report Of The Western NWT Biophysical Study

Tabled Document 69-15(5): NWT Species 2006-2010 General Status Ranks Of Wild Species In The NWT

Tabled Document 70-15(5): Beverage Container Program 2005-2006 Annual Report

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following two documents; the 2005-2006 Annual Report of the Western Northwest Territories Biophysical Study, and the NWT Species 2006-2010 General Status Ranks of Wild Species in the Northwest Territories, and the Beverage Container Program Annual Report 2005-2006. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Tabled Document 71-15(5): Safer Communities And Neighbourhoods Legislation Consultation Paper

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Legislation, a consultation paper about a proposed new way to make a community safer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

Tabled Document 72-15(5): 2005-2006 Annual Report Of The NWT Human Rights Commission

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Tabling of documents. Pursuant to section 21 of the Human Rights Act, I wish to table the 2005-2006 Annual Report of the Northwest Territories Human Rights Commission. I would like to draw your attention, Members, to the presence in the visitors' gallery of Mary Pat Short, chairman of the Northwest Territories Human Rights Commission.

---Applause

Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. Motions. Honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

ITEM 16: MOTIONS

Motion 9-15(5): Censure Of Premier And Support For Victims Of Sexual Abuse, Carried

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. WHEREAS sexual abuse in institutions and by employees who held positions of trust in relation to aboriginal people has had devastating ramifications in the North;

AND WHEREAS Premier Handley's remarks to the media on the civil case involving former teacher Edward Horne, first reported by the Canadian Press on September 22, 2006, have caused a great deal of distress and disappointment to sexual abuse survivors across the North;

AND WHEREAS sexual abuse survivors who come forward with their stories are often faced with families and communities who are unprepared to accept or believe that such horrific acts have been committed in their midst, and thereby deny survivors the support they desperately need and deserve;

AND WHEREAS this government has an opportunity and a moral obligation to stand with and support survivors of sexual abuse, many of whom have nowhere else to turn, and no one else to speak on their behalf;

AND WHEREAS this government cannot be idle on this issue, but must instead demonstrate leadership and commitment through concrete measures to assist survivors of sexual abuse;

AND WHEREAS northerners must respect and have faith in this government's leadership on the issue of sexual abuse, and their ability to have this respect and faith has been shaken as a result of Premier Handley's remarks;

AND WHEREAS Premier Handley's apology for his remarks must be reinforced by concrete measures;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Range Lake, that this Legislative Assembly censures the Premier for his comments to the media on the civil case currently before the courts related to former teacher Edward Horne;

AND FURTHER, that this Legislative Assembly strongly recommends that the government bring forward a policy on how it will handle allegations of sexual abuse, which is consistent with zero tolerance toward violence, which shows support to survivors;

AND FURTHERMORE, that the government identify gaps in assistance and services for survivors of sexual abuse, and bring forward proposals to address these gaps;

AND FURTHERMORE, that the government, within the life of this Assembly, develop a mandatory sexual abuse survivor assistance training program for front-line workers.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Motion is on the floor. Motion is in order. To the motion. The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this has been a very difficult motion to bring forward. As we all know, the Premier is well liked across the Northwest Territories and even on this side of the floor. But the support that I've been receiving personally and the e-mails that I've received have made this not easier, but it's something that I feel needs to be done.

Mr. Speaker, the subject of sexual abuse in the Northwest Territories is a sensitive subject. You mention sexual abuse and you touch a lot of nerves. I debated and I was concerned about bringing this motion forward. You think, well, does this bode well for your political future. Is it going to keep you on this side of the House? I look down this side, there's nothing wrong with that. Mr. Speaker, something that you see that you perceive to be wrong, something that you don't agree with, regardless of what happens to you, you have to speak up to it, otherwise I wouldn't be able to wake up in the morning and look in the mirror knowing I thought something was wrong and I did nothing. I think, Mr. Speaker, that's the worst way to be. So we have to show some courage here, because the courage that a lot of these people displayed in coming forth with their allegations and with their stories is something that we should take some comfort in and use that as a guide, and show half the courage that a lot of the survivors showed; and they are survivors, Mr. Speaker.

I had known very little about this. You hear rumours, you hear stories start coming out in the news and in the papers, and a lot of the survivors start coming forth. I feel that I owe a lot of kids that I went to school with a personal apology, because I went to school with them, I was side by side with them, I played on sports teams with them, and little did I know of the abuse that they were going through. I'm really glad that I've had the opportunity to listen to stories and hear of the abuse that was committed to a lot of these kids, because it's opened my eyes, Mr. Speaker, and I don't feel like I'm ignorant to the facts anymore. I like to think that I've educated myself.

That's why, Mr. Speaker, that I really felt that it was important to bring this motion forward. Mr. Handley has apologized for the remarks that he made, and I believe his apology to be sincere. I've said before it's not me he has to apologize to, because the apology should be towards the survivors. I know that this whole episode has bothered Mr. Handley. I know that for a fact. You take all that, you multiply it tenfold and that doesn't even come close to a what a lot of these survivors had to go through. So, Mr. Speaker, I do stand up here with a strong conviction that I feel like I have to do what I perceive to be the right thing. Accountability is not just a word that we can throw around in this Assembly like a cheap word, it's not. People expect us to be accountable for our actions and for our words, and I believe by bringing this motion forward we are holding the Premier accountable for his remarks, and we're holding ourselves accountable for what we believe to be doing the right thing, and I think we are doing the right thing.

This, Mr. Speaker, is not about us; it's not about me. It's about showing support to the survivors of residential school, and that should be our main focus here, Mr.

Speaker. I appreciate the support, I really do, that I've received.

It's amazing that the number of letters or e-mails that you get, and some want us to take a stronger stand, some accept the apology. Pretty well 100 percent of them want us to stand up here and show some accountability and hold the Premier accountable for those remarks. So, Mr. Speaker, hopefully with some courage here, I brought this motion forward and I would be quite interested and looking forward to my colleagues' remarks on this. I do appreciate the support that I've received. It's made what I've had to do a little easier to deal with, and it's made me feel like we are doing the right thing here.

Mr. Speaker, I say again this is not about us, this is about the survivors. I think if we have to stand here and show our support, and it's something many of us should have done years ago. We do it now. We'll do it and we'll do it holding our head up, because we want to be able to look in the mirror in the morning and not mind the reflection that's coming back to us. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. To the motion. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes for the motion, and I speak as the seconder of this motion in support of this motion. Mr. Speaker, I support this motion for two reasons. One is, by the motion of censure it publicly states that we do not approve of what the Premier said in the media about the issue of sexual abuse. The second part of the motion, Mr. Speaker, sends a strong statement by the Members of this House that we would like the Premier and the government to help us move beyond this unfortunate incident and make sure something positive comes out of it. This motion does this by making recommendations to the government on what it can do in terms of policies and programs to address the very real and urgent needs of the survivors of sexual abuse.

