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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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Tel: (867) 669-2200 Fax: (867) 920-4735 Toll-Free: 1-800-661-0784
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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Wednesday, May 9, 2007****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 Chamber for the continuation of the sixth and final session of the 15th Legislative Assembly.

Speaker's Opening Comments

I know you are all eager to get started in this, our next to last sitting, but I would like to take a few moments to acknowledge some special events in our Legislature since we last met.

I was very pleased last week to hold the 8th Annual Youth Parliament of the Northwest Territories. Nineteen high school students from each electoral district in the Northwest Territories participated and received a first-hand look at the workings of our unique style of government. As I had announced earlier, the theme for this year's Parliament focussed on enhancing the role of women in politics, and I am proud to announce that 16 of the 19 youth parliamentarians were young women.

---Applause

I applaud all 19 members of this year's Youth Parliament for a job well done. I was fortunate to be in the gallery for the sitting of the Youth Parliament and witness the performance, and I am confident that maybe we'll see some of them representing future governments of the Northwest Territories.

In continuing the theme of women in politics, it was also my pleasure last week to welcome the Outreach Program of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians, Canadian Region. We were very fortunate that this meeting coincided with our Youth Parliament and it was a great pleasure to have such capable, experienced politicians including our very own Ms. Lee and Mrs. Groenewegen address the young parliamentarians.

Sadly, colleagues, we have seen the loss of several great leaders and prominent northerners in the last few weeks. We join with their families and communities to mourn the passing of respected elder and former Member of this House, Mr. Pauloosie Paniloo; former Member of Parliament, Robert -- better known as "Bud" -- Orange; respected elder Harry Simpson of Gameti; Robert Blake of Fort McPherson; Phillip Goulet of Ndilo; Garret Ruben of Paulatuk; and Winnie Carpenter of Sachs Harbour. All were noted for their many contributions to their communities and to the North. I extend my condolences, and those of this House, to the families and the communities of all of these men and women. They were leaders who will be missed by their people.

Also, our condolences go out to all residents of the Northwest Territories who have had the misfortune of losing loved ones since our last sitting.

Now, colleagues, to the business at hand. As my representative from Hay River North in Youth Parliament so politely put it: Let's move on.

I look forward to a very productive session and remind you all of the standards that we have set for the dignity and respect of this House.

Orders of the day. Ministers' statements. The honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**Minister's Statement 7-15(6): Sessional Statement**

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, as this Legislative Assembly is in the final year of its mandate with an election scheduled for this fall, it seems like an appropriate time to take stock of our work to date. In particular, I want to speak about some of the major initiatives we have moved forward over the past year and those that will be the focus of our work for the remainder of our mandate.

I want to congratulate all students from the Northwest Territories who have or will be graduating from high school and post-secondary school programs this spring and summer. The education of our youth remains one of the most pressing challenges facing our territory and a continuing priority of this government.

The record number of graduates we have seen over the past several years from high school and post-secondary institutions, along with the significant investments this Legislative Assembly has made in our education system, bodes well for the future of our territory. To our graduates and all other students, we salute your hard work and commitment and hope you choose to put your knowledge and skills to work in the Northwest Territories.

---Applause

Mr. Speaker, when we took office in late 2003, we began a consultative process leading to the development of a strategic plan that has been the basis for our work over the past three and a half years. A major focus of our work has been to provide our residents and communities with the tools they need to help build a better life for themselves and their families.

The most basic need for people in all of our communities is access to affordable housing. While the demand for affordable housing in this territory still far outstrips supply, we have made significant gains in closing the gap. In partnership with the federal government, we have invested \$100 million in the affordable housing initiative to build over 500 new dwellings over a period of three years. We are also working to streamline our traditional programming to ensure greater flexibility and access for those most in need.

Homelessness is also a critical issue in our communities. The issue is a complex one as the factors leading to homelessness are diverse and vary over time. No one sector or level of government alone can address the problems of homelessness. We recognize those on the front lines, who work directly with homeless people or

people at risk of homelessness, are best placed to identify effective solutions. Joint action between governments, the private sector and not-for-profit organizations is the best way to reduce and prevent homelessness

An example of this type of joint effort is Bailey House in Yellowknife, named for Reverend Gordon and Ruth Bailey. This facility will offer services beyond those offered in emergency shelters by assisting homeless male clients seeking to make the transition to a permanent community residence. Support for the facility is coming from many sources, including the federal government, the City of Yellowknife, the Bailey House Fundraising Committee, Diavik Diamond Mines, and others. Our government is providing a significant financial contribution to this project through the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, Education, Culture and Employment, and Health and Social Services.

This year we will also be seeking applications in communities for projects to provide shelter services for individuals who are homeless and do not have access to emergency housing.

Providing increased and better programming for youth in our communities also remains an important focus for this government. This year we are increasing funding support for the operation of community youth centres. We also continue to provide funding for important programs, such as the NWT Youth Corp, which supports a wide range of youth-at-risk initiatives, and the Take a Kid Trapping, which allows an estimated 1,000 young people to learn more about northern culture through this on-the-land initiative.

Foster care is an essential and necessary service provided throughout the territory by many dedicated foster parents who care for some of our most vulnerable children. As a result of increased concern regarding regional discrepancies in foster care rates, we'll be taking steps during the current session to enhance funding allocated to foster care services in all communities.

Ensuring safe communities remains an essential part of providing residents with the tools to help themselves. Eliminating the instances of violence against families is a critical element of this. In 2004, we tabled our response to the NWT Action Plan on Family Violence. Phase two will be a five-year framework that will improve education and awareness, enhance prevention activities and services, improve training, and further develop partnerships and coordination that will lead to significant investments and concrete actions over the next four years to address issues around family violence. In 2007-2008, we will be proposing additional funding to advance specific actions such as specialized training for shelter workers on helping children who witness abuse.

As part of the government's commitment to enhancing community policing, we are proposing to fund six new RCMP positions to provide full-time policing services in Gameti, Wrigley and Sachs Harbour.

---Applause

Contribution funding for victim services organizations has been increased by 50 percent starting this year and we are beginning programs to do outreach work with child victims.

Mr. Speaker, we are also working hard to provide communities with the resources necessary to deal with challenges they face. We have significantly increased funding to community governments over the past three

years. Since 2004, we have provided an additional \$9.6 million to communities for O and M, and increased funding for community public infrastructure by \$12.9 million. We also established a \$35 million community capacity building fund to allow communities to address local priorities.

A second priority identified in our strategic plan was the need to negotiate fair deals with Canada and aboriginal governments.

As all Members of this Legislative Assembly contributed greatly to ensuring our message has been heard in southern Canada, in 2005 we went en masse to Ottawa with aboriginal leaders and leaders from our business community to bring this message directly to the federal decision-makers. We also made our case to the Council of Federation Advisory Panel on Fiscal Imbalance and the Federal Expert Panel on Equalization and Territorial Formula Financing.

We were pleased both of these important panels recognized the challenges facing northern governments in providing basic public services to their residents. Their report emphasized a unique territorial characteristic: the small dispersed populations, developing economies, underdeveloped infrastructure, high living costs, challenging social living conditions relative to southern Canada, and evolving political systems in the northern territories.

As a result of these efforts, our overall financial position has improved and stabilized since we took office in 2003. The recent federal budget contained a number of important commitments for northerners, not the least of which was confirmation of a new territorial financing formula. The federal budget also included additional funding to address infrastructure needs, climate change, and several other key priority areas for the North. As well, our borrowing limit has been increased to \$500 million, providing future governments with the flexibility to make strategic investments in critical northern infrastructure.

We are pleased that resource revenue sharing discussions can now continue within the context of overall devolution negotiations. As recommended by the expert panel, the Government of Canada will continue to treat natural resource revenues outside of the formula. Consistent with equalization, 50 percent of resource revenues will be excluded from the offset calculation against the federal grant up to a yet to be determined overall cap.

Mr. Speaker, the evolution of this territory is linked closely to transfer for responsibility for lands and resources and the revenue they generate to northern governments. The Members of this Legislative Assembly passed a motion last fall sending a clear message that we needed to work cooperatively with northern leaders and press harder to get an agreement-in-principle completed in a reasonable time frame.

I am pleased to inform this House today we have reached an agreement-in-principle on devolution and resource revenue sharing between the Inuvialuit Regional Council, the Gwich'in Tribal Council, Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated, and the Northwest Territories Metis Nation and our government.

---Applause

This agreement-in-principle represents an important leap forward in the negotiations process and indicates the commitment and solidarity of these organizations to advance and close these vitally important negotiations in a

timely manner. The draft agreement-in-principle contains the following key features and proposals:

- the transfer of the administration and control of federal Crown lands and natural resources to the Northwest Territories;
- the protection against the abrogation and derogation of aboriginal rights;
- a framework for the much needed review and reform of current federal lands and resource management systems while providing for the cooperative and coordinated governance of lands and resources among the Government of the Northwest Territories and aboriginal governments;
- a provision for the fair treatment with respect to resource royalties and for the sharing of these royalties among northern governments; and
- provision for reasonable and adequate transfer of one-time and ongoing funds for the management and administration of NWT lands and resources.

As part of our agreement with these four aboriginal organizations we have also reached an agreement on sharing the net fiscal benefit that will accrue to northern governments from devolution.

Later this week, we will jointly forward this draft agreement-in-principle to Minister Prentice for his consideration. It is our hope that Minister Prentice responds in a positive manner so we can work towards finalizing this agreement-in-principle quickly with the federal government.

Completing negotiations on devolution, which has gone on for 20 long years, will facilitate the progressive development of governance in the Northwest Territories. Devolution will clearly place the responsibility for our economic and social future and the stewardship of our natural resources and environment where it rightfully belongs and will create incentives for sustainable development. Devolution will also serve to facilitate the conclusion and implementation of self-government agreements.

Mr. Speaker, the face of governance in the Northwest Territories is changing as aboriginal rights negotiations are concluded and agreements are implemented. This environment is a complex one. Agreements deal in varying degrees with aboriginal rights over land, resources and self-government, and these agreements are at differing stages of negotiation or implementation.

We are making tangible progress in these negotiations. We are working with the Tlicho to implement the Tlicho Final Agreement, the first combined land resources and self-government agreement in the Northwest Territories. We have finalized process and schedule agreements with the Gwich'in, Inuvialuit and Norman Wells to negotiate new self-government agreements. We are in the final stages of negotiations of a final Deline Self-Government Agreement; the first community self-government in the Northwest Territories. Last November, our government reached an interim land withdrawal agreement with the Akaitcho Dene First Nation that clarified land issues within the city of Yellowknife.

Mr. Speaker, a third component of our strategic plan is the development of the economy and infrastructure of the Northwest Territories.

