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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Friday, May 11, 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. Pokiak, Mr. Ramsay, Honourable Floyd Roland, Mr. Villeneuve, Mr. Yakeleya

ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good morning, colleagues. Orders of the day. Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. McLeod.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 10-15(6): School Of Community Government Program Completion Ceremony

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: It is my pleasure to speak today about the recent accomplishments of staff from community governments and other community and regional organizations who have achieved program completion through the School of Community Government.

The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs' School of Community Government works with community governments and other national and territorial partners to design programs, write curriculum and schedule courses that provide meaningful theory and practical experiences to be used by students when they return to their workplace.

Since the School of Community Government was first established in 1999 as a response to training needs identified by community government and aboriginal organizations, more than 2,700 students, mostly community government staff, have taken part in training. Each year, the school offers approximately 100 courses in 15 broad program areas in communities throughout the Northwest Territories.

At the 2007 annual program completion ceremony held on April 12th, a total of 32 students of the School of Community Government were honoured, six students received their occupational certification as community finance officers and 26 received their completion certificate in the areas of land administration, community finance, community firefighter, firefighter instructor level one, administration, recreation facility operations or bylaw enforcement.

A significant highlight of the ceremony was the presentation of the first School of Community Government program completion certificate for our water treatment plant operator to Ms. Mary Louise Nitsiza from Behchoko. This is a remarkable achievement for both Ms. Nitsiza and for the community government of Behchoko which supported her throughout the courses and exams. Six students received their occupational certificate as community finance officers under the Government of the Northwest Territories' Apprenticeship, Trades and Occupations Act. This means there are now 18

community finance officers with occupational certification who are able to work in community governments. Occupational certification provides community government employees with a recognition of their

competence in the skills and knowledge needed to perform their finance duties.

The program completion ceremony is an important milestone for the community government staff who meet the many challenges that face adult students in the Northwest Territories. This is the culmination of several years of work during which time students sacrifice time with family, time at work and their leisure hours to attend classes. The ceremony was an important opportunity to recognize this dedication and celebrate the successes achieved by these dedicated community government staff.

In closing, I would like to congratulate the students of the School of Community Government and all the community governments for supporting their employees and preparing for the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Minister's Statement 11-15(6): RCMP Change Of Command

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to draw Members' attention to the RCMP change of command ceremony that will take place later today in the Great Hall.

Chief Superintendent Tom Middleton will be appointed as the 34th commanding officer of the RCMP "G" Division. He continues the excellent work of his predecessor, outgoing Commanding Officer Pat McCloskey. Chief Superintendent Middleton is a 30-year veteran of the RCMP and will provide leadership to officers across the NWT. He will have a critical role in strengthening RCMP relations with communities, government agencies and institutions as well as non-government organizations.

Our communities are served by about 200 regular and civilian RCMP members. They work in the hardest of conditions to respond to crimes, protect public security and prevent criminal activity. The work can range from community patrols to disrupting the operations of organized crime gangs. I know that everyone in this House has the greatest respect for the work these officers do.

Please join me today for the change of command ceremony at 2:00 p.m. in the Great Hall. As Minister of Justice, I would like to welcome Superintendent Middleton to the Territories. I would also like to thank Pat McCloskey and Superintendent Rick Roy for their leadership over the past few years.

---Applause

Thank you. We look forward, Mr. Speaker, to working with Superintendent Middleton to address the continuing policing and security needs of all communities. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Ministers' statements. The honourable Member responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board, Mr. Krutko.

Minister's Statement 12-15(6): North American Occupational Safety And Health Week

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, every year, we join together to celebrate North American Occupational Safety and Health Week, which this year falls on May 6th to 12th. This safety and health related week was first marked by an agreement between Canada, Mexico and the United States in 1997. In Canada, Canadian Occupational Health and Safety Week had been celebrated for 10 years prior to its international launching.

North American Occupational Safety and Health Week's goal is to focus the attention of employers, workers, the general public and all partners in occupational safety and the importance of preventing injury and illness in the workplace and at home. This year's theme, Start Today, expands on last year's theme of making a lifetime commitment to safety and health. It is never too early, or too late, to start learning about and practising safety.

As part of this year's activities, the organizing committee has several exciting safety and health related events planned. The Department of Transportation is hosting safety video lunches for GNWT employees in Yellowknife, Inuvik, Hay River and Fort Simpson. All Yellowknife schools have been invited to explore the Workers' Compensation Board's Mine Safety Discovery Zone. The unions, including the Union of Northern Workers, the Public Service Alliance of Canada and the Northern Territories Federation of Labour, have organized safety video lunches and quizzes, complete with prizes.

Today, the WCB is holding the 2007 Ready, Set, Go Safe! Team Challenge, a community safety relay race with lunch provided at a community barbecue hosted by the Northern Territories Federation of Labour.

I encourage all Members to get involved in North American Occupational Safety and Health Week this year, by participating in or by attending some or all of the planned events and to strengthen their commitment to occupational safety and health. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Roland.

Minister's Statement 13-15(6): National Nurses Week - May 7 - 13

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in celebration of National Nurses Week from May 7th to 13th, I would like to acknowledge the tireless contributions made to the residents of the NWT by our nurses.

This year's theme, Think You Know Nursing? Take a Closer Look, focuses on the expanded roles of nurses as leaders, innovators, pioneers, primary care providers, mentors, educators, researchers and administrators.

Mr. Speaker, the nursing shortage being experienced across Canada is also a reality here in the NWT. We are addressing this by training our own northern workforce through a four-year degree program at Aurora College. Each graduate northern nurse is offered a full-time job within the NWT health care system. We are supporting our current nurses through career development opportunities in community health nursing and other specialty areas.

We must continue to find innovative ways to deliver health care, and we look to nurses to continue their various roles in developing a strong and vibrant health care system, one that is responsive and reflects the priorities of northerners.

As Minister of Health and Social Services and on behalf of all northerners, I would like to express my gratitude for the many contributions each and every nurse makes on a daily basis. I invite the public and Members of the Legislative Assembly to join me in celebrating National Nurses Week. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On National Nursing Week

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to speak today about nurses and draw attention to the fact that this week is National Nursing Week across Canada. Tomorrow, Mr. Speaker, May 12th, is Florence Nightingale's birthday. In 1971, the International Council of Nurses declared May 12th International Nurses Day. In 1985, the council passed a resolution to begin negotiations with the federal government to explore having the week including May 12th proclaimed as National Nurses Week. A few months later, in recognition of the dedication and achievements of the nursing profession, the Minister of Health at the time proclaimed the second week of May as National Nurses Week. In 1993, the name was changed to National Nursing Week to emphasize the profession's accomplishments as a discipline.

The purpose of National Nursing Week is to increase awareness amongst the public, policymakers and governments, of the many contributions of nursing to the well-being, not only of Canadians but to northerners. It's also an opportunity to educate Canadians about health issues by providing information they need to make decisions about their health and to promote the role of the nurse.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to publicly acknowledge the hard work, dedication and conviction shown by our nurses here in the Northwest Territories. Many of them have been through trying times over the past few years and nurses, Mr. Speaker, are the cornerstone of our health care system. Nursing for me is very close to home as my wife, Amanda, is a registered nurse and I get to have a very close-up look and understand some of the challenges and demands that are placed upon our nurses.