Mr. Speaker, we know, without a doubt, so much of our substance issues, abuse, violence, FASD and parental issues, so much pain and suffering in our communities stem from sexual abuse by persons, institutions and, in many cases, victims becoming abusers. We, as a society, are constantly dealing with the aftermath from the fallout of this dark legacy.

Mr. Speaker, it's important to note that this motion does not go anywhere near asking for the Premier's removal. I have never sought this option inside this House or outside. What I hope to do, and what I believe this motion is doing, is to do right by the survivors of sexual abuse in our midst everywhere in the North.

Mr. Speaker, this House, in the past, has removed a Member for offending Newfoundlanders and a conduct unbecoming of a Member in public places. Just last week, we removed a Member from Cabinet for offending a Member and his family, for what he said off the record, even though a genuine and sincere apology was offered. Mr. Speaker, the important question before us is who among us are willing to step up to the plate and speak for the survivors of sexual abuse. Are we not supposed to place the Premier in a higher standard than any other Member or Cabinet Minister? Mr. Speaker, is it not the least we can do, as a self-policing body, on behalf of, if no one else, the survivors of sexual abuse? Mr. Speaker, if we do not, are we worthy of being the only Legislature in the land who declared so proudly last summer that May

26th be the official Day of Reconciliation for the Sexual Abuse Victims of Residential School?

Mr. Speaker, as a Member of this House with the privilege to vote and speak to this motion, I am voting for and speaking on behalf of sexual abuse survivors and victims I know. I'm speaking for two sisters I went to junior and high school with in Yellowknife. They're my age. They were abused by a family friend of their parents. Five years ago they came out and they told the court what happened to them. They were not believed and the man got off. After that, another woman came out and the same man got a house arrest. Then another victim came out after that, and finally the man is going to see some jail time. Mr. Speaker, I have to ask you, why is it so hard for us to believe sexual abuse victims who were once children?

I'm voting today, Mr. Speaker, for an aboriginal man who came and told me that when the settlement of residential school victims were announced by the federal government, he felt finally like he was believed, and then when he heard what the Premier said, he said he was kicked in the stomach once again.

Mr. Speaker, I'm also voting for two Annies from Nunavut that I know who live here. The senior Annie is an abused victim and who works tirelessly on behalf of others who are victims. I am speaking up for a junior Annie who told me, in tears, who told in one of the gatherings for victims of violence about how she suffered family violence all her life, and so much pain and suffering which ended with blood and brain matter of one of her family members dripping on the street, and she was touching it and she was crying, and this was as a result of another drunken rage that I believe could only come from the kind of abuse that our people have gone through.

Mr. Speaker, our task in preventing further abuse and at the same time standing up and speaking out for the silent victims and survivors out there continues, and we must be relentless in this regard. The victims and survivors are watching us and I ask this House to do the right thing by supporting this motion, to say we don't agree, we know it's wrong what the Premier said, and that we will call the Premier and the government to task by making a very strong recommendation to follow up on his apology with concrete actions stated in this motion on behalf of all of the victims and survivors of sexual abuse in the North. Mr. Speaker, I ask for support of this motion from all the Members and I ask for a recorded vote. Thank you.

---Applause

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand in support of the motion as a signal to the Premier, and to everyone in positions of authority, that when it comes to speaking out on issues of this nature that are not only before the courts but that speak to long and chronic and hurtful aspects of what goes on in our society, that it has to be undertaken with much more sensitivity, and a much greater sense of purpose, and recognition for the job that we have as leaders.

Mr. Speaker, I see a message, an underlying message. We, as leaders, always need to be looking at, if you will, our moral compass. I really want to compliment our colleague Mr. McLeod from Inuvik Twin Lakes for the address that he gave to us upon sponsoring this motion. I think he has said, in many ways, what we should and I believe can all aspire to, not only in this Assembly, Mr.

Speaker, but in our communities, in our workplaces, as well, of course, as in our own homes.

Abusive behaviour is not acceptable, but it has been for so many years and so many decades in so many ways in our society. I think we have to face the weaknesses and the flaws that we all have as human beings, and understand that we're not going to get any better if we simply deny, or try to avoid, or speak around or over or through these issues. We do need to face them. As Mr. McLeod said, we need to be able to look at ourselves in the mirror every day to see if we can get through another day, and do it while we hold our head up high.

Mr. Speaker, we have so many addictions that lead to violence or contribute to it; addictions to alcohol, to drugs, to gambling. Not all of these lead to physical abuse or violence. A lot of what we are experiencing, and that I am learning more about, is emotional, it's financial, especially elders.

Mr. Speaker, our Assembly has tried to do a lot of work with front-line agencies in addressing this huge problem, but it's still something that is silent. People tolerate it, but we should do everything we can every day to confront this and change this pattern, Mr. Speaker, of tolerance, of ignoring it, of trying to absorb it and say it's been here for a long time and we can't do anything about it. We can and that's the message in this motion and I am pleased to stand here in support of it, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to speak in support of this motion not for the fact that I didn't believe our honourable Premier was sincere in his apology when he did make it. I accepted his apology, but I am in support of this motion simply for the fact that I want to let NWT residents know that MLAs here in this House strongly like to defend victims of sexual abuse. It can't be overstated the amount of pain and suffering that sexual abuse and sexual assault has caused here in the NWT over the last 100 years. It will probably be felt for the next 50 years or more. Even today, we still have six times the national average of sexually related assaults and abuse here in the NWT. I think it's of utmost importance that we stand united together here in the House and put forward a motion that calls for immediate action against the support toward victims of sexual abuse and action against perpetrators of sexual abuse and sexual assault.

We believe here that actions speak louder than words. We can apologize until we are blue in the face, but what are we going to do in the long run and what are we going to do with government policy and how are we going to change people's attitudes towards dealing with sexual abuse? I am sure there are many instances of sexual abuse out there that are still unreported today, Mr. Speaker. I think if this government starts building on support systems and programs to bring those victims out of the closet, I guess, that they have been stuck in for many years, which causes dysfunctional families and dysfunctional lifestyles because they are carrying this burden for years and years. Even if it's not something as harsh as other people might have experienced, but still the longer you carry the small burden in the back of your mind, the bigger it gets as time goes on. People have to live with that and our social fabric suffers because of that and it starts breaking down. We get higher health costs, higher justice costs and the thing just creates a big

snowball effect in communities, especially in the smaller communities where it's prevalent.

This is why I like to support this motion, because I support the victims and I have many victims in my constituency that have suffered through sexual assault, sexual abuse and continue to do so today because we just don't have the programs, the services available, the assistance that we could have to bring these people forward and give them the confidence to say that we are here to support them and we want to help them. Come and see us and we will do what we can to help you with the programs and services that we are able to provide. I think it's a start that we move forward with this motion because it calls for action and we need action. We can't just talk about it until we are all sick and tired of hearing it, because it will never cease. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, rise today to approve of the motion that is before us here. I am in support of the motion. As a former student, I attended residential school in Inuvik and I understand how these people feel. Fortunately, I was one of the lucky ones where it never got to the point where it happened in terms of what has been happening lately.