A primary driver of our economy over the past 10 years has been the diamond industry. The Northwest Territories is now one of the world's largest producers of diamonds by value. The growth in the diamond industry has been phenomenal, with production in 2006 topping 12.9 million carats with an overall value of \$1.6 billion. Currently, Canada produces 11 percent of the total global output of rough diamonds and this is expected to increase to 15 percent when Snap Lake goes into full production. It is an incredible success story for an industry that did not exist in Canada 15 years ago. The success is testament to the ingenuity and perseverance of the Northwest Territories mining industry and their partners.

Our work continues to build a strong diamond mining and manufacturing sector in the Northwest Territories. Recently our government reached an agreement with De Beers to provide rough diamonds to the secondary diamond industry.

If diamond mining represents our present, the development of our vast natural gas and oil resources will be a critical part of our future. The Mackenzie gas pipeline project has potential, if we do it right, to trigger a level of economic growth unprecedented in the history of the Northwest Territories. However, the project is facing difficult challenges and is particularly threatened by significant cost increases. The latest estimate by Imperial Oil shows project costs climbing to \$16.2 billion. In this, the Mackenzie Valley gas pipeline is not an exception as cost increases are common these days in resource projects throughout the world. At the same time, the projected prices for natural gas are not as robust as they once were. Caught between rising costs and lower revenues, the economics of this project clearly need some work.

We believe these challenges can be overcome if government and industry work together to resolve them. This work will focus our continued discussion with proponents on a stable and secure fiscal environment for the development of the Mackenzie gas pipeline project. As importantly, we believe governments must work together on the development of public infrastructure supporting the project, including the Mackenzie Valley highway.

The Mackenzie Valley gas pipeline is a basin-opening project that will provide significant benefit to Canada beyond the direct economic benefits from this construction. Our government believes the Mackenzie Valley gas pipeline is too advanced, too desirable, too necessary and too beneficial to the North and to Canada to allow it to fail.

Our government is working hard to make this project happen. We recently completed a socio-economic agreement with the proponents that included an estimated \$21 million training fund, the establishment of an oil and gas advisory board with aboriginal governments, and confirmation from the Mackenzie gas project of employment and procurement commitments for the life of the project. We are also working with the Aboriginal Pipeline Group to facilitate their equity participation in this project.

Mr. Speaker, a lack of infrastructure is perhaps the single biggest impediment to further development in our territory.

We are pleased with the commitment of the federal government in the recent budget to provide each jurisdiction with a base of \$25 million annually in infrastructure funding for the next seven years. We intend

to work with Members of this House, in the coming weeks, to develop a plan for allocation of this funding to key infrastructure throughout the territory such as the long-term planning for an all-season road to the Arctic Ocean.

---Applause

This will build on the work done under the Canada strategic infrastructure fund that was used to reconstruct a total of 60 kilometres of highway, the resurfacing of 52 kilometres of road, the construction of permanent bridges and improvements to the Mackenzie Valley winter road, including construction of bypasses to Norman Wells and Tulita. Additional work will be undertaken over the remaining two years of this agreement.

Mr. Speaker, our government is also working with the Fort Providence Combined Council Alliance, represented by the Deh Gah Got'ie Dene Council, the Fort Providence Metis Council and the Fort Providence Hamlet Council, to finalize an agreement for a public/private partnership to build a bridge across the Mackenzie River.

---Applause

The alliance, through the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation, will design, construct, finance and operate the bridge and transfer it to the Government of the Northwest Territories at the end of the concession period. I am pleased to report the Bridge Corporation is working with the Department of Transportation to finalize costs, the concession agreement and project financing. The schedule is to complete all necessary documentation soon, with construction anticipated to begin this summer.

The bridge across the Mackenzie River would change the physical landscape and symbolize the change in the political and economic landscape of the Northwest Territories. Our government is committed to supporting this innovative P3 project. The federal government must now step up to the plate and provide its share of the funding necessary for this important piece of the national highway system.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, we have made a commitment in our strategic plan to ensure we are responsible stewards of our environment.

Northerners are acutely aware of the importance of the natural environment and our collective responsibility for environmental stewardship. While more and more Canadians indicate the environment is a major concern, it is here in the North that the effects of climate change are felt most directly.

Energy efficiency and conservation, renewable energy development and the application of emerging technologies and the reduction of energy use by the GNWT are all areas in which our residents are demanding action. In response, the Ministers of Industry, Tourism and Investment and Environment and Natural Resources jointly released the NWT Energy Plan and Revised Greenhouse Gas Strategy in March. The plan proposes a total investment of \$6 million for projects throughout the Northwest Territories, including the development of:

- hydro resources, including the potential development of mini-hydroelectric plants to service small isolated communities;
- alternative energy projects using wind and geothermal heat pumps;
- projects using residual heating systems and surplus hydro capacity to heat public buildings;

- an energy efficient financing program to support energy saving investments made by residents in their homes, appliances and vehicles; and
- energy conservation programs to reduce household energy use.

The protection of our land, water and wildlife are also critical issues for northerners. Our government signed a memorandum of understanding with the Government of Alberta on the development of a Bilateral Water Management Agreement in March.

Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

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

MR. HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, our government signed a memorandum of understanding with the Government of Alberta on the development of a Bilateral Water Management Agreement in March. This agreement, once ratified, will ensure the integrity of water flowing downstream from Alberta into the Mackenzie River Basin.

The GNWT has long been a proponent of the Protected Areas Strategy. To date, approximately 20 areas of interest have been identified across the NWT. The federal government recently announced an additional \$10 million would be invested to create or expand protected areas in the NWT. This funding will be spent over the next two years and will focus on preserving boreal forests and the habitat for some caribou herds. This is welcome news and will see the first ever candidate under the Protected Areas Strategy, Sahoyue-?ehdacho near Deline, receive permanent protection.

---Applause

In February 2006, our government released the Barren-Ground Caribou Management Strategy to guide the management of barren-ground caribou herds in the Northwest Territories. This five-year strategy makes use of both traditional and scientific data and outlines short and long-term conservation measures aimed at ensuring viability of barren-ground caribou herds.

Another important and very successful initiative is the Beverage Container Program. This program continues to enjoy a high level of public support with almost 25 million empty beverage containers having been returned to community depots between April 2006 and March 2007. This includes 214 tons of aluminum and 158 tons of plastic containers, most of which would otherwise have been disposed of in landfills or left as litter.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps the most important initiative we are undertaking to protect our environment and reduce greenhouse gas emissions is the Taltson hydro expansion project. The Deze Energy Corporation recently submitted the project description to the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board to begin the regulatory process for this project. The Taltson hydro expansion project is a \$400 million joint venture being undertaken by Deze Energy Corporation Limited, a joint venture between the Akaitcho Energy Corporation, the Metis Energy Company and the NWT Energy Corporation Limited. This is a unique approach to a project of this size and truly represents northern and aboriginal ownership on a major development.

The project involves building a new hydro facility adjacent to the site of the existing Taltson hydro plant to serve the four diamond mines. If all mines became hydro customers, overall NWT greenhouse gas emissions would be reduced by 15 percent and there would be 2,000 fewer truckloads of diesel fuel going over the NWT winter roads each year.

This project is a win-win for all involved. The mines would have access to a reliable, environmentally friendly source of power with long-term stability in price. Communities will benefit from both the local aboriginal ownership of the project and the training, job and business opportunities it would present. Our government would benefit from reduced greenhouse gas emissions and reduced pressure on the winter road system.

The new Taltson project is being undertaken by aboriginal development corporations and represents a new way of undertaking hydro development that places community and environmental issues front and centre and ensures they guide all aspects of the project.

Mr. Speaker, before I end, I want to take a moment to thank our public service without whom these critical initiatives could not move ahead. Having had the opportunity to work in our public service in a variety of roles for over 20 years, I can attest to the tremendous professionalism and dedication our employees bring to their jobs. I thank them all today on behalf of all Members of the Legislative Assembly.

---Applause

Mr. Speaker, the potential of our territory is enormous: potential for development, for investment, for community and individual progress, potential for shared benefits and wealth unprecedented in our history, wealth to benefit all Canadians. There can be little doubt the territory has been strengthened fiscally, economically, socially and politically during these past three and a half years. But of course, we still have a great deal of work to be completed before the end of our term. I look forward to working with all Members and with our other partners to ensure this work is completed for the benefit of the entire territory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi cho.

---Applause

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

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On Passing Of Respected Nunakput Elders

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to welcome my colleagues from a safe journey to the Sixth Session of the 15th Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, the Inuvialuit and everyone in the Northwest Territories have always shown respect for their elders. In our culture, the elders are respected for their protection of their children and great-grandchildren, and for their knowledge in ensuring the fish, wildlife, water and environment are protected and cared for for future generations to come. Mr. Speaker, I say this because as I was growing up as a child, I was taught some important values from my parents that I still use today and I have passed on to my children.

Mr. Speaker, having said that, I rise today to send my deepest sympathy, regrets and condolences to the families of the late Mr. Garret Ruben of Paulatuk and Mrs.

Winnie Carpenter of Sachs Harbour. Both these individuals were very well-respected elders and leaders in their respective communities.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Garret Ruben leaves behind his beloved wife, Olga, children and great-grandchildren. Olga stood beside her beloved husband, Garret, during his long battle with his illness. Mr. Ruben held many portfolios during his lifetime, which included mayor, councillor, COPE board of director, and a director of the hunters' and trappers' committee. Garret was also a distinguished leader in the growth of Paulatuk, and as a hunter, trapper and businessman. He will be greatly missed by his family and his friends along the Beaufort-Delta and across the Northwest Territories. I understand the funeral for the late Mr. Ruben is being held today at 2:00 p.m. in Paulatuk.

Mr. Speaker, another well-known respected elder, Mrs. Winnie Carpenter of Sachs Harbour, passed away peacefully after a long battle with her illness. Mrs. Carpenter leaves behind her husband, Mr. Andy Carpenter, Sr., children and great-grandchildren. Mr. Carpenter and the late Mrs. Carpenter played a very important role and were instrumental in the growth of the community of Sachs Harbour. She was also a COPE board director but, more importantly, a dedicated wife to her husband, Andy Carpenter, and her children. As one would always say: behind every man, there's a good woman. In this, it held true for Mr. Carpenter. Mr. Speaker, she will be greatly missed by her husband, Andy, her children and great-grandchildren, and to her many friends from the Beaufort-Delta and across the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to seek unanimous consent to complete my statement. Thank you.