Mr. Speaker, I have the utmost respect for our nurses and I am very proud of the work and care they provide to our residents each and every day, in our hospitals, in our health centres, in clinics and in public health units and in our senior care facilities, Mr. Speaker.

With that, I want to thank the nurses for all they do for us each and every day. Mahsi.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On National Nursing Week

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to recognize nurses week being May 6th to the 13th. I also would like to express my congratulations to Gail Beaulieu on her completion of the Nurse Practitioner Program at Thebacha college last week.

---Applause

I would also like to see Ms. Beaulieu return to her hometown of Deninu Kue and continue to provide nursing services to the residents, because we do have a shortage of nurses in our community and people are encouraged to visit our health centre on an emergency basis only.

Mr. Speaker, the nurses here in the North have to be very dedicated, hard working and committed while working in an atmosphere that is very personal, sensitive and often borderlines on abusive in nature. The long hours and effects on their personal lives and health are often overlooked by many residents who use our health care providers on a regular basis. Mr. Speaker, this has to change.

We, as a government, have to fully support and recognize that there needs to be more emphasis on educating northerners about the positive, long-term effects that communities can realize when we start treating all our health care professionals, especially our nurses, with the respect and the dignity they so rightfully deserve.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to encourage people to value, commend and thank our nurses at all times of the year and not just this week or on nurses day tomorrow, May 12th. I hope people will start doing that and then we can realize that our nurses will want to stay in our small communities to treat the people that they know personally. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On National Nursing Week

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, May 6th to 13th is International Nurses Week and at this time I would like to acknowledge nurses week and recognize the work and dedication of nurses around the world, across the country and here at home in our communities in the Northwest Territories. It seems that with each passing year, there is more and more pressure put our health care system and in the face of shortages in our different, varying medical professionals that are being experienced across the country, sometimes in the absence of a doctor, it is nurses that will take on additional responsibilities, especially in our small northern communities.

Nurses are involved in the whole spectrum of health care, home care, health promotion, public health, diabetes care, emergency care. Our nurses provide service in long-term care, acute care, dialysis management, psychiatric care, prenatal, obstetrics, telephone advice via our Tele-Care program. This is quite a list of responsibilities in a wide spectrum of health care services.

To give a sense of proportion of staff that are nurses, roughly one-third of the staff at the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority are nurses. They are professionals with a broad knowledge of care delivery and some go on to specialize in certain areas such as

managing chronic diseases, dealing with infection control or becoming nurse practitioners.

In Hay River, we are very fortunate to have many long-term nurses and although there have been periodic vacant positions, I commend the hospital staff, the CEO Paul Viera and the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority for their efforts in managing, scheduling and filling these vacant positions in order to provide the level of health care that we enjoy in Hay River.

In closing, I would like to congratulate our nurses and health care workers for their excellent service to the public and thank them for the contribution they make to ensuring the health and safety of the residents that they serve. Tonight, Mr. Speaker, we will have the pleasure of joining with our health care professionals in Hay River, along with Minister Roland, to honour them in a night that is specially set aside to show our appreciation for them.

Mr. Speaker, not to change the subject, but I was figuring out a way that I could work this into my Member's statement. I would like to recognize my two daughters-in-law who are involved in a different type of nursing for many, many hours lately and they will be celebrating their first Mother's Day this Sunday as mothers of my two new grandchildren, and I also wish Happy Mother's Day to all the women across the Northwest Territories who are fortunate enough to be mothers. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Mackenzie Gas Pipeline Legacy Infrastructure Projects

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The financial and community, territorial and federal governments, and certainly the developers of the Mackenzie Valley gas pipeline project, are, I think, still trying to get used to the stunning news of a couple of months ago about the revision, cost and the timing of the pipeline. The cost is more than doubled to something like \$16 billion Canadian with a completion date for the project now in 2014. One global energy advisor, a company called Tristone Capital, in a report just last week, said that the very high-risk project, in order to earn the high returns that would normally be required on a project of this nature, is not commercially viable and that it may need as much as \$2 billion in government support or financial aid or incentive to make this happen.

Now, Mr. Speaker, many Canadians absolutely shudder at the thought of subsidizing ventures such as Exxon Mobile which had revenues of over \$370 billion in 2005. Certainly, we have to take on an abundance of caution whenever we are starting to talk about government support or investment of taxpayers' money in projects like this. But we have to look at some of the significant barriers we have here in the NWT to our own sustainable development. That really involves infrastructure, the kind of thing we have been talking about of late here, the Deh Cho Bridge, hydro investment, ports and communication facilities. So we have yet to see, Mr. Speaker, any real legacy project arising from the already significant developments that have happened in the NWT. So here it seems is an opportunity for the federal government if they are going to come on board to invest and contribute to this project not through any equity position, Mr. Speaker, or direct subsidy or financial support but in the building of these very crucial, very necessary and I think very

significant kinds of investments that will help this project to become a reality and indeed leave the kind of legacy that we need here in the Northwest Territories for generations to come, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Tuktoyaktuk Water Quality

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I begin my Member's statement, I would like to send a birthday wish to my brother Frank Pokiak in Tuktoyaktuk and also to Therese Voudrach.

---Applause

Mr. Speaker, just prior to me coming down to attend the Sixth Session of the 15th Legislative Assembly, a well-respected elder from Tuktoyaktuk spoke to me regarding the water quality that is delivered to the residents of Tuktoyaktuk. He is concerned with the chemicals added into the water; for example, chlorine and fluoride.

Mr. Speaker, this elder remembers long ago when everyone would haul water from nearby freshwater lakes for drinking purposes. As a young person growing up, I too remember hauling water from nearby freshwater lakes and getting ice from these lakes for dog teams. Mr. Speaker, years ago, water was delivered by trucks and pumped into 45 gallon barrel drums for daily use. Today, most communities have water reservoirs and the water is either trucked or piped into water reservoirs. Once the reservoirs are filled, the hamlet maintenance staff add chemicals to the water.

Mr. Speaker, I understand there are strict water policy guidelines to follow when treating water. The concern raised by the elder is that he is worried because, over the last number of years, people are becoming ill. It is not known if the chemicals added to the water may be a cause for these illnesses.

Mr. Speaker, I am confident the hamlet's maintenance staff are qualified to treat the water for safe drinking purposes. In closing, Mr. Speaker, as a government, we must ensure the water quality is safe for all the residents of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Recognition Of Soccer Player Achievements

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. (Translation) Today, I would like to recognize some of our youth that play in soccer. Students from the Chief Jimmy Bruneau School travel south for tournaments. They recently went to Grande Prairie. They really tried to win those games. They will compete in other tournaments coming this fall. There is also another person that is recognized as a valuable player who was selected recently. They have played in a lot of tournaments last year. They have been trying for many years now. They are recognized as good players. I would like to recognize the 11 players and also their coach, Michael Botermans. (Translation ends)

Today, I would like to recognize all of our youth who represent our communities in sports. In particular, I would like to recognize some particularly talented athletes from

Chief Jimmy Bruneau School in Behchoko. Congratulations to Rae Warriors under 20 boys soccer team who put on a fabulous show at the 2007 Northern Lights Cup in Grande Prairie, Alberta, this past weekend. As a result of their fantastic talents, Mr. Speaker, four of the star players were identified and selected for soccer scholarships this fall.