I appreciate the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes for putting forth this motion. It's hard to talk about it, but I have been to school with some of these people as far east as Cambridge Bay, Taloyoak and all these places I went to school before. I understand this. I went to school with students from Fort Good Hope in the Sahtu. I have been there.

Some of the former students committed suicide even before this whole thing came out. It's a problem when you look at the situation where this is coming out. I appreciate those people who are still coming out and saying something is wrong here and we have to fix it.

We have to be very careful in what we say to the motion. Mr. Speaker, I think we are bringing a message to the government that we will not tolerate it. We have to fight on behalf of people who can't speak for themselves. They are the ones who are coming out right now and I really support their endeavours, Mr. Speaker.

My colleagues are in support of this motion but, like I say, Mr. Speaker, it's something we have to do. Some of my colleagues said that the Premier already apologized for this. The apology might be taken by some Members of this House, but the apology should be to the people who are out there who are still struggling to do something for themselves. As Members right now, we have that opportunity and we are putting forth this motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I, too, am going to support the motion that is before us today. I wanted to go back a little ways. I think what is important here, and my colleague from Inuvik Twin Lakes mentioned it; it's not about us, it's about the victims of sexual abuse in our territory.

All of us have stories and most of us know victims of sexual abuse and the impact it has on their lives. From

where I stand, Mr. Speaker, the Premier has apologized to the Regular Members in this Assembly. He has done that. I personally accepted his apology when he made that to us. But, Mr. Speaker, the Premier sent out a press release as an effort to apologize publicly for the statements that he made and the comments he made in the press with regard to... We all know what we are talking to here and I will be very careful about that. What the Premier hasn't done yet, to date, and I thought, Mr. Speaker, when we gathered here together in this Assembly on October 17th, the first thing the Premier should have done is stand up and publicly apologize to the residents and the victims of sexual abuse across this territory.

That didn't happen, Mr. Speaker. Again, I don't know exactly why it didn't happen but it didn't happen. In my mind, the residents are owed an apology by the Premier. Hopefully, even today, he can stand up and make that apology. I think we have to clear the air on this. We are going to move forward and this also shows some action on behalf of this government in the area of victims of sexual abuse and some support networks that should be readily available for them. So, Mr. Speaker, with that, I fully support the motion and I, too, would like to thank the Regular Members here for bringing the motion forward and us airing this out. I think it's a necessary thing and something that needs to happen. Mahsi.

---Applause

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say a few words about this motion. As I stated in my Tlicho language, what we went through since the remarks came out about Premier Handley about the residential school survivors, as you can see there are some Members in here that went through the system and there are some out there in the audience who are witnessing this motion that was brought forward. I, too, fully support the motion.

Whatever happened in the past, we thought they were hurt and it's going through the proceedings and whatnot. When remarks come out like that, it opens up fresh wounds. The Premier's remarks we have discussed for the last three weeks now, Mr. Speaker. Almost on a daily basis, we have been discussing how we can approach this. As Members around the table, numerous discussions have taken place. We must hold the government accountable, because those individuals cannot stand here and defend themselves.

Accountability is a big word, like Mr. McLeod said. It's not just a word. We have to act on it. We have done it in the past since the beginning of session, there has been some drastic changes. I think we really need to apologize, not necessarily us here, but the Premier as the government leader, as the Premier of the Northwest Territories, and the voice to speak to those individuals out there. He has already apologized to us. I fully accept that myself, but it's not us, as my colleagues have stated, it's those individuals out there.

We must move on. I am hoping we don't face this kind of situation again. We represent the Northwest Territories, 40,000 plus. We stand here every day defending those people. We have to do that until our term is up. There is a lot of respect in that area when we are talking about these particular issues. This is close to our hearts. Our family members have been through this and it's hurting a lot of

people and it's hurting me, too. That's all I need to say. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to, first of all, thank my colleague from Inuvik Twin Lakes for having the courage to bring this motion forward and for standing by and having the courage of his convictions through this entire discussion. I would also like to thank my colleague Sandy Lee, from Range Lake, for seconding this motion and getting this topic onto the floor of the House today.

I would also like to thank people like Ms. Arlene Hache who has been in the visitors' gallery and has been a tireless advocate on behalf of victims and the fallout from the ravages of sexual abuse here in the Northwest Territories, and who works with victims and with families to try to bring about healing. I would like to recognize her today and thank her as well.

Mr. Speaker, to the motion, I think it is good we are having their airing of this issue here today. With respect to the Premier's comments, the Premier has apologized and many Members have said here today that they accept that. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, there is a power to our words. There was a little theme lesson or illustration that was given to some children recently at Sunday School who went out on a particularly windy day a couple of weeks ago in Yellowknife and took a handful of seeds into the wind and let those seeds go. The teacher said if those were your words, can you go back and find those seeds and can you pick them up, gather them up and bring them all back to us? Unfortunately, the power of our words are very strong and sometimes the hurt and the damage that they cause, it's not possible to go out and necessarily gather those words back and retract them the way we would like to.

So this incident and these words have shaken my confidence in the Premier. I have stated publicly in this House before, and to him personally, that I have supported him as the Premier of our government and I would not be truthful today if I did not tell you that what has happened here has shaken my confidence. It's difficult to say that, because we work in a very small, collegial kind of setting around here and it's a very sensitive issue.

I guess also the words that were uttered were really an offence in the public domain. It's not mine to forgive. What is mine, though, is the responsibility to uphold the highest standard of the word and the thoughts and the ideals and the positions taken by this government and by the leaders who are in this government.

So, Mr. Speaker, today I don't pretend to fully comprehend what the victims of abuse have suffered. I made a Member's statement earlier today on some of the ramifications of sexual abuse that had such a tremendous impact on the people of the Northwest Territories. I mentioned that in my Member's statement today and I am not going to go over that again.

Mr. Speaker, by this motion here in the House today, I think that I would like to see this motion be a public declaration that for those who have suffered abuse at the hands of perpetrators and sexual predators, that there is hope. Evil will always thrive when good men say nothing,

but what we are saying today in this House is there is hope, there is justice, there is healing and there is vindication. To those people who have suffered, we, through this motion today, are standing with you. We support you. We encourage you and we want this government to demonstrate, through tangible means, support for those who have been the victims of sexual assault.

Mr. Speaker, for myself, I am sorry. I am sorry for what has happened to people. I am sorry that good intentions of people to educate and intervene in the lives of other people turned so wrong. I am sorry for the children who were taken away from that natural protection and natural authority of their parents and put into the hands and care of people who abused that trust. As a mother, I can tell you there is something that when you think about a child being harmed, there is an emotion that rises up, and I am sure for fathers too, that brings out a protectiveness. I am sorry that no one was there for those children who were taken advantage of and whose lives were so devastated by what happened to them.