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

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege and honour to work with Mr. Garret Ruben and Mrs. Winnie Carpenter during the intense land claim negotiations between COPE and the federal government. They both provided their expertise and knowledge of the land in these negotiations and to eventually promote the signing of the Western Arctic Inuvialuit final settlement claim.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, once again, on behalf of the constituents of Nunakput, I would like to extend my condolences to the families and friends of the late Mr. Garret Ruben of Paulatuk and Mrs. Winnie Carpenter of Sachs Harbour. Although I cannot be there during their time of sorrow and grief, my thoughts and prayers are with the families and friends.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, may their families continue to draw the strength and courage to carry on their lifelong traditional values. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Member's Statement On Confidentiality Of GNWT Civil Servant Medical Leave Requests

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I'd like to speak on an issue that has been brought to my attention by a few constituents in Inuvik. That, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that some of the departments of the GNWT are asking for medical prognosis when employees

are given medical leave by a doctor. To me, Mr. Speaker, that violates the doctor/patient confidentiality. If the doctor gives the employee a leave form saying that they can't be at work for a week, that's between the employee and the doctor. I don't think it has anything to do with the department. I don't think the department has a right to ask for a prognosis of the employee. If I'm given a week off, Mr. Speaker, and the doctor gives me a note, it should be between me and the doctor and I shouldn't have to have a prognosis saying my back is out and I'm leaning a little bit to the left.

---Laughter

I mean it's nobody's business but mine and the doctor's.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think there are a lot of questions that need to be asked on this particular issue and I intend to ask them to the Minister of Human Resources today, because I feel like it is a violation of the employee's privileges, their rights, and I think it questions the integrity of the doctors. We have a hard enough time trying to recruit doctors and keep them in the Northwest Territories and we put something like this on them, I think it's just more stress and more pressure on them. They shouldn't have to have their opinion questioned. They shouldn't have to provide a prognosis because it's really nobody's business but their's and the patient's. I have some serious concerns and some questions on that issue, Mr. Speaker, and I do intend to ask the Minister of the Human Resources department at the appropriate time. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Passing Of Gameti Elder Harry Simpson

MR. LAFFERTY: (Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have lost an elder in the past three weeks. His name is Harry Simpson. He's originally from Gameti. He was the last surviving member of the elders negotiation team that settled our Tlicho land claim.

Mr. Speaker, as one of the four elder advisors of the Tlicho Nation, Simpson spent the better part of his life working on the Tlicho Agreement. One of Mr. Simpson's greatest accomplishments was setting up the annual trail of our ancestors' canoe trips, where elders and youth would travel together to celebrate their traditional lifestyles. Simpson started the canoe journeys in 1995 and now over 240 people attend the trip annually.

Mr. Simpson also promoted his culture with Gameti Ko Society, promoting Tlicho culture and traditional knowledge involving youth and elders, which was created in 2003.

In 2005, he helped build a traditional Tlicho cabin in Gameti using the knowledge his father taught him. (Translation ends)

Mr. Harry Simpson was a prominent elder originally from Gameti. He was the last surviving member of the elders negotiating team that settled our Tlicho Land Claim and Self-Government Agreement.

Mr. Speaker, as one of the four elder advisors of the Tlicho Nation, Simpson spent the better part of his life working on the Tlicho Agreement, and his dreams were realized with the ratification of the Tlicho Agreement in June of 2003. Mr. Speaker, one of Mr. Simpson's greatest

accomplishments was setting up the annual trail of our ancestors' canoe journeys, where elders and youth would travel together to celebrate their traditional lifestyles. Simpson started the canoe journeys in 1995 and now over 240 people attend the trip annually. The tradition still continues to thrive today.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Simpson also promoted the cultural way of life with Gameti Ko, a society promoting Tlicho culture and traditional knowledge involving youth and elders, which was created in 2003.

In 2005, he helped build a traditional Tlicho cabin in Gameti using the knowledge he got from his grandfather.

Mr. Speaker, the Tlicho Nation will sadly miss Mr. Simpson, but in order to move forward we must continue his legacy of promoting our Dene culture and way of life. He planted the seed and shared his knowledge. We must pass on the knowledge. Mahsi.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Deh Cho Bridge Project

MR. BRADEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. If we all listen very carefully we will be able to hear a very irritating, a very frustrating and a very expensive noise in the background. It's a noise that's been going on for the past 40 years, Mr. Speaker, and it's high time we did something about it. That noise, Mr. Speaker, is the clawing, scratching sound of our cost of living and the cost of business going up because we don't have a bridge across the mighty Mackenzie River.

AN HON. MEMBER: Mighty.

MR. BRADEN: At this very moment, Mr. Speaker, another noise we're hearing is the helicopter shuttle that clatters back and forth across the kilometre-wide span that separates us from year-round road connection with the rest of Canada. That shuttle is bringing everything from parts for yesterday's engine breakdown to tomorrow's bacon and eggs at an added cost of about 14 cents a pound on top of regular freight rates. But in the fall, Mr. Speaker, with unscheduled ferry interruptions due to low water, those costs can escalate an extra 46 cents a pound. For instance, this cost to shareholders at the Yellowknife Direct Charge Co-op is an extra \$100,000 a week.

AN HON. MEMBER: Ohhh!

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, the Co-op is to be applauded because they've decided to absorb this cost off their bottom line, rather than pass the cost onto the customers. But the reality is most businesses don't have that option. They must absorb and then pass along the added cost of the freight, along with the storage for the extra inventory and, of course, the hit that their cash flow takes.

Mr. Speaker, from Deline to Cambridge Bay, from Yellowknife to Gameti, and the four diamond mines, we are more and more vulnerable to tremendous impact when this ferry service is interrupted, and it's not just the economic impact. Mr. Speaker, just this past weekend here in Yellowknife, we hosted Super Soccer. But even those teams -- and there are many of them on the southern road system -- had to raise extra money so they could fly to Yellowknife instead of taking the more economical highway transport.

There was a time when we grudgingly accepted these costs. They were a given. They were just a part of living here in the North, but we can no longer accept this, Mr. Speaker. A very compelling thing that's happening is that there are other factors at play that may overtake money as the reason we must build this bridge.

Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, colleagues, Mr. Speaker. That other factor, Mr. Speaker, is climate change and environmental warming that is causing these unexpected interruptions because of low water, especially in the earlier winter. Our economy cannot sustain the cost or the risk of these interruptions which can launch those freight costs upwards of 54 cents a pound.

Mr. Speaker, building a guaranteed, year-round road connection between the NWT's capital city and the rest of Canada is already a mandate of the National Highway Strategy. It is imperative that Canada joins in the partnership that the Premier addressed in his statement. It is time to end the uncertainty and make the Deh Cho Bridge a reality, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Issues Arising From Pre-Session Constituency Meeting

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, keeping up with the past convention, I hosted a pre-session constituency meeting at Range Lake North School this past Monday and I was pleased to spend the evening listening to and sharing information with the valued members of my constituency whom, although few in number, had a lot of advice and assignments for me to work on during this session and beyond, Mr. Speaker, and as we begin our short session today I'd like to tell you about some of them.

They would like, Mr. Speaker, me to keep working hard to resolve the intolerable situation surrounding the WCB policy regarding conflicting medical opinions of injured workers' cases. They would like to see a full independent management or advisory board at the Stanton Territorial Hospital. There were a number of questions about the recent joint territorial/federal Health Ministers announcement on wait times and how those decisions were made for the North. They wanted to know why there are still so many vacancies at the Stanton Hospital, in particular the hospital pharmacist position which has been vacant, Mr. Speaker, for 11 years. Mr. Speaker, they would like to see the government putting in more resources for traffic enforcement on Highway No. 3 to the mine sites, especially during the busy winter road season. As well, they would like to see a Kam Lake bypass road in order to ease the traffic congestion and safety issues. Mr. Speaker, they would like us to introduce a GNWT VTA, vacation travel assistance, in order to make it easier to recruit and retain needed human resources for the North and to reduce the cost of living. As well, one constituent expressed, once again, the concern about so many fly-in and fly-out jobs with the mines, and asked that we

consider a 15 percent payroll tax with the provision for immediate credit to NWT residents monthly as a way of encouraging people to move and live in the North.

Mr. Speaker, I don't imagine the Minister of Finance would like to jump on that option, but I think these suggestions and concerns, the underlying concerns are something that are not new. These are only a few of many issues that myself and my colleagues have brought up in this House for the attention to the Cabinet, and one that I look forward to and I'm committed to working on this session and beyond. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Poor Condition Of Reverend Gordon And Mrs. Ruth Bailey's Gravesites

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in his sessional statement, the Premier made reference to Bailey House and years of selfless work by Reverend Gordon Bailey and his wife, Ruth Bailey. There has been millions of dollars spent on Bailey House and there has been many accolades heaped on the Baileys, well deserved for their years of selfless service.

Mr. Speaker, as they look at this good news event, what people do not realize, I don't think, is that the Baileys spent their last years in Fort Smith in the Northern Lights special care home. They now lie together, as they did in life, in the Anglican graveyard, side by side. But, Mr. Speaker, as we were doing the cleanup of both graveyards in the community and I was walking through there, I noticed that while they lie side by side, their graves were basically forgotten and abandoned, the wooden crosses falling apart and rotting, and their names barely visible. I've raised this issue with some members in Yellowknife involved with Bailey House, that to make this a true celebration of their contribution that it would be very fitting for a small ceremony and a simple headstone to be put in the final resting place of the Baileys to recognize not only in Yellowknife where they did their good work, but where they spend the rest of eternity together in Fort Smith in the local graveyard, that it be marked in a fitting way that recognizes, in fact, the work that they did do. They should not be forgotten and they should not be ignored like that.

So I would hope today that by raising this issue in this House that the people listening to this will recognize that that is a key piece to make this a true celebration of all the work the Baileys did for the people of the Northwest Territories, especially the homeless. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Public Housing Rent Scale

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, let me just start off by welcoming all the Members here back into the 15th Legislative Assembly. Mr. Speaker, last year and the year before and I'm sure many years prior, myself and many other Members of this House, from this side of the House and that side of the House, have raised the issue of our rent scale used in our public housing here in the NWT many times, Mr. Speaker. There are many concerns about the disincentive it creates to seek

meaningful employment by the clients in our public housing, the animosity it raises between the clients, the LHO staff and our NWT Housing Corporation staff about what is deemed fair for rent for units that just may be lacking in proper maintenance or just plain run down, and the lack of respect for this government's housing stock by many public housing clients due to the fact that they just feel they are just not being treated fairly in their communities when it comes to public housing allocations and rental agreements and rent scales.