---Applause

They will be playing for the Grande Prairie Regional College in September 2007. Congratulations to Marvin Migwi, Tyrone Fish, Rusty Mantla, and Almer Tinqu. Just as exciting, Mr. Speaker, Cordelia Bouvier, who was also given a soccer scholarship to play for the Grande Prairie women's team. She has shown for many years that she can play with the best of the boys. Her feisty play and strong defence are her strong qualities, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this year, the same team has been named the 2006-2007 NWT Team of the Year by the Sport North Federation. These young athletes earned it and deserve this recognition for years of dedication and hard work. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate this team. Mahsi.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Norman Wells Day Care

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to speak about the success story of the Norman Wells Day Care. This is a great example of how a community can work to provide for itself. In the past, I spoke about the need for day care places in the Sahtu. The entire region had only 59 licensed day care spots. The new Norman Wells Day Care will add 20 day care and 10 pre-school spots thanks to the efforts of the Norman Wells Early Childhood Society. I would like to congratulate the society for the workers, the volunteers, Chamber of Commerce, the Norman Wells Land Corporation, the Town of Norman Wells, the corporate donors and all the GNWT departments that made this project possible.

This is a remarkable success story, Mr. Speaker, because people almost gave up on this idea. They could not find the estimated \$500,000 fund required to build a new facility. What turned their fortune around was the Housing Corporation of the Northwest Territories agreeing to supply to surplus three houses for a nominal fee. The ownership was transferred to the Norman Wells Early Childhood Society and several community businesses chipped in to help out with the renovations and the relocation of a building to a site donated by the Town of Norman Wells. At the end, Norman Wells will one day have a day care opened this fall for less than half the original estimated cost.

The Norman Wells Early Childhood Society estimates that start-up costs were around \$200,000. This success is a great example for a community for its driven solutions. I would like to congratulate the residents and businesses of Norman Wells for their endless efforts and the agencies for the collaborations for making day care a reality for the mothers. Maybe this is a happy Mother's Day gift to all the mothers in the Sahtu in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Increase To Yellowknife Gasoline Prices

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to speak today about something funny going on at our gas pumps in Yellowknife. Mr. Speaker, we know the rising price of gas has been on the national news because the prices keep going up and staying up. But what is an issue for a Yellowknife resident who called me last week is that the gas price went up by six cents per litre one day last week and there should be no reason to. Mr. Speaker, the ice bridge has been out for weeks. We know we have no permanent bridge over the Mackenzie River. This should tell us that the gas at the pumps has been brought here weeks ago if not months ago. So we have to ask why such an increase? We can't think of any reason other than to say it is just to be fashionable with the rest of Canada. I believe the word we use for that is gouging because it is just for more profit margin on the same old stock.

Mr. Speaker, the question about gouging has been raised in Yellowknife before and it is being raised in the rest of Canada. In the past, the old industry used major natural disasters like Katrina or the ongoing Middle East conflict like the Iraq War, but we haven't had a natural disaster like Katrina lately and there is no other war in the Middle East, thank goodness for that, but what is the excuse for the latest price hike?

Mr. Speaker, another line by the industry is that we don't have adequate refinery facilities in North America and they can't turn crude oil to gas fast enough to meet the demand. Well, is that an excuse or a conspiracy, Mr. Speaker? We know about the gazillion dollars in profits all oil producers make each year. Why don't they use some of that money to build refineries to bring the price down and create jobs? There has not been a new refinery built in North America in decades. Mr. Speaker, why do they keep allowing all the gas pumps to be built but not enough gas to keep the price down? Mr. Speaker, the last statement I heard from the president of the Petroleum Association based in Calgary on CTV is that he said the prices keep going up. We keep thinking the demands will go down, but that is not happening so the price can't go down.

Mr. Speaker, so they keep the price high, demand stays high and they laugh all the way to the bank.

Mr. Speaker, may I seek unanimous consent to finish my statement?

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have to say they surely have us where they want us. They know we can't make our own gas. Conveniently, every gas station, no matter what name brand except for the Co-op, keeps the price high so there is not even really competition in gas pricing. As the news said, we can continue to suck it up, but I think we should all try to reduce the use of gas so that we could try to make an attempt to reduce demand, but that is not going to happen fast enough. The real action has to come from the government. We need to demand the federal government and all the provincial governments to do something to

even the playing field for the hapless consumers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Pet Policy In Disabled Housing

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May I begin today by reminding all Members today is red Friday and I am wearing a red tie to honour our Canadian Armed Forces.

Mr. Speaker, in 1859, Florence Nightingale, the famous founder of our modern nursing profession, promoted the important role pets play in therapy. She said a small pet animal is often an excellent companion for the sick, especially those battling long, chronic conditions. Since then, many studies have proved the benefit of human-animal bonds. Medical and emotional improvements have been recognized as a result of therapeutic value found in pet therapy. Multiple sclerosis patients have found their pets to be one of the greatest comforts during their ups and downs of the disease.

A constituent of mine, Mr. Speaker, Ms. Carmen Tees who is in our gallery today, knows exactly what Ms. Nightingale advocated for almost 150 years ago and what studies have confirmed since then. My constituent suffers from MS and finally has the opportunity to move into a barrier-free home. Understandably, she was pleased to see an apartment building that was finally being built that would meet her special needs right out her front window. Unfortunately, there is one problem. My constituent was told no pets are permitted in this building. She has a cat as her long-time companion pet for some time now and has stated that she will not move into this building if she cannot bring her pet. She needs her cat, a therapeutic aid, for comfort, emotional well-being and to help her cope with her long-struggling illness. This new building has no carpet. All the floor surfaces have linoleum and they can be easily cleaned. A no pet policy seems completely unnecessary. At the very least, there must be some discretion to allow people with pets for therapeutic reasons in this building.

Mr. Speaker, the GNWT must look at this policy and deal with this situation. Yesterday, I tabled in this House the two cases provided to me by the Human Rights Commissioner where it shows and demonstrates clearly that a no pet policy should not apply to people who have disabilities when they have doctors' notes saying that it is an important role into their long-term health and gain.

Mr. Speaker, we don't need a human rights case to go on here. We can do the right decision today because we know what the right decision is by allowing people who need pets for therapeutic reasons to enter this building. Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Housing Minister later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Devolution And Resource Revenue Sharing Agreement-In-Principle

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again today, I want to commend the group for signing the AIP.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

MR. MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, they showed real leadership. This is something that has been a long time in the works. We have to start somewhere and we have a foundation in place. Now we have to build something on top of that. Some may feel that this AIP was rushed into. Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that this process has been going on for over 30 years. I know we operate on NWT time up here, but 30 years is not rushing into anything.

---Laughter

We might not have all the groups on board right now, Mr. Speaker, but I am sure the door is being left open for them to sign when they feel like they are ready to contribute to the future of the NWT.