Mr. Speaker, I think there is a special place and punishment for people who would hurt a small child. I saw a reference to a bible verse today in Matthew that says that for someone who would hurt a child, it would be better that a millstone was tied around their neck and they were tossed into the sea. These kinds of crimes that were committed against children are of the worst kind.

I just hope, as I said earlier, that people will find peace and healing. I will be supporting the motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to speak briefly to this motion. The motion itself deals with two related but separate issues. The first issue is the censure of me for unfortunate and inappropriate comments that I made to the media last month. The second purpose of the motion is an issue that I believe is fully supported, in fact I know it's fully supported by all Members of this House, and that is to support victims of sexual abuse.

It's unusual to have two such issues put together in the same motion, so I am going to speak to the two parts of the motion separately. First I want to speak to the motion censure and my comments to the media that resulted in that part of the motion. I have addressed this issue previously to Caucus and in a public statement and response to questions in the House at the beginning of the session. Mr. Speaker, I will say again, I am genuinely sorry for the remarks I made. They don't represent my views. It was clear that I should not have spoken about this issue nor should I have said what I said. It was a fundamental error of judgment and, as an experienced politician, I should have known better.

Mostly, Mr. Speaker, I deeply regret the pain that my comments have caused others. It was not my intention to denigrate or dismiss the suffering of people who have been abused sexually or otherwise. I assure you that I will be much more thoughtful in the future before I speak on matters such as this.

Mr. Speaker, my Cabinet colleagues accepted my apology and I am prepared to move. Mr. Speaker, I hope the victims of sexual abuse and all people of the Northwest

Territories and Nunavut accept my apology. Mr. Speaker, I also hope that the honourable Members on the other side of the House accept my apology. I would also like to believe that my record of public service to the people of the Northwest Territories over the past 20-plus years, including seven years in this House and the rest of the time in the public service, are taken into account.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to speak to the second part of the motion which is intended to support victims of sexual abuse and make recommendations to strengthen the policies and programs we have in place to support these victims. I, along with Members of Cabinet, strongly support this part of the motion, but Cabinet will not be voting on this motion because part of the motion constitutes recommendations to us as Cabinet.

However, Mr. Speaker, we are committed to working with other Members to reduce violence in the Northwest Territories and to increase support for victims. This week, we saw the release of a study that showed residents of the Territories are more than three times as likely as their provincial counterparts to fall victim to violent crimes such as robberies and sexual assault. Clearly, we have much to do.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate my apologies to all people who have felt pain as a result of this. Mr. Speaker, I am truly sorry for it and thank you very much.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. I will allow the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, the mover of the motion, to close the debate on this motion. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a proverb says: "He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed." I feel today like I am walking amongst the wise. As I said before, this was not an easy motion to bring forward and I do accept and appreciate the Premier's comments and his apology. I do accept it. It was not our intent, Mr. Speaker, in bringing this motion forward to open old wounds. It was not our intent.

People for years have been going through healing processes. We have to feel for them. They are trying to heal and when you have comments that come out like this, it does open old wounds. I hope that they accept the Premier's apology and they will continue to carry on with their healing. The ones I have met, Mr. Speaker, are very, very strong people to live with what they live with every day. It's a healing process and I don't think it's something that just heals overnight. They go through the healing process.

That was one of the things I struggled with deeply, Mr. Speaker, was the fact that people are trying to go through a healing process and then they hear comments and it just opens old wounds again and the stress that it must cause them.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues for their support to the motion. I appreciate their words. This is a sensitive subject in the Northwest Territories. I think you have all spoken well to the motion. I appreciate that.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I do want to send a message to all the survivors out there. As some of my colleagues have said, this was not about us. We felt that we had to stand and show support and I pray that your journey into healing is a good one and I just want you to know that we have taken steps that we believe, amongst each other, to hold the Premier accountable for his remarks and hopefully

that puts some closure to this discussion in this Chamber and hopefully it will put closure to what a lot of survivors have gone through. Hopefully, this is part of the healing process and it helps them. Our prayers are with you and we wish you nothing but the best of luck. Thank you again, colleagues.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Recorded vote has been requested. All those in favour, please stand.

Recorded Vote

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. McLeod, Inuvik Twin Lakes; Mr. Hawkins; Mrs. Groenewegen; Mr. Ramsay; Mr. Pokiak; Mr. Villeneuve; Mr. Lafferty; Ms. Lee; Mr. Braden.

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

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

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. The results of the motion are nine for, zero against, seven abstaining. The motion is carried.

---Carried

---Applause

Before we go onto the orders of the day, Members, the Chair is going to call a short break.

---SHORT RECESS

MR. SPEAKER: We'll return to orders of the day. Motions. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

Motion 10-15(5): Transfer Of Responsibility For Social Housing, Carried

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. WHEREAS there are serious problems associated with the transfer of responsibility for the administration of social housing from the NWT Housing Corporation to the Department of Education, Culture and Employment;

AND WHEREAS residents of the Northwest Territories living in social housing are being inconvenienced by the disconnect between the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, which calculates the amount of subsidy, and the local housing authority, which determines the unit's rent;

AND WHEREAS in the absence of centralized government service centres, some tenants attempting to pay rent on their social housing are compelled to attend at least two government offices, and possibly a banking institution and, as well, are not able to pay their rent in a single visit;

AND WHEREAS the inability of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment to calculate subsidies in a timely manner and pass that information on to the local housing authorities has had a downstream effect and has negatively affected the cash flow of local housing authorities and may impact on their ability to maintain their units;

AND WHEREAS the local housing authorities have in the past demonstrated their competency in calculating subsidy eligibility and rental rates;

AND WHEREAS it would be desirable for there to be one-stop access for social housing clients attempting to pay their rent;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable member for Range Lake, that the responsibility for the administration of social housing be once again placed under the control of the NWT Housing Corporation;

AND FURTHER, that the responsibility for determining the methodology of calculating social housing subsidies remain with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Motion is on the floor. Motion is in order. To the motion. Honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is a motion that I was more than happy to bring forward. The transfer over to ECE has had an effect on a lot of housing tenants. I think when we were up in Sachs Harbour we were spoken to by a lady that had to fax her information to the Education, Culture and Employment office in Inuvik and wait for it to come back. We've heard many stories, Mr. Speaker, from tenants that are having trouble with this new program. The government likes to say that they're having one-stop shopping and I challenge that, because I think, Mr. Speaker, that it may be easier on the employees of ECE to have everyone there, but they're having trouble getting a lot of this information back to the housing authorities on time. It's affecting the housing authorities' ability to do their business. When the Housing Corporation looked after the money, it was put in their accounts on a quarterly basis and that gave them the ability to do all the work that's required. I'm not sure what the vacancy rate is on some of these units. It's just been a real problem, Mr. Speaker, to a lot of housing tenants; not only housing tenants, it's affecting some of the housing authorities. Some of the Members have spoken to it in the past in some of their Members' statements and in some of the questions.