Mr. Speaker, from the many inquiries and concerns I received on this issue, this is never going to go away unless this government has to really seriously revisit this issue and ensure the people in our public housing units are being assessed rent that is deemed fair in the terms of their social and financial circumstances in their communities, and on the condition of the unit and on a scale which allows clients to move out of our public housing, which is the public housing mandate here in the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, later on today I will be again asking the Minister of Housing questions about this government's action plans, if any, to address this ongoing, anti-independent, socially dysfunctional system of public housing management, Mr. Speaker. I hope the Minister can present some good action plan that this government intends to take in the next year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Enhancing Programs And Facilities For Small Community High Schools

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to send congratulations to all the Sahtu students who will be graduating from Grade 12 this spring and to the parents who have worked hard for many years to see their children to this point. Finishing high school is an achievement all students should be proud of, Mr. Speaker. A high school diploma should be a direct ticket to other opportunities, like universities and technical schools. Unfortunately, this is not the case for many of our students in small communities. Although they work just as hard as students in the larger centres to get themselves to Grade 12, many of them are finding that they do not have the core courses or the skills to further the education of their choice. These students have to go back to high school or to an adult upgrading centre, usually for upgrading, before they can get into a post-secondary education institution.

Mr. Speaker, young people are anxious to get on with their futures. It's hard for them to postpone their dreams. How many potential doctors, teachers and tradespersons have been discouraged by this system or just have given up? We are letting down these students, Mr. Speaker. We need to ensure our students in small communities have access to all the courses, in particular the science and math courses, and the chemistry and lab courses, that are requirements for many universities and technical programs. This means access to facilities like labs, as well as qualified teachers that can guide them through difficult subjects like chemistry and physics.

Mr. Speaker, we can do this, Mr. Speaker, and we have to because these young people are our future, our hope and, more importantly, one day will be our voice in our governments. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Health Benefits For Congenital Club Foot

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, once again I am rising in this Assembly to speak about the inequities of our NWT health care system. Our health professionals do a fantastic job meeting our northerners' needs. However, like me, they also have trouble comprehending the logic of what is covered and not covered by NWT health care. I raise the issue of constituents with a child born with club feet who were told that the government would pay for all surgeries needed to correct the condition, but the government would not pay for the required braces needed between the surgeries. I am pleased to say, through the generosity of residents, particularly Ekati Crew F Recovery/Processing Plant, Grace Ann Fitzpatrick-Crouch, Wayne Scheelar, National Car Rental, Nancy Magrum and Dennis Bevington, our MP, they have donated enough money to get this little girl the next medically required braces, Mr. Speaker. This should have never had to have happened, and I want to make sure that every time my constituent's daughter needs new medically prescribed braces they do not have to rely on northern generosity. Generous people should not be picking up the tab for something that the government is responsible for, Mr. Speaker. Doctors have stated, without adequate braces, all the good work done by surgeries will be undone.

This is an absurd situation. This government must acknowledge the responsibility and pay for the required braces. According to the department, it has been at least 12 years and maybe even longer since the specified disease condition schedule in the extended health benefits policy has been amended. Clearly there is a need to review this policy more than once every 12 years. I note that there are many other conditions on this list that people are born with that are genetically prone to developing cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, and even spina bifida. These include a number of congenital conditions. Why is this congenital club foot not on the list? I am talking about what is right. I am talking about the department and the program that needs to find less bureaucratic ways and more empathetic ways to help the needs of our northerners. There needs to be less worrying about what other jurisdictions are covering and more worrying about ways that we can find a method to help our northern families, Mr. Speaker.

In closing, I will be following up with the Minister on this issue because I want my constituents to worry less about where the money's coming from and more about their daughter specifically. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Deh Cho Bridge Project

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to speak today about the Deh Cho Bridge project. I want to state for the record, Mr. Speaker, that I do support the Deh Cho Bridge being built. Most Yellowknifers and residents of the North Slave would certainly welcome the construction

of a bridge across the Mackenzie River. I do, however, have some concerns regarding the project and I feel that before agreements for a project like this are entered into, they should be subject to public information sessions and consultations with stakeholders. Every opportunity should be taken to ensure that as many opportunities are made available to northern business and people in the construction of such a large piece of public infrastructure.

The Deh Cho Bridge Act, which is legislation that was passed by the last government, gives authority to Cabinet to enter into agreements to build a bridge across the Mackenzie River. In the Deh Cho Bridge Act, there is no requirement for the government to consult or come back to Regular Members regarding agreements that are entered into. Mr. Speaker, what I'd like to see is that if this project is proceeding, I want the government to consult with Regular Members and stakeholders. We need and we deserve to have the opportunity to ask questions about this project.

The loan guaranteed to the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation has been increased several times over the past three years, from \$2 million in 2004 to just over \$4 million in March of this year. When the government was questioned as to why the loan guarantee was continuously increased, the first answer offered up was that the government was waiting for federal dollars to make the project viable.

I'd like to provide a short quote from last October's sitting from the Premier, and I quote. "Mr. Speaker, it's our view that there is infrastructure money coming and we should not jump the gun here and be premature. Let's wait to see what the federal government has to offer." The project, Mr. Speaker, is going to cost in excess of \$130 million and judging from the Premier's sessional statement today, it would seem to me that the government isn't waiting. The Department of Transportation is marching headlong into making agreements in the absence of any federal dollars becoming available for this project. If the project does cost in the magnitude of \$130 million, what will that do to tolls -- which, by the way, Mr. Speaker, we're never supposed to go over \$6 a ton -- what will this do to the price of consumer goods in Yellowknife and in the North Slave region?

Mr. Speaker, everybody wants a bridge and I just want to ensure that the entire process is as open and transparent as it possibly can be. Mahsi.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On First Council Of Sport And Recreation Conference In Hay River

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to invite Members of this House to attend the first ever Council of Sport and Recreation conference in Hay River. The Town of Hay River will host this joint partner conference this summer from the 12th to the 17th of June. This meeting is important because it brings partner organizations together for the first time. These partners share the belief that recreation, physical activities and sports programs are very important for the health and well-being of the residents and the communities of the Northwest Territories.

The NWT Council for Sport and Recreation is a fairly new forum created in the summer of 2005. Its 13 members represent the regions as well as the sport and recreation

field. The goal for the council is to assist with the development of a collaborative, inclusive approach to sport and recreation in the Northwest Territories. Conference partners are the NWT Parks and Recreation Association, the Mackenzie Recreation Association, the Beaufort-Delta/Sahtu Recreation Association, the Aboriginal Sports Circle of the Western Arctic and the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. So there is buy-in for collaboration, inclusion and discussions about common goals and challenges and many reasons to celebrate our successes.

The NWT Recreations and Parks Association works with communities across the territory to promote living, to promote healthy living through active recreation. The Beaufort-Delta/Sahtu Recreation Association alone covers groups and organizations in 13 communities, promoting a broad definition of recreation, maximizing equal opportunity for all to participate in activities of their choice. Another partner is the Mackenzie Recreation Association representing the Deh Cho, supporting cultural activities and sporting events.

Hay River will be recognized as a leader in sports and recreation while the town provides an ideal meeting location to recognize and celebrate the efforts of the five partner agencies and their many members who strive to promote and deliver sport and recreation throughout the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, I hope that many Members of this House will come to Hay River in June and participate in this ground-breaking event. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

Member's Statement On Issues Arising From Pre-Session Constituency Meeting

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I just recently travelled back to my home and held a constituency meeting. I thought I would take this opportunity to relay the messages that I heard in the community at my recent constituency meeting.

May 2nd I had an opportunity to hold a constituency meeting in the Inuvik Centennial Library and, as at a number of my recent constituency meetings, the turnout was low, but it gave me an opportunity to have a good discussion with the people who did show up. A number of the issues that were raised we hear around this Assembly coming from other communities, but I thought I'd take the opportunity to highlight them here.

Elders' issues are one of the prominent things that came up in that, right from transportation to see the doctors or doctors' appointments to seniors in public housing and the rent set up, as well as singles in public housing and that area. So it again was an avenue for people to raise their issues and speak to Members about what needs to be done and what they see as challenges they face. Hopefully as a government, as we sit down, we continue to work, and as I had pointed out, we'll bring those issues to the table and hopefully work to try to resolve some of them, including all Members of this Assembly.

So I just wanted to stand up here -- I haven't taken the opportunity to do a Member's statement for a while -- and just raise the highlights of my constituency meeting. From those that think it was just me and my wife at the meeting, no, it wasn't.

---Laughter

I had other constituents there, but the number was low who turned out. It's not necessarily a bad thing, but just giving the fact that you can come out, raise your issues and they will be raised in this forum. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's with great affection that I'm often able to acknowledge the presence in the gallery of my mother, Esther Braden, and today it gives me special pride to advise the Assembly that she is here and with a special distinction as the Northwest Territories most recent recipient of our country's highest civilian award, the Order of Canada.

---Applause

Mr. Speaker, she is in good company with retired Anglican Bishop Jack Sperry, also a member of the Order of Canada.

---Applause

With them, too, is another very respected Yellowknife senior and someone most deserving of the Order of Canada, but not there yet, Mr. Ed Jeske. Mr. Speaker, thank you.

---Applause

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize family of my constituents who moved from Edmonton area to my riding. Even though we don't have VTA, the father came here to work for the GNWT and mother's working at the bank here. Parents are not here, but I'd like to recognize Mr. Clemens Park and Mr. David Park and with them are my assistant Cathy Olson and her husband Mike Olson. Thank you.

---Applause

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

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize teachers and students from Nahanni Butte. I'd like to recognize Meagan Bertrand, Jarvis Tsetso, Logan Matou, Melvin Vital, Josh Bertrand, teacher Wayne Ingarfield, assistant Martin Pritchett, and as well as chaperone Mr. Bruce Dauphinee. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasant surprise to see a number of constituents in the gallery, especially now that the ferry is not operating.

---Laughter

From our smallest community in the North, Kakisa, we have a number of people here, a number of students. We have Dalton Simba, Waylon Simba, Shyanne Chicot and Sheila Hilliard. I'd like to welcome them to the gallery, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to raise awareness of a couple of issues, Mr. Speaker, and acknowledge the presence of Arlene Hache, who is in the gallery today. We talked about the Bailey House and local advocates who've really raised this issue of homelessness. I want to thank Arlene for her work in this regard.

I'd also like to acknowledge Mike Olson, who's already been mentioned, but he is emceeding a trade show or a fashion show at the trade show that a number of MLAs are involved in. We'll be modelling some of the Arctic Winter Games clothing. As many of you know, Mike's very active in the chamber and works for First Air, but I very much look forward to that event. I think it will be a lot of fun and I want to thank him for the work that he's doing. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. If we've missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to the House. It's always a pleasure to have an audience observing the proceedings in here. Acknowledgements. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

ITEM 7: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 37-15(6): Resurfacing Highway No. 5

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are directed to the Minister of Transportation. It's in regard to a letter written on April 4th by community leadership in Fort Smith talking about and requesting that now that there's \$24 million in new money in the budget for infrastructure, that Highway No. 5 finally be put back on the priority list for chipsealing; and not only that, but that they look at repairing the serious deterioration of the existing chipsealing. So I just want to ask the Minister if he could indicate in this House what is planned in that regard. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. Menicoche.