The amount of money we lose, Mr. Speaker, still causes me a great deal of concern. Many projects could be partially funded by a lot of this money, including a road to the gravel source in Tuk. My colleague from Tuk makes a legitimate case for a road, but still nothing. Perhaps if Tuk was in the southern NWT, they might get something.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

MR. MCLEOD: This issue, Mr. Speaker, continues to anger and upset me. I want what is good for the people of Inuvik Twin Lakes. I want what is good for the Inuvialuit because I am an Inuvialuit. I also want what is best for the Northwest Territories because I live here and I do plan on being here until they plant me. Mr. Speaker, it upsets me because I do not like having something that is rightfully ours taken from us. People get taken to court for taking something that is not rightfully theirs. I think it is a position we have to take sometimes.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I again commend the leadership for starting the foundation with the signing of the AIP. I urge the remaining leadership to join the cause and add their voice to the voice of the NWT because it will give it so much more strength. We have to tell Ottawa, Mr. Speaker, that enough is enough. We won't stand by anymore while they continue to pick our pockets. Thank you.

---Applause

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

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is an honour today to recognize Ms. Carmen Tees. She is a constituent of mine. She suffers from MS. She is here today because of this important issue that I have been raising in my Member's statement. She will further hear my questions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize a constituent, Mr. Jim Peterson, a former president of the NWT Tourism Association and a sports hunting and fishing outfitter, Mr. Speaker.

---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. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to recognize students from Range Lake North School: Robert Digness, Austin Tanner, Allison Web, Trent Broom, Dakota Hamilton, Jensen Hu, and with them the teacher, Jason Perrino. I would also like to recognize Mr. Peterson.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. If we missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to the House. I hope you're enjoying the proceedings. Acknowledgements. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

ITEM 7: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 56-15(6): Increase To Yellowknife Gasoline Prices

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, following up on my Member's statement, I'd like to just ask the Minister of Finance what is his explanation for the gas prices in Yellowknife stations going from \$1.19 to \$1.25 when he knows that we have no bridge and unless they flew the gas in, which I don't think they did, it's the same stock. So if he could try his best to answer to start with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Roland.

Return To Question 56-15(6): Increase To Yellowknife Gasoline Prices

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I guess I want to be clear that in responding to this question I'm not defending big oil and the way they set their prices. However, from the work from the Department of Finance, nothing has changed in the way we deal with the fuel price in the Northwest Territories or from the fuel tax that we have on fuel in the Northwest Territories. So the prices that are changed are as a result of what we were told when we raised this issue with industry, is rack price adjustments that happen throughout Canada. For example, when this issue was raised in my constituency of Inuvik, I made some calls to find out what was happening, so I'm going on that response that I got because the changes aren't as a result of what we're doing. It's a result of the rack price changes and how fuel is stored and then sold as it leaves that storage facility into trucks and service stations. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 56-15(6): Increase To Yellowknife Gasoline Prices

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think we can establish there have not been new tax increases from the GNWT. The Minister is saying rack price adjustment but what we see is, and we can tell, that the gas they were selling last week is the gas they would have gotten at least before the ice bridge went out and chances are it's been there for months. We can't think of any increased

costs, so I think another word for rack gas pricing adjustment is gouging. So I'd like to ask the Minister, if someone is selling the same...This product doesn't change; they didn't bake it fresh that day; it's the same stock and the price goes up. So would the Minister agree that this may be gouging? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 56-15(6): Increase To Yellowknife Gasoline Prices

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess many in the Northwest Territories may term it or state that it's a form of gouging, but the practice has been throughout industry that -- and I'll use an example -- again, my community when the prices started going up, we know, for example, in communities that don't have highway systems or barge, for example, Inuvik gets its fuel supply by barges and we know that that barge delivery happens in early summer and it's put into storage facilities within Inuvik under one of the larger companies. It isn't until that gas leaves that storage facility, is put into a truck for delivery that the price is set. So the rack price on the market-of-the-day is what it's spotted at and charged at that rate. So that's, when I talk about rack price, the way it happens. In the large companies, the large suppliers, as the fuel leaves its facility into the delivery truck, the price is set at that time. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 56-15(6): Increase To Yellowknife Gasoline Prices

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, none of that explains why the gas price went up by six cents in Yellowknife when we have no permanent bridge. There is no new supply coming in; it's the same old stuff. I mean that explanation may work for southern communities, but we are cut off from the rest of the world because we have no bridge. They're using the same stuff and the price went up and the only variable was that the prices were...

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

MS. LEE: ...it went up because it went up down south. So could I ask the Minister to make a commitment to review the prices of gas at the gas stations in Yellowknife over the last three weeks and provide us with the information from the industry as to why they raised those prices? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 56-15(6): Increase To Yellowknife Gasoline Prices

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First and foremost, we have to make it clear that within the Department of Finance we have no control over what the industry does in this area. The only place our government has an impact is in POL, or petroleum products division within Public Works and Services where we supply to communities where there is no private sector. Here in the North, the rest of the communities, the only impact we have is on the fuel tax side. That hasn't changed, but I will request the department go back and look at the changes and then we'll have to send an inquiry into some of the bulk dealers throughout the Territories. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 56-15(6): Increase To Yellowknife Gasoline Prices

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My request is very narrow and it's not anything to do with the POL; I'm asking the Minister of Finance, as a public interest question -- and he can refer it to the Minister responsible for consumer protection, if they have any -- but I'd like to know if the Minister would report back to the Members as soon as possible within this month. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 56-15(6): Increase To Yellowknife Gasoline Prices

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we will go back and look at some of the price changes and request information and then forward that on to Members. Thank you.

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

Question 57-15(6): Mackenzie Gas Pipeline Legacy Infrastructure Projects

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, my questions this morning are for Mr. Bell, the Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment, and it concerns the suggestion floated a few days ago by Tristone Capital that the Mackenzie Valley pipeline won't cut it on commercial terms unless the federal government jumps in with a suggested \$2 billion worth of support. Mr. Speaker, my first question is does the GNWT agree with the suggestion that the federal government must put taxpayers' money into the Mackenzie gas project to make it viable? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 57-15(6): Mackenzie Gas Pipeline Legacy Infrastructure Projects

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Obviously, the new costing came out and although we were expecting an increase in the price of this project, we were surprised by the magnitude of the increase: \$16 billion. I think the suspected or the whisper number on the street had been, sort of, in the 10 to 12 range. So this is much higher than we had anticipated. We've been lobbying for some time; we do believe that there is a logical role for governments in assisting this project. We've never been advocating that there be subsidies paid to the producers; we don't think that makes sense or is the role of government, but we do believe that there are some areas governments can help. The Tristone report points those out. Whether it's infrastructure investments that could bring down the price of this project, we know it would be cheaper to construct in the South because of our infrastructure disadvantage. So marine infrastructure, road infrastructure, airports; there are some things that can be done. Assistance to the APG is another area that we would like to see happen in the form of loan guarantees, Mr. Speaker, potentially some shipping commitment help. So there are a number of areas we see a logical role for governments. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 57-15(6): Mackenzie Gas Pipeline Legacy Infrastructure Projects

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, considering the significance of this project to the Northwest Territories, is the Minister, is the government going to be more specific and be more aggressive about the kind of support we would like to see the federal government taking? Of course, there are lots of different options, all of them that make sense in certain areas, but which are the ones that make most sense for us for the long-term future of the Northwest Territories? Is the government going to be taking that case to the federal government and promote our interests in this project, Mr. Speaker?