So I think, Mr. Speaker, with this motion what we're hoping to do is ask the government to transfer the responsibility back to the NWT Housing Corporation and the \$35 million along with it, and allow the local housing authorities to do a job that they've been doing for years and years, and they've been doing it well, Mr. Speaker. It's an easier process for the tenants and we have to listen to what the constituents are telling us. I'm not sure how it is with the transfer over to ECE, if they've been trained well enough; it doesn't seem to be. Tenants are having to wait three weeks to have their assessment done. A lot of people that have never been in arrears before are in arrears because of the lateness of the assessments getting back over to the housing authorities. So what we're asking today, Mr. Speaker, is for this government to be big enough to realize that this is a program that's not working, and be big enough to say that we'll listen to the constituents, we'll listen to the residents on this one, and we'll move it back to the responsibility of the NWT Housing Corporation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. To the motion. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to comment briefly in support of this motion, as the seconder of this motion. Mr. Speaker, I must say I have tried to remember all of the arguments in support of this transfer that came about in some of the discussions we had in the committee

meetings and such, and I have to tell you I cannot really think of one good rationale as to why this move was made, other than to say what the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes has already mentioned, which was that there should be one-stop shopping, so to speak, for housing subsidy programs.

I remember being advised before all the details were worked out about the implications of moving this program. The statement was made that the money should be transferred to ECE and that the details and more of the merit of the case will be brought before the committee members after the fact. Now that I have heard from the constituents all over the Territories, I am more convinced than at the time, and I was not entirely convinced at the time, that this was not the right move. If it is the right move, the government has not met the burden of making their case.

Mr. Speaker, when we went out on the road over the summer months to do pre-budget consultations, I cannot tell you...There was not one community where the issues about this did not come about. This is a big issue for those people in Yellowknife who are getting housing subsidies through the Housing Corporation who are now having to go to ECE. When we were in Sachs Harbour, I learned, once again, how we are so insulated from the implications of a small decision, which we thought was more of an efficiency situation, about government doing things more efficiently. There was not any new additional money being put forward for housing subsidy and, in fact, I think this transfer has cost the government more money, because now ECE is having to create new positions to do that.

What we learned, that really surprised me, in Sachs Harbour, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that the housing worker that has a job there and has always done this could not do it anymore, and now we are seeing situations where in small communities their files are being moved to regional headquarters and bogging down the system even more than it was before. If at all possible, government should be making changes to either enhance the program, improve the program, and have more benefits at the user level. I tell you, this transfer is something that didn't make sense at the time, that has not made it's case by the government thus far, and that until the government establishes their case for this and meets the burden of proving that, I am in strong favour of moving this program back to the Housing Corporation until the government establishes and proves their case.

So just in short, Mr. Speaker, I think this has caused nothing but heartache for the people who are applying it. It has not added any more benefits to the beneficiaries of the program. It has caused a great deal of stress to the workers in the field who are delivering these programs, and I think government has an obligation to take it back and revisit it and make it better before they come to us again to do that. So for that reason, Mr. Speaker, I will be voting in support of this motion. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. To the motion. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I read the motion; I've heard some statements made, both in committee and now. I will not be voting in favour of the motion. I think the concerns highlighted through disconnect means that maybe the government isn't working hard enough, but I believe in the theme and the

concept of harmonization. There is one problem I will definitely say, and that is I think the day that the government took social workers out of these types of programs was a mistake of this government as a whole. Not this Assembly, the 15th, but the one that did that action.

I think housing officers need to be social workers to some extent. I believe income support workers need to be social workers. I think those are the people who can help folks out there who are in this category.

If there are problems paying rent, Mr. Speaker, you know, no system is flawless, but I believe harmonization is the way to go. I believe that if we're having trouble with subsidies in the sense of calculating them, again, that's why MLAs are here. If people are having difficulty getting their payments in, we have to consider those options, as MLAs, bring them forward to the ministry. That's what we do each and every day.

Mr. Speaker, as it's said here, it would be desirable if there was a one-stop centre. Yes, sometimes things take time, but I'm a big believer in service centre concepts. I believe it was difficult to finally get it to the next stage of the harmonization, so, therefore, I will be supporting it...Or, sorry; supporting my perspective, by voting against it. Thank you.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will be speaking in favour of the motion. I questioned the sense of moving the housing funding to ECE at the time that it happened. I cannot remember, for the life of me, what the explanation was that the Minister of ECE came up with. He was extremely strident in whatever the case was that he put forward. I thought it made no sense at the time, and now that we see it actually playing out in real life, I think it is an untenable, awkward situation. I think the LHOs were doing a fine job of collecting the rent and assessing the rent for the housing clients. I think that everybody has been put in an awkward situation; most importantly, the tenants themselves.

Mr. Speaker, I find it interesting that when we're speaking in this House, the Minister who this affects does not take the time to even pay attention to what we're saying and has been talking during every presentation we've made to this motion, but anyway...Mr. Speaker, I will be interested in hearing again what the Minister of ECE has to say about what the good and valid reasons were that he had. In the process of conveying this money, 13 new positions were created at a cost of about \$1.3 million to the Department of ECE, and I think we should just roll it back and I think the Minister should be held accountable for this disaster. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this issue has some considerable history dating back, by my recollection, to the 13th Assembly, where we started moving on the issue of harmonization and trying to better integrate the programs to make them more efficient and effective for the people that are using these very much needed programs. It carried over into the 14th and then again into the 15th before there was any decision to finally act.

Our job, as legislators, is to look at these types of issues that are very important. They require significant structural change and a commitment to stay and try to work things through. I recollect the concerns about housing at the time were significant, about the way they were located, the disconnect with the social workers, the disconnect with income support, and that we had to do a better job of trying to deliver this service. I believe the concept is a sound one. I believe what we're struggling with here clearly are implementation problems. If it's an implementation problem, then let's identify what the specific issues are, set some timelines and take a look at what's going to be done to improve this circumstance before we try to roll back significant structural change, transfers of tens of millions of dollars, positions, policies. We spent months working with the public to get them ready for this, and the issue of changing horses in midstream, throwing out the baby with the bathwater, we have to be very careful how we do this. So I'm suggesting we look at the implementation piece on this and if it needs fixing, as it clearly does from the concerns being raised to the MLAs, then we should task the responsible department to lay out the timelines and how they're going to address those issues and be able to report back.

With eight months to go, to suggest we do a major rollback of one of the biggest policy initiatives in this government, in the life of this Assembly, I think is going to be very difficult to do, and is not the right step, in my mind, so I won't be supporting this motion. Thank you.

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

MR. POKIAK: I think, Mr. Speaker, some of my colleagues already indicated...Oh, I'm sorry. I will support the motion, Mr. Speaker.