Return To Question 37-15(6): Resurfacing Highway No. 5

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we had responded to the joint letter from the community leaders of Fort Smith, as well as the MLA there, Mr. Speaker. There will be chipsealing happening on Highway No. 5. I believe it's around kilometre 88 for this year. The Member does bring up priorities in the new federal infrastructure funding that the details are currently being...We have not seen the details from the federal government, but some of the priorities of where we're going to spend that money does indeed rest with the responsibility of this House and in committee, as well, and we'll be proceeding with that soon, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi.

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

Supplementary To Question 37-15(6): Resurfacing Highway No. 5

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, we appreciate any amount of chipsealing on the roads, even if it's repairs and, no matter how small the distance, it's better than nothing as has been the case in the last number of years. I would like to ask the Minister to indicate what other steps are required to look at the chipsealing of the remaining 100 or so kilometres. Are there engineering studies required before any further work can be done? Is it going to be part of a broader plan to look at how do we deal with these long ignored roads in the Northwest Territories while all attention is paid on Highway No. 3 and the Ingraham Trail? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 37-15(6): Resurfacing Highway No. 5

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The section that we are chipsealing is kilometre 88 to 106. We are looking at the whole highway system. We are dedicating some resources to an engineering study, Mr. Speaker, that will tell us exactly what the deficiencies are on Highway No. 5 and where we must strategize and look forward to, hopefully, eventually chipsealing the whole highway. I know that's in the Member's long-range plan as well as ours. Mahsi.

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

Supplementary To Question 37-15(6): Resurfacing Highway No. 5

MR. MILTENBERGER: God willing, Mr. Speaker, I'll live long enough to be able to still have my licence and drive across the fully chipsealed Highway No. 5.

---Laughter

I'd like to ask the Minister if he could indicate to this House when does he anticipate this engineering study to be complete and is the intention to include those recommendations in the upcoming 2008-09 business plan? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 37-15(6): Resurfacing Highway No. 5

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we're looking at completing it throughout the course of the summer and this fall and certainly the areas that need immediate remediation will certainly be addressed and discussed as we sit down and discuss the capital planning this summer. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 37-15(6): Resurfacing Highway No. 5

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to get the Minister to speak specifically to the issue of will those recommendations be brought forward through the business planning process that is now, in fact, underway for the 2008-09 business planning cycle that the

new incoming 16th Assembly will be looking at? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 37-15(6): Resurfacing Highway No. 5

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We'll certainly look at discussing the needs for Highway No. 5 in the current business planning cycle. Mahsi cho.

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

Question 38-15(6): Gameti School Extension

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. (Translation) Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment. Schools across the North are preparing for their year-end school next month. The school in Gameti was approved by this government to build an extension so the community has access to the local gym. (Translation ends)

...prepared for their year-end school next month. The school in Gameti was approved by this government to build an extension so the community can have access to the local gymnasium, which they currently do not have. Construction for this project was scheduled to begin this summer, Mr. Speaker. The community of Gameti, however, is concerned as it is now spring break-up and the supplies for this project have not yet arrived over the winter road. My question is to the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment. Mr. Speaker, what is the current status with the Gameti school extension? Mahsi.

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

Return To Question 38-15(6): Gameti School Extension

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The project went out to tender, and it wasn't just to put in a gym, it was to provide a bit of an expansion to the school to allow for the community to have high school courses offered in the community. When the bids came in, they were so much over budget that we couldn't proceed. There were some attempts to find ways to reduce the cost of the budget and they weren't successful. So at this point, MACA, ECE and the Department of Public Works are examining what the options might be. We remain committed to the project and we're looking for what we can do to ensure that it will proceed. Obviously, as the Member has pointed out, with us missing the winter road this year, the extension, which had been projected for the fall of 2008, will be delayed probably for one year.

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

Supplementary To Question 38-15(6): Gameti School Extension

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask Minister Dent about the next question; that is what other alternative measures were taken by your department to move things forward, especially during the critical time where supplies could have been delivered

over the winter road? What were the other alternative measures? Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 38-15(6): Gameti School Extension

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand that Public Works attempted to discuss the issue of the cost with the contractor in the community; they were not able to come to any resolution. So Public Works has come back to MACA and ECE and given us a number of options that we can consider. We are working together with the other two departments to develop a strategy so that we can move the project forward, hopefully, within the next year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 38-15(6): Gameti School Extension

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that there was much done to move things forward with the project. It is my understanding that the bid on the project was high for approval but, at the same time, why hasn't the department come back to the government to seek additional funds to cover additional costs to complete the project, the most important project in the community of Gameti? Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 38-15(6): Gameti School Extension

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. By the time the tenders came in, were evaluated, by the time Public Works embarked on the process of negotiation -- they thought there might be some room for movement there -- we had lost the opportunity to make the award of a contract then to meet this year's shipping. So we will work to ensure that we can make the decision on the project soon enough this year that we'll be able to make the winter road this winter.

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

Supplementary To Question 38-15(6): Gameti School Extension

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the community of Gameti is frustrated over the whole process; it's been on hold for a number of months and it wasn't moving anywhere once the bid came in, was too high. That's why I was asking about alternative measures. But, Mr. Speaker, my final question: This project was scheduled to be completed before the next school year; that was the hope. The bureaucratic red tape is no excuse for any delay; we've heard it over and over. When will the building for the Gameti school extension begin? Will it be next year? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER: When?

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

Further Return To Question 38-15(6): Gameti School Extension

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said, we're still in the process of examining whether or not the scope of the project will need to change. We haven't decided whether or not we're in a position to just agree to pay the price and go forward with the project. If all of our

school projects keep coming in at more than twice what the budget is, Mr. Speaker, we're not going to be able to proceed with all of the projects. We agree with the Member that the school expansion in Gameti is a priority and we're going to work with Public Works and MACA to do our best to bring the project forward next winter. Thank you.

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

Question 39-15(6): Public Housing Rent Scale

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Just to follow up on my Member's statement about the rent scale policy that this government never seems to want to revisit. Mr. Speaker, just seven months ago I was asking the then-Minister of Housing, the Honourable Dave Krutko, about this same issue and just looking at the Hansard I see words like "review," "revisit," in conjunction with the transfer to ECE having something ready in the next number of weeks to review. You know, all this on the review of the rent scale policy, Mr. Speaker, and it's seven months now in the works. As a committee member, I have seen nothing that this government has even looked at revisiting this rent scale issue, which, you know, the Deputy Premier said it was brought up in his constituency meeting. You know, from Inuvik to Fort Smith, people are concerned and I think this government really has to take it to task that we have to revisit this old policy. Is that going to happen some time soon, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. The honourable Minister responsible for Housing, Mr. Handley.

Return To Question 39-15(6): Public Housing Rent Scale

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure there are many people who would like to have their rent lowered. Mr. Speaker, the current arrangement we have is that housing units are based on market value. So a rent is set depending on the condition, the age, the size and so on, of the house. That's how we determine what that house is worth to rent. It's the same way one would have if you were to rent a house in Yellowknife or Edmonton or wherever it may be. Individuals are asked to pay up to 30 percent of their gross income as rent. If you went to a bank, they would ask you for 32 percent. So we're in the same range as a bank would expect. Mr. Speaker, so from the Housing Corporation point of view, we feel we're being fair. Now if an individual or family feel that they don't have adequate income to be able to cover that, then they are all welcome to go to income support and make a case for some assistance there. That's how people would get support for the rent. Mr. Speaker, if it's a case of people feeling the house is not worth what we're asking for in rent because of the condition of it, then that certainly is something that we will take a look at. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 39-15(6): Public Housing Rent Scale

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, the rent scale ranges from \$32 a month to about \$2,000 a month, Mr. Speaker, on the rent scale that this government holds. I don't think you can get any rent from people asking to lower my \$32 a month rent. You know, actually, some people are willing, probably, to pay more rent if they could probably get a fair assessment of their

rent based on perhaps their net income, not gross income. If somebody's netting \$1,500 and taking home \$900 but their rent is still coming in at \$1,800 a month, Mr. Speaker, that's...In Detah or in Colville Lake, you know, \$1,800 a month is based on Yellowknife rent and vacancy rates here in Yellowknife, not in the communities, Mr. Speaker. So we have to get that straight. Also, the Housing Corporation thinks it's fair; the Housing Corporation doesn't collect the rent, Mr. Speaker, it's the LHOs, the people that live in the community have to go out and collect that rent. So the Housing Corporation really has nothing to do with the collection of rent and, therefore, it's not their issue of how much the rent is going to be. So I want to ask the Minister, is the department going to revisit the rent scale because it's old; it's 15 years old, Mr. Speaker. We've got to do something different, make a change that people...

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. I'll allow the Minister to answer that question.

Further Return To Question 39-15(6): Public Housing Rent Scale

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The rent scales and our formula for determining rent are always being revisited. I might say it doesn't really matter whether we do it based on gross salary or on net salary, we take into consideration the other costs that individuals may have anyway. So the dollar amount would work out the same; we would just...If we used net, we would take out a higher percentage of their net income. The way we do it is they pay 30 percent, or we calculate 30 percent and then we take from that, in fact, costs of operating the house and other deductions, so the net effect is much less. In fact, people in the Northwest Territories enjoy, on average, a 16 percent rate of their income on rent. It's quite low compared to national averages, but I'm sure there are individuals who have other cases that they feel are unfair.

Mr. Speaker, in answer to the question, yes, it will be reviewed, but keep in mind that any kind of subsidy is to come through the Income Support Program, not through Housing. So we will work with Minister Dent, and Minister Dent's department is doing a review of income support and I'm sure that this issue will be considered through that review as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 39-15(6): Public Housing Rent Scale

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess my point is more directed toward people who can actually pay some sort of rent. The Income Support Program tops up to \$32 or whatever your rent is to what the market rent was set at and that's just basically money going from Education into Housing, you know. It's just from one government department to the other. There is really no money going into another person's hands except from one department to the other, so I don't really understand how the income support is going to be affected directly or indirectly. My question is how can we accommodate people that are out there with a good job but are being hammered on their rent for a dilapidated unit and they just don't deem it as fair but they're willing to pay anyway, Mr. Speaker? You know, they don't want to just...

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. I'll allow the Minister to answer that question.