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

Further Return To Question 57-15(6): Mackenzie Gas Pipeline Legacy Infrastructure Projects

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, there are discussions, if not currently underway, they're imminent between our officials, federal officials and the pipeline proponents to talk about the areas that government could support and assist this project, and I've just indicated some of the options that we favour. We need to see more detail from the producers in terms of their costing. What does that \$16 billion comprise? What types of infrastructure would help make this project price come down? We want to make sure that we're advocating for areas that will have the most impact on the price of this project. So there are discussions underway at the officials' level and once those take place, that will come back up to our Cabinet for further discussion. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 57-15(6): Mackenzie Gas Pipeline Legacy Infrastructure Projects

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, I guess I'm a bit disappointed to hear that the GNWT has not got a more firm or more aggressive position on this at this point. The DIAND Minister, Jim Prentice, clearly has the mandate to make this happen. In light of the, as I indicated in my statement, absence so far of any substantive legacy project from the already massive development that is underway in the NWT, will the Minister seriously consider the advantages that legacy projects such as hydro, roads and communication projects will have and press that case for federal government investment, Mr. Speaker?

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

Further Return To Question 57-15(6): Mackenzie Gas Pipeline Legacy Infrastructure Projects

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons we like this project is because of the legacy it can create and, first and foremost, 50 or 100 year industry for people up and down the valley in terms of oil and gas exploration. There are logical infrastructure contributions we think can be made by the federal government. We've been advocating that for some time. Now what we do need to see from Imperial and the producers is some detailed breakdown on that costing. There's no sense for us advocating for roads that will have little or no impact on the project. We need to see this detail. They have indicated that it would be filed before the end of May. I think that is happening now as we speak, or very shortly. That's when we can get down to the brass tacks in terms of discussions with the federal government and Imperial. There have been some high level discussions around support for the project, but without that detailed

information it is very difficult for us to talk about what kinds of infrastructure will contribute the most. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 57-15(6): Mackenzie Gas Pipeline Legacy Infrastructure Projects

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, you know, again, I want to appeal to the Minister and ask for his commitment to focus not on what's good for the pipeline project, Exxon Mobil and the other investors; what is good for the Northwest Territories? Will this government finally and aggressively focus on what we need, not what works to the advantage of the pipeline proponents, Mr. Speaker?

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

Further Return To Question 57-15(6): Mackenzie Gas Pipeline Legacy Infrastructure Projects

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would argue that what is good for this pipeline project and sees this pipeline project go ahead, eventually will be good for the Northwest Territories. It makes little sense for us to sit down with these three parties and argue for infrastructure contributions that have no bearing on whether or not this pipeline goes ahead. There's a place for that and those are in discussions between our government and the federal government. There are a number of logical areas and we do that continually. However, if we're talking about what can make this pipeline a reality, we need to understand from the project proponents where the project needs the most help, and that's the approach that we've undertaken. We have, for some time, the Premier, Minister of Finance, myself, have been advocating for and lobbying for support to the APG. Those loan guarantees can bring down the cost of borrowing for the APG. They're going to need some help. Obviously as the price of this project goes up, it's going to mean they have to come to the table with more money. We've been working and focussing our efforts there primarily, but obviously we're encouraged with the indication from Imperial that infrastructure contributions in the North would be an area that would really help them. We think that has the federal government's attention and we will start to focus there as we see more detail. Thank you.

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

Question 58-15(6): Recruitment And Retention Of Northern Nurses

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my statement today I talked about this being nurses week and I'd like to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services if he could provide this House with an update on our ability, as a government, to fill nursing positions in the North right now. In the past, we had been struggling to ensure that vacant positions were filled. We've used a lot of agency nurses in the communities, locums and at a probably greater cost than it would cost our government if we could have nurses come here, be recruited, retain them. I'd like to ask the Minister what is the status of the nursing shortage in the Northwest Territories today? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 58-15(6): Recruitment And Retention Of Northern Nurses

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't have the vacancies that we have across all the health authorities on me at this moment; I can get that information. What we have done, for example, in trying to address this, is we've worked with authorities on how we're going to use agency nurses. There is a shortage yet; we still will use them from time to time, but what we've worked with authorities on is the fact that if agency nurses are going to be used, it is to ensure that our facilities stay open, not to do a top-up, as was happening in a number of stations. We continue to work around the continued education as well, and an example of that is the community health nurse initiative and the nurse practitioner initiative here in the Territories, and that mentorship, trying to encourage that in the Territories. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 58-15(6): Recruitment And Retention Of Northern Nurses

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, there has been a certain degree of success with some of those programs that the Minister has referred to, but he has confirmed that we still do have a nursing shortage in the Northwest Territories. I noticed when I was flying to Edmonton the other day, the Up Here magazine has an article called "Northern Outpost Nurses - Choose Your Adventure," and there's quite an extensive ad here trying to recruit nurses to join a venture healthcare program to go to northern outposts. I'm sure that it's similar to the agency nurses that we hire. How aggressive are we being in terms of advertising and trying to attract nurses to the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 58-15(6): Recruitment And Retention Of Northern Nurses

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have stepped up in that area of recruitment and are going to universities and colleges that have the nursing programs beyond our own program in trying to encourage nurses to come north. Put out packages and extend the fact that we have this new program of community health nurse side and nurse practitioner side as well, and we're starting to do that work and looking at expanding it to bring more nurses to the North. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 58-15(6): Recruitment And Retention Of Northern Nurses

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I assume there's an advertising campaign, as well; I'm assuming we go to job fairs. How many people in the Department of Health and Social Services are devoted to the task of recruitment of health care professionals to the North? If a nurse was reading this Outpost Nurses advertisement versus what we -- well, I've never seen an advertisement from us -- but how would what they're offering and what we're offering compare? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 58-15(6): Recruitment And Retention Of Northern Nurses

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we work with the Department of Human Resources on our recruitment and retention side closely. They have some dedicated staff that work with us. We do, internally, as well, within the department of working towards what we can do and that example I gave earlier about going to colleges, universities, along with our own recruitment practice we have with our own Nurse Graduate Program. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 58-15(6): Recruitment And Retention Of Northern Nurses

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you. I'm still not getting the sense that there's any dedicated staff in Health and Social Services or in HR that are specifically devoted to recruitment efforts; I have not seen any advertising. So I'll ask again are there any positions that are specifically dedicated to recruitment of nurses and do we have an advertising campaign? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 58-15(6): Recruitment And Retention Of Northern Nurses

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are dedicated staff within HR. As well, we do have some staff within the department and I will get that information. Thank you.

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

Question 59-15(6): Income Support Program Treatment Of Impact Benefit Compensation

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, the honourable Minister Dent, on our income security reform, or income support reform that the department is going to be going through. I just wanted to talk about the recent payout of IBA to some income support clients in Fort Resolution that have been clawed back through their income support assistance for the month. I just want to ask the Minister in relation to the request for an exemption on the Hook Lake Bison Recovery Program and the compensation settlement on that. Will he direct the income security office in Fort Resolution to continue to treat these IBA settlement payments similar to this compensation settlement as excluded income? Will the Minister do that? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 59-15(6): Income Support Program Treatment Of Impact Benefit Compensation

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good morning. Mr. Speaker, the government's position is that IBA payments are not compensation; they are a contractual arrangement between a band and between a company; they are a private contract. So in this circumstance they aren't treated the same way as a compensation payment. So the answer to the Member's question is no, that would not be the direction provided.