When we travelled to the communities during the pre-budget, we did hear a lot of the problems the housing association are having with income support workers. It's been over seven months since we implemented the program and they're still trying to figure out how it's supposed to work.

The intent, I guess, at the time, was to have a one-stop shop. We still don't see it in the communities. Right now, when you travel to Sachs, when I went with the Minister of Housing, the housing association managers were overseeing that program. Then you have to let...(inaudible)...you have to receive a fax to get information. Subsequent to our meeting in Ulukhaktok with the Housing Minister at that time, there were so many problems going on with the program that eventually the same week, the following week, the Department of ECE actually sent people from headquarters to the Inuvik region to go talk of income support work in Ulukhaktok and rectify the problem.

One individual in Ulukhaktok at the same time at the meetings said it was working before, so why change it? Comments like that, something was working; you try and change it and it is not working today. Mr. Speaker, I will support the motion. Thank you.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to speak to this motion today. I hear the concerns of my colleagues, especially my colleagues from the smaller communities. They are hearing the brunt of the issues that are out there facing their constituents. This whole transfer of responsibility for social housing from the

Housing Corporation over to ECE two years ago when it all started was, and continues to be for me, one of the strangest and most bizarre things that I have seen here in this House as a Member of this Legislative Assembly. I will tell you a little story, if I could, in speaking to this motion.

Thirty million dollars was taken from the Housing Corporation over to ECE to roll out the social housing policy and look after it. Thirteen positions were needed at ECE to carry out the work that was being done by the Housing Corporation and the staff in the regions. There was no rhyme nor reason as to why the positions couldn't come over with the money. We left the positions in. I am still left baffled as to what exactly the people who were doing the social policy work in the Housing Corporation are now doing now that the money is over at ECE. Last year we took I believe it was in the neighbourhood of half a million dollars out of a supp to try to send a message to the government that it didn't quite add up for us. It didn't add up for me, and it didn't add up for a number of my colleagues over here, that the government wanted to hire 13 people in ECE to deliver the same thing that the Housing Corporation was delivering. We were successful in taking that money out of the supp. We turn around, and the next thing you know, \$1.3 million is just grabbed from the Housing Corporation budget to fund the new positions. It is completely bizarre. Again, there was no rhyme, there was no reason as to why and how this all took place.

Fundamentally, I agree with some of my colleagues here that a centralized service delivery model is possibly the best way to go about things, but there are some serious concerns on implementation of this. If the problems out there are existing to the extent where Members are hearing concerns from their constituents and things aren't getting done and things are just a complete mess, I think that is, for me, why I am going to support the motion. I mentioned it the other day, too, when Ministers travel to various FPT meetings across the country, oftentimes they learn ideas or they see things that provinces are doing and these super service centres are all the rage now in southern Canada. We come back here and we try to think, hey, maybe we can do this here too. But it doesn't always work here. We have only 42,000 people and we have scarce resources. Yet, what happened? What took place there? I still cannot figure it out exactly what transpired there with the 13 positions at ECE and the people that were at the Housing Corporation. Mr. Speaker, I have to chuckle because that, to me, was just completely absurd. I have yet to hear an explanation exactly how that all happened, Mr. Speaker.

I will support the motion in support of my colleagues in the regions who have heard the concerns and are hearing the concerns. Even in my riding, Mr. Speaker, I have heard concerns as well. So I will support the motion. I think some of the responsibility here, and let's be clear with this, lies with us, with the Regular Members, with the Social Programs committee. I am not on that committee, but let's try to work through some of this stuff. There has to be an easier and a better way to do things. Right now, it seems like a complete mess, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. To the motion. I will allow the Member, the mover of the motion, to close the debate. Sorry. To the motion. The honourable Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I understand that some of the Members are hearing from their constituents the concerns around the

transfer of social housing to the assessment part from the Housing Corporation to ECE. I know that housing is an important issue for all of our constituents in all of our communities, so I understand the reason for wanting to bring this item forward.

I like to point out that we are fairly early in the process of this transfer. It has only been some seven months since ECE has had full responsibility for administering the Public Housing Rental Subsidy Program. Part of the transfer that seems to have gotten wrapped up in the transfer is the fact that the Housing Corporation instituted the last phase of the rent scale change on April 1st as well. So there has been a change in the rent scales that happen that was brought in on units. It was brought in by the Housing Corporation. I think, in many cases, that is getting wrapped up in tenant concerns about the way the program is rolling out in the communities.

I think also that we have to remember that when you change a program of this magnitude, you are going to have some unexpected problems that are going to come about with the transfer. I know that, within three months of the start of the program, we set up a working group that involved people from LHOs, from the Housing Corporation, the regional managers from Education, Culture and Employment. We met in July. They set up a work plan. They have identified from the LHO side, the tenant side, from the ECE side, where the problems are. They have a list of tasks that they need to address. The plan is that they will meet in about two weeks from now to take a look at that work plan, see how far they have come along. But I would be quite happy to report to the Standing Committee on Social Programs what that work plan looks like and give an update on the progress that is being made.

Part of what has been frustrating, too, is that we have been under some pressure from Members in this House to make some changes, but before the transfer was made, Members asked that we not make any changes to the housing subsidy for at least the first year to make sure that ECE was aware of the program and how it was working. For this year, we have followed the exact same policies that were in place for years, set up by the Housing Corporation.

I think it is also important to remember that the transfer of the Public Housing Rental Subsidy Program is a critical part of a much larger project which is to address income security redesign. The focus of that program is to create a system that supports self-reliance for people to the greatest extent possible while ensuring we have support available for those who need it. We have, in this government, \$128 million in subsidies that we pay out directly to people. The largest single part of that is the public housing rental subsidy. We know that these programs, because they were developed at different times by different departments and with different goals in mind when they were developed, we know that not all of our programs work very well together. I have heard many times from Members of this House, they have talked about how the rent scale doesn't encourage self-reliance. It doesn't help that the program is set up so there are clawbacks that don't engender that self-reliance when people get into work. As we are redesigning the Income Security Program, those are the sorts of issues that we are hoping that we are going to be able to address.

I am hoping to be able to come forward to the Standing Committee on Social Programs within the year, before Christmas, to outline some of the options we have to be

able to better streamline our programs and better make sure the programs like the public housing rental subsidy do, in fact, not penalize people who go out and become more productive.

So I think that there is no question there was some teething problems. We hear about that from agencies. If LHOs are having cash flow problems, if those are brought to our attention, those are issues we can deal with. If the LHOs are advising the Housing Corporation that they have a cash flow problem, then we can meet together with the Housing Corporation and find a way to deal with that.

The first time the meeting was held in July, that issue was brought up. So rather than waiting for the assessments and transferring money after the assessments are done, now the money is being advanced to the LHOs from ECE. The money is being advanced to the Housing Corporation so that there isn't a need for LHOs to wait, and a reconciliation can be done on that funding later.