Further Return To Question 39-15(6): Public Housing Rent Scale

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have to keep in mind that the majority of people, even those who draw income support, have some income; the majority are earning some money. Again, there are some who aren't. Anyone who is earning income but hasn't got the money to be able to rent the unit that's available in their community can go to income support to have it topped up. It isn't just for \$32 rent; in some cases it's \$1,000, \$1,500 rent that they need some help to be able to pay the rent. So they can do that. Mr. Speaker, as I said, through income support we are reviewing the rates; through the Housing Corporation we're looking at our units and we'll do everything we can, and we are working hard at getting the units in better condition so people feel more satisfied that they're getting their money's worth. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 39-15(6): Public Housing Rent Scale

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess my point of advice, when we're reviewing this rent scale, everything that this government reviews is based on Yellowknife. Our power is based on Yellowknife; all our subsidies are based on Yellowknife; our rent is based on Yellowknife; vacancy; everything Yellowknife. When we're reviewing this, can we go out to these communities and really do some real analysis of what people are actually willing to pay and what it costs to build a unit there and how much people can rent it out at a fair market rent based on that community only, Mr. Speaker? Not on Yellowknife as is the norm. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 39-15(6): Public Housing Rent Scale

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We use Yellowknife as a rate because it's probably the most reasonable rate. We could base it on Colville Lake or somewhere else but I don't think people would like that, Mr. Speaker. So we have to use a base and we compare it to something. We also have to compare the quality and the condition of our units, as well, and that's fair that we need to do that. Mr. Speaker, it doesn't matter how we do it, we want to make sure that people have the money to be able to rent decent accommodation and at the same time meet all their other obligations. Mr. Speaker, I'll take it to the Housing Corporation, we'll look at it again. We have the income support reform exercise going on. This is an issue that I've heard in other places, too, and we take it seriously. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 40-15(6): Health Benefits For Congenital Club Foot

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to follow up on my Member's statement today and my questions will be directed to the Minister of Health and Social Services. Mr. Speaker, for the record, B.C. Ministry of Health notes that nerve damage from spina bifida can lead to deformities such as club foot. Mr. Speaker, with that said, when does the Minister see any type of update

of our extended health benefits list to address this gap in services being provided to our children? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 40-15(6): Health Benefits For Congenital Club Foot

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have begun our work around the whole extended benefits policy and that work is underway right now. We're not picking out a specific piece, for example, a list of what is covered in that area at this time. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 40-15(6): Health Benefits For Congenital Club Foot

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, clearly, this is a problem having a club foot in the Northwest Territories. There may not be an epidemic, but it is an issue, Mr. Speaker, and, further, it's an issue that we could solve; it's something within our reach. So, Mr. Speaker, what is the apprehension of adding club foot to our extended health benefits? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 40-15(6): Health Benefits For Congenital Club Foot

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's not just a matter of one subject or one disability over another being added to the list. There are many that don't make the list, whether it's in the drug side, particular procedures and, as well, we'd have to look at, as we do with a lot of our programs, income of individuals and whether they qualify for some of our programs or not. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 40-15(6): Health Benefits For Congenital Club Foot

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, we're not allowed to ask the opinion of a Minister, although that would seem relevant in this particular case. However, Mr. Speaker, we pay for the surgery of this problem and it seems completely absurd why we would ignore the treatment side. I mean, what's the point? So, Mr. Speaker, what would it take to get club foot on the extended health benefits list? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 40-15(6): Health Benefits For Congenital Club Foot

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the fact that in many procedures, not just in the Northwest Territories but all of Canada, we, as providers of health care service, would cover for surgical procedures, hospital bed time. In many cases when patients are released back to their communities or homes, they have to pick up their own tab on drugs and so on as a result of some of the procedures, so this is not a unique case. It would take for adding this one case to the list, we'd have to do a review to see if it's one thing or another;

or, if we're going to add to this list, what's the priority. We have a growing cost already that we're having a hard time keeping in check and we add another procedure to it. That's some of the stuff we have to weigh as we look at this. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 40-15(6): Health Benefits For Congenital Club Foot

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, again I think the Minister underscores the oddity here; whereas we pay for the surgery but we don't pay for the treatment. I mean it becomes completely irrelevant at that point. Why do the surgery? It's confusing, Mr. Speaker. So my last question to the Minister is, what will it take this Minister to recognize and identify that this is a real issue to go on our extended health benefits? Does he require letters from mothers? Does he require a motion in this House? Does he require camping out at his doorstep? Does he require a petition? What would this Minister like to see to add this issue to our extended health benefits list? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 40-15(6): Health Benefits For Congenital Club Foot

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member is continuing on his view of this. The situation is, as a government, if we had more money to put into our extended health benefits policy, would this be one of the priorities, and that has to come under the equation. We'd have to look at a whole number of procedures that are not included now that people would have to pay on their own or go to other jurisdictions that we can't provide. As I stated before, there are procedures, surgeries done on patients. Once they've gone home, they have to pay and pick up the tab on a number of other things. So this is not a rare or unique situation. Unfortunately, there are situations where issues aren't dealt with through our existing system. In all of our programs, as we're reviewing, we have to look at the ability of patients to be able to pay some part of their own care. Thank you.

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

Question 41-15(6): Deh Cho Bridge Project

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Premier, the Minister responsible for the Deh Cho Bridge Act and corporation, and the proposed construction of the Mackenzie River bridge. Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my Member's statement earlier, most residents here in the North Slave region in the city of Yellowknife would welcome a bridge. But from where I stand, I don't believe the project has received any level of scrutiny by Members of this House, by the public; and by the sounds of the Premier's sessional statement, we're marching headlong into agreements without any federal assistance. Mr. Speaker, I'm a tad bit confused, I must say, because over the past three years the government has insisted that the project wouldn't go ahead unless there was federal assistance, and now in the sessional statement today the Premier is saying that the project is going to go ahead. So I'd like to ask the Premier, if he could, to let us know if indeed the project, the Mackenzie River bridge, will be built without any federal assistance. Mahsi.

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

Return To Question 41-15(6): Deh Cho Bridge Project

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me, first of all, clarify that responsibility for the bridge project now rests with the Minister of Transportation. But, Mr. Speaker, I'll answer the question since it was directed to me. Yes, we are going to move ahead. We'll move ahead carefully, but we'll move ahead with solidarity. We're not going to slow down on this one. Mr. Speaker, I wrote to the Prime Minister this week, asking him, reminding him of his commitment and that this is part of the national highway system and we fully expect to have that. Mr. Speaker, keep in mind that these negotiations are between the Bridge Corporation and the contractor. It is the Bridge Corporation who is owning this bridge during the concession period, so it's not 100 percent ours. But I will take a look at how we can arrange briefings for the Members. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 41-15(6): Deh Cho Bridge Project

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is the decision to proceed and whether in fact the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation enters into agreements with contractors, that is going to tie the hands of what's left of this government and the governments for the next 35 years into paying for it, not to mention the tolls that are going to have to be paid on goods that are trucked across that bridge. I think we really have to take a look at this and make a business case for it. Again, we've had one briefing in the past three years that would suggest if you're anywhere close to making a decision, without any federal money, Mr. Speaker, this project, to me, should be put on the back burner. I don't believe we should be taking all the risk. I'd like to ask a question to the Premier. How much equity or risk is the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation putting into this project? Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 41-15(6): Deh Cho Bridge Project

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me just remind Members that in 1978 I believe it was, the Legislative Assembly of the day looked at the price of the bridge and decided then that \$6.2 million was too much, so they put it on the back burner. Today we're looking at, as the Member had said, something in the neighbourhood of 130, somewhere in that range. If we had done it in 1978 instead of putting it on the back burner, we would have had a bridge a long time ago and we'd have a cost of living that's a lot lower than it is today.

Mr. Speaker, I'm concerned of putting it on the back burner because the costs are going to continue to go up. So we've got to get on with this project and that's been our message to the federal government: Get on with it. Do it. It's going to be less money this year than it's going to be five years from now or whenever we think we may have the money.

Mr. Speaker, in regard to the equity from the Bridge Corporation; yes, they are putting money into it. They are investing in it; they are taking some risk on it, and I don't

have the exact numbers on that information, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 41-15(6): Deh Cho Bridge Project

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I know some of my colleagues are saying build a bridge. Well, build a bridge; we haven't seen a business case, we haven't seen the numbers, and I'd like to know how we can build a \$130 million bridge with our eyes closed, Mr. Speaker, and to me that's what we're doing, we're building it with our eyes closed. We haven't seen a business plan; we haven't seen the numbers; the feds aren't coming up with any money, but yet we're going to move ahead and enter into agreements. Mr. Speaker, something about that just doesn't sit right with me. Sure, I want a bridge, like anybody else wants a bridge, but I want to know how the heck we're going to pay for it over the next 35 years and that has to be clearly spelled out. The stakeholders in the North Slave region have to be consulted. I'd like to ask the Premier if the stakeholders, and I'm talking about the business community here in the North Slave, when are they going to be consulted about the possible increase to the tolls that trucks are going to have to pay crossing that bridge? Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 41-15(6): Deh Cho Bridge Project

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What is of concern to the stakeholders north of the Mackenzie River is the amount of the toll and what that is going to cost them. That's the bottom line for them. In terms of the detail of all the financial information and how it's being financed and so on, that's something that I will see if we can share it with the committee, but keep in mind it is the Bridge Corporation's contract not ours. We're paying a toll and we're paying, in addition to the toll, an amount to make this work including the ice crossing and winter road. But, Mr. Speaker, it's the bottom line of how much it costs that is going to be important to people.

Mr. Speaker, just a correction. The Member said earlier in his statement that the commitment was that the toll would not exceed \$6. That's not quite accurate. The toll was set at \$6, but there's also a factor that was worked in for inflation. So it would go up gradually over the years because some day, 20 years from now, 30 years from now, \$6 may have the value of \$2. So we need to have that inflationary built into it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 41-15(6): Deh Cho Bridge Project

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want the Premier and the government to know I'm ready and willing to work with them to see that this bridge gets constructed. I just want to know what's happening and, Mr. Speaker, we haven't been given the level of detail that would let me lend my support to us entering into a \$130 million deal with the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation. At the end of the day it is public money. It requires the scrutiny of this Legislature before the government can enter into getting this project off the ground. I would like to ask the Premier if he could commit to coming back before any agreements are signed to vet the agreements with

Regular Members of this House at the very least. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 41-15(6): Deh Cho Bridge Project

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, as I say, the Bridge Corporation will be signing the agreement. They have undertaken to complete the agreements within a month, or by early June. Mr. Speaker, if we have the information that can be shared with the Members, then certainly we will do that. There is nothing secret in here other than the confidentiality by the partners in the agreement. Mr. Speaker, I must say I appreciate the Member's support for the project. We will make it a project that is good. Mr. Speaker, if I might say, as well, there is P3 money in the federal budget for this year and for future years. There is also extra capital money, \$25 million a year in there. We don't intend to use big chunks of that for this bridge but, Mr. Speaker, we intend to get our share of that P3 money to apply for this and make it a great P3 project. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 42-15(6): Health Procedure Wait Times