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

Supplementary To Question 59-15(6): Income Support Program Treatment Of Impact Benefit Compensation

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Okay, well, let's just get on the topic of compensation here and section 20 of the Income Assistance Program policies, Mr. Speaker. You know, we're treating the Japanese Canadian Redress Agreement and the Merchant Navy Agreement as compensation and as exempt. I don't know who thought that up, but any stuff like the Indian treaty money received is also exempt. It says here the beneficiary will not...your calculation of net monthly income. We receive treaty money once a year, Mr. Speaker. It's \$5 a year. They've got it in here. That's an insult for the treaty money that we do receive. I would like to receive compensation included as IBA here. It says the Inuvialuit Final Agreement is treated as exempt. They receive up to \$1,000 a year in compensation on this part and that is treated as exempt. Why can't we treat IBAs the same, because it is compensation for loss of property, which is the land that the aboriginals use. Why isn't it treated equally? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Further Return To Question 59-15(6): Income Support Program Treatment Of Impact Benefit Compensation

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact, when we have court awards of compensation, for instance, in the residential school settlements, those are clearly exempt from our income support or consideration as income under our income support policies. Our legal opinions from Justice indicate that IBAs are contractual arrangements and are, therefore, not treated the same as compensation and that is the position of the government.

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

Supplementary To Question 59-15(6): Income Support Program Treatment Of Impact Benefit Compensation

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know that through the RC distribution payment being considered exempt, they did take the government to court and the court did decide it should be exempt as income, as unearned income or exempt from clawback on your monthly income.

Mr. Speaker, if we are going to see residential school settlements being included as exempt in the new income support reform, then why can't we include IBA dollars? A lot of claimant groups only get this money based on...It's not guaranteed every year. They could have used the money for something else and they could have distributed it differently and in different circumstances. So why can't we include that as an exemption in income because it's not...

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. I will allow the Minister to answer that. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 59-15(6): Income Support Program Treatment Of Impact Benefit Compensation

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are a lot of things that may happen only once. For instance, gifts that people are given that are considered

as income. The exclusions we offer now through the program are those that are provided for as compensation for some purpose like the wrongdoing that happened at residential schools. IBAs are not considered the same way. It's a contractual arrangement. It's not seen by our government as compensation. So on that difference of opinion, that's where we stand between the Member and the government.

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

Supplementary To Question 59-15(6): Income Support Program Treatment Of Impact Benefit Compensation

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Okay, well let me ask the Minister this, if he can explain to me what the difference is between the Inuvialuit regional claim distribution payments and IBAs. I don't see any difference in it, Mr. Speaker. I would like the Minister to tell me what that difference is. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 59-15(6): Income Support Program Treatment Of Impact Benefit Compensation

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One flows from a modern treaty -- the settlement of a land claim -- and the other flows from something that is not part of a treaty, but is in fact a separate contractual arrangement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 60-15(6): Pet Policy In Disabled Housing

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today, I spoke about my constituent, Ms. Carmen Tees, who is in the gallery today who is suffering from MS, as well as depression, aortic arthritis, sleep apnea, and she's shut in most of the year. She is not allowed to move into the new apartment building that is barrier free because she has a cat. Mr. Speaker, I have two small points to make. The Yellowknife Housing Authority has made a no pet policy for this building and that is a human rights breach. Mr. Speaker, I would like to hear the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation position of whether the NWT recognizes medical therapeutic, other benefits companion pets can provide our elderly and disabled constituents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 60-15(6): Pet Policy In Disabled Housing

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We certainly respect and recognize the use of animals, pets, if you want to call them that, who are considered to be service providers. For example, a seeing eye dog. But in terms of companion pets, I really don't know, Mr. Speaker, that the Housing Corporation has a position on that.

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

Supplementary To Question 60-15(6): Pet Policy In Disabled Housing

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, I have letters that have been sent in from doctors, clinical

therapists, even the former president of the Housing Corporation and directors of the Housing Corporation that have all said in a timely way they will make sure she gets a unit. By the way, Ms. Tees was one of the genesis clients to go out there to find out what they need for a disabled building to suit disabled people's needs. So, Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of the Housing Corp go back and have this policy reviewed in a fair way, because it's my opinion that it's a human rights breach? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 60-15(6): Pet Policy In Disabled Housing

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is the Yellowknife Housing Authority that is responsible for the policies with regard to the management of the units that the Member is referring to. Mr. Speaker, it's their policy decision. I will ensure that they have knowledge of the Member's concern and that they take it into consideration. But we have to keep in mind they are responsible for managing the units. They have the authority to set the policies and we don't want to interfere in something that is their authority. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 60-15(6): Pet Policy In Disabled Housing

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, if I can refer without reading them, I have two NWT Housing Corp letters, one from the president and one from the director of policy and programs, instructing the Yellowknife Housing Authority to accommodate this constituent as soon as any facility becomes available that is absolutely suitable. Mr. Speaker, we have an eight-plex next door right out her front window, Mr. Speaker, or side window, sorry. The fact is it's there and now they have obstructed her entering this building because she has a cat. Are they afraid of a little cat, for goodness sakes, Mr. Speaker? Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of the Housing Corporation go back and tell the housing authority to let this woman in, because it is an absolute necessity for her well-being to have this cat in there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 60-15(6): Pet Policy In Disabled Housing

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not sure they are afraid of a cat, but they might be.

Mr. Speaker, I will make sure that they are aware of the issue that the Member has raised. But as I said before, this is their authority. They are the Yellowknife Housing Authority. They have the right to set the policies. They have no right to break human rights legislation or rights, but, Mr. Speaker, they have to take into consideration the needs of all of the tenants in the units that they occupy. I will make sure they are aware of this concern. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 60-15(6): Pet Policy In Disabled Housing

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Minister's position on the fact that they are not allowed to breach human rights. So, Mr. Speaker, I

would like to get a commitment from the Minister today because we own the buildings and we can set policy, territorial-broad policy, not just one housing authority, all housing authorities. I would like him to agree today that he will go in and investigate this problem and make sure that we do not have to march down to the Human Rights Commission office downtown to make sure this lady gets into this unit, because she absolutely deserves to be there. Even the Housing Corp president has mentioned that and the director has mentioned that she should be in this building. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 60-15(6): Pet Policy In Disabled Housing

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said, this is within the jurisdiction of the Yellowknife Housing Authority. I will make sure they are aware of the concern the Member has raised. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 61-15(6): Delivery Of GNWT Human Resource Services

Mr. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Human Resources. I would first like to start off by saying thank you for allowing me to have a look at the Hackett report that was done last year. I have never held \$500,000 in my hands before, so it was quite amazing to know what \$500,000 feels like. Thank you, Mr. Minister.

---Laughter

I want to ask the Minister today of the recommendations that were contained in that report that was done over a year ago. I would like the Minister to provide us with a status of where those recommendations are and how they are being proceeded upon. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister of Human Resources, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 61-15(6): Delivery Of GNWT Human Resource Services

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have implemented a number of the changes recommended in the Hackett report. The structural changes to the Department of Human Resources are in progress. They are substantially underway. I can't say they are 100 percent complete, because a lot of the changes required that we work to move people around as the work gets done. For instance, we have a significant backlog in pay and benefits that we have been trying to deal with. We need to keep people in that area until that backlog is dealt with, but we are moving towards the final transformation. I would expect that we should be able to, over the course of the next year, conclude the transformation of the department.