So, Mr. Speaker, government always pays attention to what it hears in this House. We have heard the concern that is being expressed by Members around this motion. I hope that Members will give government a chance to come back to the standing committee and outline our work plan for resolving the problems that are there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. I will allow the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes to close the debate on the motion.

MR. MCLEOD: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to some of my colleagues who are supporting the motion. We are trying to listen to what constituents are telling us. I really challenge the government to be big enough to listen to what they are being asked to do. If it's not working, let's go with something that works. Lord knows, if we find anything else that's working in the government, are we going to try to change that too? I think this was a program that was working. I think we should stick with it. We've received numerous concerns from constituents. I know I have personally and I want to act on those. I want to do what's right for the constituent here. I really do.

Talk about growing pains and maybe that's all true, but the fact of the matter is we're doing what residents are wanting us to do, what's good for the residents, not what's good for the departments. Isn't that why we are here, to do what's good for the residents and not what is good for departments? I thank the Members that supported me on this motion. I think it's a good motion. I think it's a motion that if you went from community to community and asked everybody if it's working, I would say 99.9 percent of the communities, LHOs, would tell you this is not a program that's working. Seven months is a long time. It's a simple little process. Get your rent assessed, pay it and you're done, but they've complicated things again. So, Mr. Speaker, I was more than glad to present this motion, because I believe I was doing what residents want me to do and I think the government should look at that and do what residents want them to do, too. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. 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

---Applause

Motions. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 13, Committee Report 6-15(5), with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I will call Committee of the Whole to order. We have two items in front of us. Bill 13, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2006-2007, and also Committee Report 6-15(5), Report on Pre-Budget Consultations, 2006. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the committee wishes to consider Bill 13, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2006-2007, and Committee Report 6-15(5), Accountability and Oversight Committee Report on Pre-Budget Consultations, 2006. Mahsi, Madam Chair.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Then I would ask Mr. Roland, who is responsible for Bill 13 and the Financial Management Board, if he would proceed with his opening comments. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am pleased to introduce Bill 13, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No 2, 2006-2007. This bill requests authority for a negative appropriation of \$4.320 million for operations expenditures and a negative appropriation of \$124,000 for capital investment expenditures in the 2006-2007 fiscal year.

To clarify the contents of the bill, the supplementary appropriation is requesting approval for an additional \$29 million in operations expenditures. Of this amount, \$19 million will be offset by additional revenues to be received from the federal government. As a result, a net increase to operations expenditures of \$10 million is being requested.

Bill 13 also includes a negative \$33.4 million adjustment for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. This change is being proposed as a result of a recommendation by the office of the Auditor General, and represents the full amount of the community capacity building fund reported in the 2005-2006 Public Accounts. Previously, that portion of funding that had not been distributed to community governments by the end of the 2005-2006 fiscal period was carried forward from 2005-2006 and was approved as part of the 2006-2007 Supplementary Appropriation, No. 1. The current request will rescind this previous approval.

Major items included in this request for operations expenditures are as follows:

1. \$16.7 million for funding provided through the northern housing trust. The expenditure will be fully offset by revenues from the federal government. In accordance with recommendations made during the finalization of the 2005-2006 Public Accounts, this funding will be cash flowed through the Financial Management Board Secretariat to the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.
2. \$2.5 million for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs for repair work and disaster assistance claims resulting from flooding in Aklavik

during the 2006 breakup. The expenditures will be partially offset by revenues from the federal government.

3. \$1.9 million for the Department of Justice to fund the Government of the Northwest Territories' share of increased costs under the Territorial Police Services Agreement.

Major items included in this request for capital investment expenditures are as follows:

1. A negative \$2.5 million adjustment for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment to advance the replacement of Deh Cho Hall in Fort Simpson.
2. \$1.5 million for the Department of Human Resources to fund additional costs associated with the upgrade of the human resource information system.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. I would like to ask Mr. Roland if he would like to bring witnesses into the Chamber.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Yes, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I would ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to bring the witnesses to the witness table.

Mr. Roland, for the record, could you please introduce your witness.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Joining me at the witness table is Mr. Mark Cleveland, secretary to the Financial Management Board.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. I will now ask the Members if there are any general comments. General comments. Okay, does the committee agree that we'll proceed to the detail of Bill 13?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Okay. I will ask the Members, then please, if they would turn to page 5 in the bill. We'll go through the line by line and then we'll return to the preamble, the schedule and the clauses. So on page 5, Executive, operations expenditures, Financial Management Board Secretariat, directorate, \$16.65 million, total Financial Management Board Secretariat, \$16.65 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed, thank you. Executive, operations expenditures, Human Resources, not previously authorized, client services, \$1.37 million, total department, \$18.02 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Municipal and Community Affairs, operations expenditures, directorate, not previously authorized, \$921,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Community operations, special warrants, community operations, \$1.7 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Community operations, \$817,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Okay, School of Community Government, negative \$33.4 million, regional operations, \$77,000, total department, special warrants, \$1.7 million, not previously authorized \$31.585 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Oh it's...I can't read it. Let's just call that again. Total department, special warrants, \$1.7 million, not previously authorized, negative \$31.585 million.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed, thank you. Page 8, Public Works and Services, operations expenditures, not previously authorized, asset management, negative \$10,000, Technology Services Centre, \$104,000, total department, not previously authorized, \$94,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed, thank you. Health and Social Services, operations expenditures, not previously authorized, directorate, \$260,000, health services programs, \$201,000, total department, not previously authorized, \$461,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Justice, operations expenditures, not previously authorized, services to government, \$60,000, law enforcement, \$1.87 million, total department, not previously authorized, \$1.93 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): NWT Housing Corporation, operations expenditures, not previously authorized, NWT Housing Corporation, \$311,000, total department, \$311,000, not previously authorized.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed, thank you. Education, Culture and Employment, operations expenditures, directorate, not previously authorized, \$142,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Education and culture, special warrant, \$560,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Income security, not previously authorized, \$125,000, education and culture, not previously authorized, \$1.502 million, income security, not previously authorized, \$125,000, total department, special warrants, \$560,000, total department, not previously authorized, \$1.769 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Transportation, operations expenditures, corporate services, not previously authorized, \$507,000, airports, \$84,000. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I had a question in regard to the money, the accrued interest, legal fees, bank fees. It's seeming to pile up on the Deh Cho Bridge project; it's \$507,000. I'm wondering if the Minister can tell us if we're putting a timeline or a fixed date. We had the Premier mention to us this summer that we were going to put our foot down and we weren't going to be spending any more money in this area until obviously \$70 million was going to fall out of the sky somehow. But when are the brakes going to be put on the spending here and when is our risk that we have there going to be stopped? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, this amount is calculated with interest and costs up to March 31st, 2007, and the costs have been carried and rolled over and the interest has been growing and we were requested by the bank that these portions, this portion of the guarantee, they'd requested it be paid out and that's why it's here today. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. If you had a loan with the bank and you paid it out, you wouldn't have any more interest that you'd have to pay on it. So I'm just wondering if the loan guarantee hasn't been paid out, why hasn't it been paid out and when might that happen so we don't have to pay interest on it? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the guarantee is still in place. It has not been paid out and we're waiting for further indication from the federal government if they will entertain this project. At that point these costs will be recovered from the project. If there is no decision to proceed with this project, then we will be, as a GNWT, fully on the hook for the total costs. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think we're dreaming quite a big dream if we think we can recoup some of these costs going forward. I'd say, you know, from a financial standpoint, the sooner we pay out the loan guarantee and get on with things the better off we'll be. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the Cabinet has reviewed this. There has been discussion on a number of occasions when the request was made to extend this. That's why we've given it a timeline of March 31st, 2007, in the possibility that there might be an announcement on infrastructure programs from the federal government. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Transportation, operation expenditures, corporate services, not previously authorized, \$507,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Airports, \$84,000, not previously authorized.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Highways, not previously authorized, \$163,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Ferries, \$670,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Total department, not previously authorized, \$1.424 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Industry, Tourism and Investment, operations expenditures, not previously authorized, economic development, \$691,000, total department, not previously authorized, \$691,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed, thank you. Environment and Natural Resources, operations expenditures, corporate management, not previously authorized, \$305,000, total department, not previously authorized, \$305,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed, thank you. Executive, capital investment expenditures, Human Resources, not previously authorized, directorate, \$1.501 million. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd just like a little bit more background on this. If the budget was \$500,000, why are we looking at another additional \$1.5 million to fund this upgrade? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the original timeline of this work was scheduled over a two-year period. The total figure for that was \$1 million. So we've requested the funding be brought forward to this year, as well as the additional costs of the contract itself. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. If you had \$1 million already, why do we need \$1.5 million more? Is the total contract \$2.5 million? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the total project cost is \$2.001 million. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Is this type of expenditure and upgrades to PeopleSoft something that's going to require a financial injection every couple of years? When are we going to reach the point when we don't have to put as much money into upgrades on this system? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, as we've become accustomed to in this area under the PeopleSoft program, there will be further requirements as the years progress to continue to