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement, I raised a number of issues. I want to start with one of them today. The question is about the announcement that was made on the wait times by the federal government and his territorial counterparts about a month ago in the Great Hall. I would like to ask the Minister of Health a question about how that proposal, in terms of how it relates to the North, has come about. The federal statement stated that the wait times would gear towards five categories. Some of them being cancer treatment, diagnostic imaging and surgical programs and such, but for the northern communities, the money is small. I understand that it is only about \$5 million. It would go toward primary care. There is nothing wrong with that, but I would like to know how that program idea came about, because my understanding is we were not consulted in Social Programs committee. I don't know what the Minister did. The insider constituency meeting suggested that, in fact, the federal government did want what the GNWT wanted. I would like to know how the Minister came about that idea. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 42-15(6): Health Procedure Wait Times

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the issue of the wait times discussions that went on between the federal government, provinces and territories was one where the three northern territories were very concerned with how that was moving and what impact that may have on us, because a lot of our critical care needs are done in southern jurisdictions. If they decided to change how they dealt with us, it could have an impact on the overall health care delivery. So we looked at the issues where we felt had our greatest pressures and worked with federal Health in that area. Yes, the Member is correct; federal Health looked at it and agreed with the three territories on the unique challenges we face and agreed that we could have a different look and

viewpoint on how we are going to move forward on this. We chose the primary health care area. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 42-15(6): Health Procedure Wait Times

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, like all things we deal with, all these things work in a continuum. We can't isolate one issue at the exclusion of all the others. While we need to put resources into primary care in communities, that is important, but we still have to address the wait time issues in areas that the federal government talks about; in particular, diagnostic imaging. We have a long line-up at the territorial hospital here to get X-rays, C-scans, unless you go to emergency. You may have to wait days or a couple of weeks just to get an X-ray on your back about what is wrong with you. I would like to ask the Minister what we are doing about dealing with the wait times in that regard. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 42-15(6): Health Procedure Wait Times

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in a couple of areas we are already meeting what times we have talked about and discussed. For example, hips and knees and cataracts are areas where we have already got fairly good coverage, so we are meeting on some of those targets the federal government has sort of aimed at as we feel we are adequate in those areas. Our challenges are, and we continue to be challenged, for example in primary care first contact. When a patient goes into a health centre or a hospital, what are our challenges? Our greatest challenges are in the smallest communities. Hence, the target of a community health nurse education initiative that we are looking at as well as the nurse practitioners side. We are also working on diagnostic imaging. We continue to work in that area, for example, with Capital Health Authority. We are working in that area to improve on the diagnostic imaging area. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 42-15(6): Health Procedure Wait Times

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I understand we need to have front-line care in the communities and also the argument is that because a lot of our cancer care and even surgeries are done with Edmonton Capital Health Authority that we are addressing it that way. But you could switch that. The reason we are relying on them is because we have been without a second surgeon for a long time. We are having a hard time recruiting that. We have a waiting list on surgeries for hips and joints. We haven't had a full staff diagnostic imaging in a long time. So I think it is important for the government to work on all fronts. I would like to give the Minister an opportunity to explain how we are addressing those areas, surgeries and diagnostic imaging here and shortage of staff here, and therefore creating wait times. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 42-15(6): Health Procedure Wait Times

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when you do a comparison with what is happening in the territorial health area, Health and Social Services with other jurisdictions, we have a pretty good system in place. How we are able to meet the demands. If you go to Alberta even, which is seen as one of the richest areas of the country, and look at the demands on their system and some of the wait times there, we are doing okay here in the Northwest Territories. Yes, we need to continue to improve. That is why we are continuing to work with Capital Health Authority on the diagnostic imaging area. That is something we will continue to do. In fact, I think we are pretty close to coming to an agreement on how we will work together.

The actual area of wait time guarantees is still under a lot of discussion with Canada, the provinces and territories. It is not a concluded area. We are going to have to see how the federal government will come to the table in what manner and with what resources if we are actually going to nail down what wait time will be on any health procedure across the country. If we were to try to take over a lot of the services that we get done right now by our partners in southern Canada, we would have to infuse a whole lot more resources than we can afford at this point. So what we have tried to do, for example, and we have done it, is we have started our own Nursing Program in the North to get the nurses on it. We have a full complement of doctors here in the capital and working on it and trying to solidify that within the region. So we are taking a number of those steps to continue to improve in those areas. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 42-15(6): Health Procedure Wait Times

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to nurses, nurses don't do surgeries. Surgeons do surgeries and they don't do diagnostic imaging. Primary health facilities, while they are important, don't do these either. These are important wait times. I beg to differ with the Minister in that we do have our own problems here and wait times to deal with. First of all, I would like to ask the Minister to commit to giving us information as to how he compares us with the rest of the country. I would like to ask the Minister to commit to providing that information and also his commitment that he will continue to work with the federal government and look at this as a problem area, because I am sensing from the Minister that he thinks this is all okay and not working on that. We need to address those wait times as well. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 42-15(6): Health Procedure Wait Times

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the issue of wait times is not, as I stated, an issue that is concluded. It is an area where we are challenged. We are going to continue to be challenged, especially when you look at the partners that we have in the Northwest Territories, in delivering health care. Yes, I will work and provide information. I will gladly sit down with the Social Programs committee or all Members of this Assembly to show how we work through this and how we have come up to highlight where we think we need to

focus on this time and, in fact, some of the areas we are working on like diagnostic imaging. We continue to work with the federal government. By signing this agreement, we have opened the door to potentially more resources in the area of how we deal with diagnostic imaging. Thank you.

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

Question 43-15(6): Enhancing Post-Secondary Student Achievement

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Mr. Speaker, I would like to, at this time, just take a few minutes just to offer my condolences to my honourable colleague in the Nunakput riding to some of the students I went to school with that the Member mentioned earlier in this statement here.

My question is to the Education Minister, Mr. Speaker, is that in the sessional statement by the Premier, he quoted saying the education of our youth remains one of our most pressing challenges facing our territory and is a continued priority of our government. Mr. Speaker, what measures does the Minister have to compare the achievement levels of Grade 12 graduates in small communities to those larger centres? How are we doing in terms of the quality of our education in our smaller communities versus our larger centres? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 43-15(6): Enhancing Post-Secondary Student Achievement

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think one of the best measures of success of our students coming out the secondary system is how many of them can move successfully into the post-secondary system; how many can go on to college or to studies after high school. We can assess that by looking at the student financial assistance record. We know that before we got into grade extensions, we were seeing in their best years about 34 percent of students who were going to post-secondary studies who were aboriginal. There were only about 842 students a year accessing student financial assistance at that time. Most recently, we are seeing over 1,500 students accessing student financial assistance. That is the current number. Our five-year average is about 1,440. Of those, 661, or 46 percent, are aboriginal. So we know we are seeing people in the smaller communities come to the school and being more and more successful getting into post-secondary studies. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 43-15(6): Enhancing Post Secondary Student Achievement

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister what steps he is taking so that in the future high school diplomas in the small communities will be the same quality as the diploma from a larger centre such as Yellowknife, Hay River or Inuvik. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 43-15(6): Enhancing Post-Secondary Student Achievement

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For students who take the same courses, no matter what the community is, those marks in those places represent the same achievement. That's because in Grade 12 we use Alberta departmental exams. They count for at least 50 percent to the student's mark. So whether the student is in Tulita or here in Yellowknife, they have to pass the same exam in order to pass the course. So in that way, we know that student achievement is the same.

One of the issues we think may be a problem with people thinking that achievement is less in the small communities is that oftentimes students and parents don't understand that a choice they make on a course in Grade 9 may require the student to take a course in upgrading in order to pursue the course they want in college. That's a big issue in not only the smaller communities, but in the larger communities. We have a lot of students who have to come back and take subsequent courses after graduation in order to pursue the course they want to take in college or university.

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

Supplementary To Question 43-15(6): Enhancing Post-Secondary Student Achievement

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In our small communities such as Colville Lake or our larger centres like Norman Wells and Deline, some of these centres don't have chemistry labs, biology labs and physics and qualified teachers to teach it or they are overburdened by the number of students. That's what I am asking. For these students who are graduating from our smaller communities, they are only geared to go into certain trades or careers. If they wanted to be a doctor or a biologist, they have to take extra courses. In Yellowknife or Hay River, they have these facilities available. In smaller communities, we are challenged. I want to ask the Minister what is his department doing to make the same standard of education in our small communities rather than asking our students that these are the trades you can take or these are the courses you can take. If you want to get further into education, good luck in upgrading your skills to meet those requirements. What is the Minister doing to handle that issue? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 43-15(6): Enhancing Post-Secondary Student Achievement

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it's important to understand that we're not talking about an issue that is only of concern in smaller communities; it's an issue that is happening all across Canada. Even in Alberta, a large number of students have to go back after they've reached the qualifications to reach a graduation certificate, a lot of students have to go back and take upgrading in order to get into the course they want to pursue in college or university. So it's not something we only see in the Northwest Territories. It happens all across Canada. It's largely because students aren't aware that choices they make early in their career, as early as Grade 8 and Grade 9, will make a difference in whether or not they will need to go into upgrading to go onto college.

Mr. Speaker, what do we do in the Northwest Territories to try to ensure people have the best opportunity? We try to make sure we have a much higher proportion of teachers

to students in the smaller communities than we do in the larger communities. We make sure high schools receive disproportionate funding, extra funding, over what would be seen in larger communities to be sure they can provide the programs. We are working with the schools to make sure that better distance education opportunities are provided so that students can access programs that they might not be able to access otherwise. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 43-15(6): Enhancing Post-Secondary Student Achievement

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I recently had a conversation with a teacher in one of my communities. Mr. Speaker, that teacher was culture shocked having to come into a classroom in the Sahtu and being faced with three or four grades to teach in the same room. So it's a little bit different in the small communities than in the larger centres.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister is, on measuring success by having the students enrolled in SFA, it doesn't show if the students are entering university or taking upgrading prior to entering university or college, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister give a reply to the House here on the success in terms of our students finishing Grade 12 and going right into a college program or university program or a technical school rather than having SFA and then going into upgrading to see if they qualify for the courses they want? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 43-15(6): Enhancing Post-Secondary Student Achievement

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The numbers that I gave the Member in the first answer are the ones that I would again use, because student financial assistance is only intended for students who want to enter a degree or certificate program. So it's not provided for upgrading. There are two exceptions and that is we offer students who are enrolled in a teacher education program, one year access to programming, as well as to nursing students. So the numbers in those two would be, in a typical year, less than 30 of the total number I have reported here. So it's still a significant number who are successful in moving directly into the programs at college.