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

Supplementary To Question 61-15(6): Delivery Of GNWT Human Resource Services

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if you look on the Government of the Northwest Territories website, go to the phone directory and have a look at Human Resources, you see no fewer than six managers managing six people. They each manage one person in the benefits section. I would like the Minister to explain to

me how it's a proper business process to allow the department to have six managers managing six people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 61-15(6): Delivery Of GNWT Human Resource Services

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said, the department is in the midst of a transformation process and that won't be the final status of the department. So as the work gets caught up and brought up to date, as we finish the movement into the latest version of PeopleSoft and as self-service rolls out, the structure will be in line with what has been recommended in the Hackett report.

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

Supplementary To Question 61-15(6): Delivery Of GNWT Human Resource Services

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Keeping with the business processes, I would like the Minister to explain to me how it is that an employee who works at HR who has been an employee of the government for 20 years, 20-plus years, and has had glowing performance reviews all through that 20-year history in the Northwest Territories, all of a sudden finds himself on the outs at HR and is being rushed out the door. I would like to explain how we have employees who work for us for 20 years and all of a sudden they are discarded. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 61-15(6): Delivery Of GNWT Human Resource Services

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would be careful to say that our employees are discarded. We value the employees who work for this government and know that the public service have nothing but the best of intentions and always want to do the best job. Mr. Speaker, as this whole transformation process has taken place, it has meant that some people are having difficulty finding a spot in which to fit. When you bring a bunch of people in who have been out in the departments doing different jobs and try to build one centralized structure, it's sometimes difficult to find the exact fit. So we are working with employees to ensure that training is offered and we are endeavouring to ensure that we can find positions to suit all of the employees that we have. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 61-15(6): Delivery Of GNWT Human Resource Services

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am wondering if I can get a commitment from the Minister today to come back to committee to discuss in further detail the recommendations that are outlined in the Hackett report and how it is we are moving forward with the recommendations that are in that report, so that we can deliver a more streamlined, efficient Human Resource service for our employees and the public. Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 61-15(6): Delivery Of GNWT Human Resource Services

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would be pleased to do that. Anytime we are requested by the committee, we will make ourselves available. Mahsi cho.

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

Question 62-15(6): Future Of Norman Wells Gas Field

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to continue with my question to the Premier in terms of Imperial Oil dropping the bomb in Norman Wells by cutting the fuel supply off to the town of Norman Wells. I want to ask the Premier if he would inform me, inform the House, inform the good people of Norman Wells in terms of what specific things this government is going to do to help residents of Norman Wells to look at possibly a conversion of the household products to keep their homes heated and operational once Imperial turns the tap off April 1, 2008. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 62-15(6): Future Of Norman Wells Gas Field

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me say again, in terms of power, the Power Corporation has an agreement with Imperial to supply energy for power until 2010. When it comes to homes, then Imperial will no longer provide gas to the domestic users after April 2008. The town has advised us that they have hired a consultant who will be taking a look at the options. Our departments are looking at this situation. As soon as we have information together, we have committed to meeting with the town and, at that point, we will determine which operation is the best to put forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 62-15(6): Future Of Norman Wells Gas Field

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the town of Norman Wells and the residents of Norman Wells appreciate the Premier's comments in terms of how this government is going to help with the natural gas supply. Mr. Speaker, the town of Norman Wells made comments to myself and Members of this House that when we had a meeting with them in terms of NCPC, the power rates would go up by using the NCPC supply. They want to maintain a certain level of affordable rates and again I am asking the Premier in terms of helping the people in Norman Wells make a conversion of their hot water tanks, electricity, fuel, is it something similar? Is Cabinet discussing something similar where the town of Inuvik had this situation and the Government of the Northwest Territories helped out the residents of Inuvik? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 62-15(6): Future Of Norman Wells Gas Field

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As well as the concerns by the residents in Norman Wells, we also have some issues that we have to deal with ourselves as a government and that has to do with the school, the health centre, the airport. We have a lot of

government facilities there, so we are working on that side.

With regard to the Power Corporation, we should be fine until 2010. We have a diesel generator there, but after 2010 if we had to produce our own power, then it may be necessary to add another generator in there. Of course, with community-based rates, that would have to be borne by the users, Mr. Speaker. That's looking forward to post-2010. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 62-15(6): Future Of Norman Wells Gas Field

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the use of diesel means that then once a decision has been made by the town of Norman Wells, the power rates would go up and we would convert over 200 homes into diesel that are on natural gas now. Should the pipeline go through and Imperial says we are opening shop again, we have natural gas and you have to convert back if they want to go back to natural gas. That's what the town is asking. Is there some assistance if they choose not to go into the diesel because of the power rates? Do they have some assurance that the Government of the Northwest Territories will help them like they did with the town of Inuvik in converting their household furnaces and heaters into propane if they wanted to go with propane? Would the government help the town of Norman Wells? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 62-15(6): Future Of Norman Wells Gas Field

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are a number of options to look at. One of them would be to switch over and begin to produce power and so on with diesel. Another one would be to just simply switch to propane and if we believe gas is coming through the pipeline anyway and it's going to be a matter of five or six years, then it's much less expensive to switch the units over to propane and use propane for a few years and if natural gas is available, go back to natural gas rather than go to the expensive route of diesel. Mr. Speaker, a consultant has been hired. Our people are looking at it. We will see what the options are. Then we will meet with the town and with them, decide what is the most appropriate and what level of support might be necessary. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 62-15(6): Future Of Norman Wells Gas Field

Mr. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think the residents of Norman Wells would sure appreciate hearing from this government that some support may be considered. Mr. Speaker, the question I would ask to Mr. Premier regarding Imperial dropping the bomb on the town of Norman Wells in terms of this decision, we had a deal with Imperial Oil and I say we, the Norman Wells preliminary agreement that was settled. What type of assurance do we have when we sign on with Imperial for future development such as the pipeline? What type of assurance will we have that this won't be done and our children won't be dealing with this type of issue the next 20, 30 or 40 years? Thank you.

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

Further To Question 62-15(6): Future Of Norman Wells Gas Field

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think if people think back, they shouldn't be 100 percent surprised by this decision because when they hooked up, they knew it was going to happen someday. Mr. Speaker, we are looking, as we negotiate on the pipeline, the feasibility of connecting communities to gas from that pipeline. Mr. Speaker, even that will run out some day. I will go back to my favourite fuel and that is hydro fuel. I think we have to, in the long term, look at hydro generated power that is there as long as the rivers flow, and that is going to be our long-term source, Mr. Speaker. But that is long term. Immediately, we will work with the town and come up with what makes most sense. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 63-15(6): Community Capacity Building Fund

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. McLeod, since he sat there quietly. Mr. Speaker, the capacity building fund initiative undertaken by the GNWT, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, was a great investment for 33 communities. Over 90 percent of the fund has been dispersed to date. However, Mr. Speaker, the community of Behchoko is still awaiting their share of the pie. What is the current stage with respect to the capacity building fund with the community of Behchoko? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. McLeod.