upgrade. There has been a significant holdback from the previous version, 8.3, to the updated version now that we will require of 8.9 as the 8.3 version will no longer be supported by the company and we're needing to upgrade our system so that we can operate more efficiently and effectively through our systems in place. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Okay, Executive, capital investment expenditures, Human Resources, not previously authorized, directorate, \$1.501 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Total Human Resources, \$1.501 million, total department, \$1.501 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed, thank you. Public Works and Services, capital investment expenditures, not previously authorized, asset management, \$75,000, total department, \$75,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Education, Culture and Employment, capital investment expenditures, not previously authorized, advanced education and careers, negative \$2.5 million, total department, negative \$2.5 million. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to thank the Minister for this one. When this discussion took place last year in regard to Deh Cho Hall and the upgrades there and the government having to spend \$3 million to keep the facility open for two years, in essence it was as decision that I felt at the time was one that we shouldn't have made. I'm very happy to see that the government has reversed its direction in this regard and is going to go out and actually build an office building to meet the requirements that the government needs in Fort Simpson. So, again, I just wanted to thank the Minister for that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Education, Culture and Employment, capital investment expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, negative \$2.5 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed, thank you. Transportation, capital investment expenditures, not previously authorized for ferries, \$800,000, total department, \$800,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed, thank you. Would the Members please go back to the beginning of the bill to the schedule on page 3. Okay, the schedule on page 3, supplementary amounts appropriated for the 2006-07 fiscal year, part I, vote I, operations expenditures, total supplementary appropriation for operations expenditures, negative \$4.32 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Part 2, vote 2, capital investment expenditures, total supplementary appropriation for capital investment expenditures, negative \$124,000, total supplementary appropriation, negative \$4.444 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed, thank you. To the clauses, then please, on page 1. We'll stand down the preamble and go to clause 1.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 2.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 3.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 4.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 5.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 6.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 7.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): The preamble.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Committee. Does the committee agree Bill 13 as a whole?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Does the committee agree that Bill 13 is ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed, thank you. Bill 13 is now ready for third reading. Thank you, Mr. Roland, and thank you, Mr. Cleveland. We'll give you a moment to collect your things and move on to the next item on our agenda, which is the committee report on the pre-budget consultation, Committee Report 6-15(5). Thank you. To the committee report, Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight have reviewed and also there's the budget that's in front of us, the pre-budget consultation has been deemed read last week. There's a couple recommendations that are coming forward. I have two motions here.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Please proceed with your motion, Mr. Lafferty.

Committee Motion 40-15(5): CR 6-15(5): Energy Efficiency Loan Program Proposal, Carried

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I move that this committee recommends the government bring forward as soon as possible a proposal for an energy efficiency loan program to provide interest free loans on a non-means tested basis to assist homeowners to finance upgrades aimed at reducing their energy consumption costs, including, but not limited to, woodstoves, pellet stoves, high efficiency oil heaters, solar panels, improved insulation and siding and more energy-efficient windows. Mahsi, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The motion is in order. To the motion. Doesn't anybody want to say what a great motion this is?

---Laughter

AN HON. MEMBER: Question

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Question is being called. All those in favour of the motion? All those opposed? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Lafferty.

Committee Motion 41-15(5): CR 6-15(5): Comprehensive Response Within 120 Days, Carried

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Madam Chair. Mahsi, colleagues. Madam Chair, I move that this committee recommends the government provide a comprehensive response to this report within 120 days. Mahsi, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Your motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Question is being called. All those in favour of the Motion? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

---Applause

Does the committee agree that consideration of Committee Report 6-15(5) has been concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed, thank you. What's the wish of the Committee? Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I move we report progress.

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

---Carried

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

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

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Bill 13, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2006-2007, and Committee Report 6-15(5), and would like to report progress with two motions being adopted, and that Committee Report 6-15(5) is concluded, and that Bill 13 is ready for third reading. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

---Carried

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

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, orders of the day for Thursday, November 2, 2006, at 1:30 p.m.

1. Prayer

2. Ministers' Statements

3. Members' Statements
4. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
5. Returns to Oral Questions
6. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Opening Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motion
15. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
 - Motion 11, Dissolution of the 15th Legislative Assembly
 - Motion 12, Extended Adjournment of the House to February 7, 2007
 - Motion 13, Appointment of Chief Electoral Officer
 - Motion 15-15(5), Appointments to Standing Committees and the Board of Management

17. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 9, Write-off of Assets Act, 2006-2007
18. Second Reading of Bills
19. Report of Committee of the Whole
20. Third Reading of Bills
 - Bill 13, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2006-2007
21. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Thursday, November 2, 2006, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 17:32.