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

Question 44-15(6): Deh Cho Bridge Project

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions this afternoon are for the real Minister of Transportation and they involve some more questioning, Mr. Speaker, on the status of the Deh Cho Bridge. Mr. Speaker, in his sessional statement a little while ago, the Premier did say that the federal government must step up to the plate and provide its share of the funding necessary for this important piece of the national highway system. Mr. Speaker, we have already filed with the federal government, I think about four years ago, a great plan, a very good plan, called Corridors for Canada, which outlined this bridge. We talked to Finance Canada, to Transportation, to Northern Affairs, to the Prime Minister. Mr. Speaker, we now know through the most recent federal budget that there is some \$33 billion committed to Canada under the Canadian infrastructure initiative and \$25 million for the next seven years to each province and

territory in transportation money. My question is, Mr. Speaker, what course of action are we taking this time to get Ottawa's buy-in for the Deh Cho Bridge project, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. Menicoche.

Return To Question 44-15(6): Deh Cho Bridge Project

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With respect to the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation, my first job as Minister was to go down to Ottawa and pound on the doors and meet federal Minister Cannon and advise him that this was one of our priority projects. The Deh Cho Bridge is a top priority, in fact. So over the course of Christmas and spring, our deputy minister had gone to Ottawa as well and talked with them. Of course, the federal budget unfolded, Mr. Speaker, and they did announce all kinds of money, and bureaucratically, even though they announced it, Mr. Speaker, they still had to work out the details. So that is where we are at right now. However, most significantly in this fiscal year, they did announce \$80 million for P3 projects. I have been advised, Mr. Speaker, that the Deh Cho Bridge project has been short-listed. In fact, it is one of the P3 projects that the federal government has been looking at provincially and across Canada. So we are very high on their agenda in terms of the P3 funding, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi.

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

Supplementary To Question 44-15(6): Deh Cho Bridge Project

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the answer. Also in this sessional statement, the Premier made further reference to this project very optimistically and enthusiastically when he said the schedule is to complete all necessary documentation soon. This construction is anticipated in summer. Now I won't read a commitment into that, Mr. Speaker, but, as I say, it's very enthusiastic and optimistic. I am kind of curious now with the information that Mr. Menicoche has provided, just how advanced is this proposal, Mr. Speaker. Summer is not that far off. If we are going to get construction started this quickly, I am reading that things really are well advanced, especially in the federal government. I would like to know the Minister's confirmation of that. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 44-15(6): Deh Cho Bridge Project

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. What we had done as our government...because the devil is in the details and federal funding, as well we are looking at ever-increasing costs of putting off the bridge project, that it's something we are looking at and as much federal government commitment as possible. Mr. Speaker, it's kind of like we don't want to put the cart before the horse in this case, but we are proceeding very often, like Mr. Braden indicated, Mr. Speaker, and that's how we are proceeding. Mahsi.

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

Supplementary To Question 44-15(6): Deh Cho Bridge Project

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, is a start to this project, as the Premier has suggested, is it contingent on the P3 approval that we are anticipating from Ottawa? Yes or no?

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

Further Return To Question 44-15(6): Deh Cho Bridge Project

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. That's a very good question.

---Laughter

I will do my best to answer it there, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we are looking at advancing the bridge project up to and including construction this fiscal year. It's good economics right now. Prices have stabilized and so we are looking at advancing with the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation up to construction this year, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 44-15(6): Deh Cho Bridge Project

MR. BRADEN: Okay. Mr. Speaker, as my colleague has pointed out very, very well, Mr. Ramsay asked about the criteria and the conditions for our own approval here. I know that when this project was advanced three or four years ago, that two significant criteria were a \$6 a ton charge for consumer and industrial goods crossing the bridge and for the GNWT's 35-year commitment to make a contribution equivalent to what we are spending now to build the ice bridge and run the ferry; two very significant parts of the fiscal threshold for us. Are those considerations still intact or have they been subject to change or are they going to be changed substantively in this deal, Mr. Speaker?

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

Further Return To Question 44-15(6): Deh Cho Bridge Project

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. There is a revised financial forecast and absolutely your colleague had indicated that the lack of government participating with committee, but we did have a briefing in early January or February and divulged as much information as we had at that time. We did indicate at that time as well, Mr. Speaker, that the financial forecast did include increases in traffic volumes and that helps our business case. However, the tonnage was going to remain around \$6 at that time. However, based on our concession agreement and inflation, those rates are flexible and can increase, Mr. Speaker.

Just with respect to the business case, the business case is that the project is not self-financing. That's where government has to step in. We've pleaded our case to the federal government that we are going to need your assistance and we kind of had to make a decision to act now while the prices of steel and everything stabilized over the last year. We know that the federal government has the financing available. It's just a matter of getting the details from the federal government. They do stand behind us and do want to see the National Highway Strategy include the Deh Cho Bridge. Mahsi cho.

MS. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Written questions. Returns to written questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to go back to item 5 on the orders of the day.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You may return to item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

REVERT TO ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. I would like to recognize a constituent of mine from Fort Good Hope. Jerry Lennie is in the gallery. He's in Yellowknife and visiting the House to see how we do business for our people.

---Applause

Mr. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Returns to written questions. Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 9: RETURNS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Return To Written Question 1-15(6): Care For Alzheimer's And Other Dementias

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Braden on March 13, 2007, regarding care for Alzheimer's and dementias.

1. Individuals with dementia are residents in all regions of the Northwest Territories. As a result, all seven of the regional health and social services authorities are required to provide services for clients with this illness.
2. In 2002, the Department of Health and Social Services contracted with KPMG Consulting to complete a review of the NWT's current and future need for long-term care services. The KPMG study identified that 110 of the total recommended 159 long-term care beds would be required for individuals with a cognitive impairment including dementias by 2012. If this percentage were applied to the revised estimates of long-term care beds in the report ISDM: A New Direction, February 2005, the clients with cognitive impairments would require approximately 152 of the 220 beds recommended by 2020.
3. Care for clients with dementia is available within the Northwest Territories. The department is in the process of renovating four long-term care residents with dementia. Staff members in Northwest Territories long-term care facilities have received training to work effectively with clients with dementia.

If a family chooses to send a family member with dementia to a southern facility, the family would be responsible for their choice of facility, care provided at the facility, and financial arrangements. The department does not send individuals with dementia to southern facilities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Return To Written Question 2-15(6): Culture And Language Programs In Tlicho Communities

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Lafferty on March 13, 2007, regarding culture and language programs in Tlicho communities.

1. Can the department please provide detailed information on the funding to Chief Jimmy Bruneau Regional High School, specifically the culture and

language programming funds for the year 2006-2007?

Culture and language funding to the Tlicho Community Services Agency totalled \$1,034,320 in the 2006-2007 school year. This is based on the total number of aboriginal students in the Tlicho. Each education authority, including the TCSA, allocates funds to its schools based on community needs. The departmental directive on aboriginal language and culture-based education clarifies the types of expenditures that aboriginal language and culture funding can be used for. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment does not collect funding information for Chief Jimmy Bruneau Regional High School because ECE does not fund schools directly.

2. Can I request a breakdown on the number of person years in the culture and languages areas for the fiscal year 2006-2007 in the Tlicho region?

In 2006-2007, a total of 11.62 person years was allocated to the Tlicho region that was then distributed by the TCSA based on community need. ECE does not collect breakdown information on the number of person years in the area of culture and language in the Tlicho because it does not fund school education assistants or aboriginal language specialist positions directly.

3. Can I also get a breakdown of funding on the culture and language program funds for Whati, Gameti and Wekweeti schools for the 2006-2007 fiscal year?

In 2006-2007, ECE provided total culture and language funding of \$1,034,320 to the TCSA. This is based on the total number of aboriginal students in the Tlicho. Each education authority, including the TCSA, allocates funds to its schools based on community needs.

The departmental directive on aboriginal language and culture-based education clarifies the types of expenditures that aboriginal language and culture funding can be used for. The department does not collect funding breakdown information for schools in Whati, Gameti and Wekweeti because ECE does not fund schools directly.

4. Finally, please provide detailed information on culture and language funds that are contributed to other Tlicho community organizations, and who delivers these important programs besides the community schools for the fiscal year 2006-2007?

In April 2006, the TCSA resumed full responsibility for administering culture and language contributions from the Government of the Northwest Territories. From April 2003 to March 2006, this administrative task had been transferred to the Rae-Edzo Friendship Centre.

Aboriginal language contributions are allocated to the TCSA that further distributes these monies to community organizations based on community language plans and proposals received for community-based language activities. In 2006-2007, the GNWT allocated \$243,000 under the Canada-NWT Cooperation Agreement. This amount was for language activities in the four Tlicho communities, as well as those undertaken by the Goyaho Society for Tlicho language activities in Detah and Ndilo. Another \$45,000 was allocated for early childhood language nests.

ECE does not collect information as to which organizations deliver culture and language programs in the Tlicho because ECE does not fund these organizations directly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Return To Written Question 3-15(6): Traditional Economies

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Norman Yakeleya, Member of the Legislative Assembly for Sahtu, on March 14, 2007, regarding traditional economies.

Given the extent of the details needed to respond to the question, later today, at the appropriate time, I will table a report dealing with the questions raised.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Returns to written questions. Replies to opening address. Petitions. Reports of standing and special committees. Reports of committees on the review of bills. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

ITEM 13: REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON THE REVIEW OF BILLS

Bill 1: An Act To Amend The Partnership Act

Bill 2: An Act To Amend The Condominium Act

Bill 3: An Act To Amend The Legal Services Act

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to report to this Assembly that the Standing Committee on Social Programs has reviewed Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Partnership Act; Bill 2, and Act to Amend the Condominium Act; and Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Legal Services Act, and wishes to report that Bills 1, 2 and 3 are now ready for Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Sahtu, that Bills 1, 2 and 3 be moved into Committee of the Whole for Thursday, May 10, 2007. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. There's a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bills 1, 2 and 3 will be moved into Committee of the Whole for tomorrow. Tabling of documents. The honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bell.

ITEM 14: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 12-15(6): Department Of Industry, Tourism And Investment Traditional Economies

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, further to my Return to Written Question 3-15(6), I wish to table the following document entitled Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment Traditional Economies. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ITEM 16: NOTICES OF MOTION FOR FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 8: Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2007-2008

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Friday, May 11, 2007, I will move that Bill 8, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2007-2008, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. Motions. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee

of the Whole of bills and other matters. Report of Committee of the Whole. Third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

ITEM 23: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, orders of the day for Thursday, May 10, 2007, 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. Acknowledgements
8. Oral Questions
9. Written Questions
10. Returns to Written Questions
11. Replies to Opening Address
12. Petitions
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
 - Motion 1-15(6), Territorial Power Subsidy Program
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Partnership Act
 - Bill 2, An Act to Amend the Condominium Act
 - Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Legal Services Act
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Thursday, May 10th, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 15:43.