Return To Question 63-15(6): Community Capacity Building Fund

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the community capacity building fund is an initiative to provide some resources to the communities to work on projects that the community feels is in their best interest. There is very little criteria that was established around this fund. It was one that would be a fund that would benefit the community. It had to be demonstrated. The other one was to have all the community government organizations sign on to the application. So far, we have not received an application that has both signatures from Behchoko yet. We have had some discussions with the leadership of that community. There is, I think, five communities left that haven't received their fund. Some communities have requested that we extend the time to give them a little more time. So we extended the deadline to the end of June, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 63-15(6): Community Capacity Building Fund

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is a hold-up on the funds that was supposed to flow to the community of Behchoko. Some disputes between Behchoko community government and the MACA department less of governing bodies entitled to the said fund, the capacity building fund. Mr. Speaker, can the

department outline who is eligible in the community of Behchoko to access this fund?

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

Further Return To Question 63-15(6): Community Capacity Building Fund

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Access to this fund is not spelled out in the directive. It is intended to benefit any community projects or organizations for that matter, Mr. Speaker. I think the problem that we are having here is who is required to sign off on the project. The signatures are required. In the case of Behchoko, it is the Behchoko government and also the Metis Local for that community and also the MLA for that riding. Those are the signatures that we require. So far, we have not had a proposal from the community with both those signatures on there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 63-15(6): Community Capacity Building Fund

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there was a list that went around the organization, municipality, the list of organizations, association and agencies. The Department of MACA is going by the dates dating back to 1998. That is prior to the Tlicho Agreement that was signed in 2005, the new agreement as an agreement that was signed by this GNWT will full respect. As you can see, it outlines in this agreement one governing body in Behchoko. Why doesn't this GNWT, the Department of MACA, respect and honour the agreement and acknowledge that there is only one governing body in Behchoko and that serves the whole community of Behchoko, a Behchoko community government? Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 63-15(6): Community Capacity Building Fund

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. By no means are we trying to insinuate that the community government of Behchoko doesn't serve its residents. Mr. Speaker, this agreement or document was signed prior to the Tlicho Government coming into power. It requires us to have the community governments that are in the community and I have laid it out which ones were there and had to sign on, and it also involves the Metis local which still has members and serves their members. It would be really unfair for us to remove them at this point, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 63-15(6): Community Capacity Building Fund

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when we did sign the Tlicho Agreement, it was a clean slate in 2005. The new government that came into play, the GNWT was supposed to be working with. The proposed investment for this particular capacity building fund, the majority of the fund was supposed to go to the sportsplex in the community of Behchoko. It has been a long time coming, Mr. Speaker. The youth in the community are anxiously waiting for this to happen. Let them see the light and move forward. Will the Minister go ahead and disperse the fund to the community of

Behchoko government where all community members, organizations, associations, agencies, will truly benefit as a community? Let's do the right thing and move on. Let's not wait. Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 63-15(6): Community Capacity Building Fund

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is our intention, Mr. Speaker, it is to do the right thing and serve all the communities in a fair manner. Excluding one group at this point that still has a recognition and good standing would be unfair, Mr. Speaker. We are waiting for a submission that would come from the community with both signatures on it. We will wait. We have extended the deadline until the end of June. Failing to have an agreement at that point, we will take the next steps and call on the communities to come forward with individual proposals, then we will make the decision. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 64-15(6): Devolution And Resource Revenue Sharing Agreement-In-Principle

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Inuvialuit, the Gwich'in, the people in the Sahtu and the NWT Metis Nation have signed on to the AIP on devolution and resource revenue sharing. I would like to ask the Premier, there are some remaining groups that still we would like to see signed on. Is there still an opportunity for them to sign on and be part of this AIP? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 64-15(6): Devolution And Resource Revenue Sharing Agreement-In-Principle

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, there is an opportunity for the others to sign on. In fact, we have offered to do briefings with them on it if they like. Again, it is their choice. We are not forcing them, but we feel that it is important that we all work together as northerners here to look after our rights. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 64-15(6): Devolution And Resource Revenue Sharing Agreement-In-Principle

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier mentioned that he would offer briefings to some of the other groups. I would like to ask the Premier. Have any of the groups taken him up on his offer yet? Is there any indication that they may be willing to sign on to the AIP quite soon? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 64-15(6): Devolution And Resource Revenue Sharing Agreement-In-Principle

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, the Akaitcho have said they would like to have a briefing. They contacted us and a date has been set. I don't know exactly when it is, but our people will be going out to meet with them. I don't believe we have an acceptance yet from the Tlicho and the Dehcho, but we are certainly hoping to brief them and not bring them under any

pressure but simply let them know what is in it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 64-15(6): Devolution And Resource Revenue Sharing Agreement-In-Principle

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To my understanding, this AIP is going to be forwarded on to Ottawa. Has it been forwarded on to Ottawa yet? When can we expect a response back from Ottawa? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 64-15(6): Devolution And Resource Revenue Sharing Agreement-In-Principle

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I spoke with Minister Prentice the day before yesterday on it. It has been forwarded to him. His response was that he would want to have a look at it before making any commitment and further action. Mr. Speaker, it is my intention that we will meet with Minister Prentice as a group, those who have signed on and those who have signed on between now and whenever the meeting is, and determine a course of action from here towards working of a final agreement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 64-15(6): Devolution And Resource Revenue Sharing Agreement-In-Principle

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Premier for that. I also would like to ask the Premier if we have a federal election and there happens to be a new government, does this fall off the table or would it still be dealt with by Ottawa? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 64-15(6): Devolution And Resource Revenue Sharing Agreement-In-Principle

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, to be clear, the agreement-in-principle that we have now is only signed by the GNWT and the four aboriginal organizations we mentioned. The federal government has not signed anything yet with us in terms of the AIP, so we need them to come to the table.

Mr. Speaker, I can't speak for future governments, but I expect, as has been the case for the last 20 or 30 years, every federal government has said that it supports devolution and resource revenue sharing. So we would certainly want to pressure the next government, whoever it may be, to continue and in fact work more aggressively on resolving this thing once and for all now that we have reached the AIP stage. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 65-15(6): Tuktoyaktuk Water Quality

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement today, I talked about the water quality in Tuktoyaktuk about an elder's concern about the chemicals, especially chlorine and fluoride, added into the water treatment plant. I have a question for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, the Honourable Michael McLeod. What sort of training does the hamlet maintenance staff have in regard to the water treatment plants? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 65-15(6): Tuktoyaktuk Water Quality

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the responsibility for drinking water falls across a number of different government departments. ENR, or Environment and Natural Resources, is responsible for the location and the source of drinking water and ensuring the water is clean. Public Works has the responsibility of ensuring the water plants are run properly and infrastructure is in place. The Department of Health is responsible for testing the water and MACA plays a role also working with the communities to ensure all this works in a good, safe fashion. One of the things we do is the training and certification for the water plant operators.

We have a partnership with a company called Circuit Rider that goes into the communities and provides training to the water plant operators. Also, we have some programs within the School of Community Government that provides certification of water plant operators, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 65-15(6): Tuktoyaktuk Water Quality

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Is this intensive training in regard to the certification they are receiving? How long does it take? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 65-15(6): Tuktoyaktuk Water Quality

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the certification I think really depends on the education level or the skill level of some of our water plant operators. In some cases, it takes some time. We have to do a number of different types of programming including some hands-on training where we have either a Public Works officer or a Municipal and Community Affairs officer work right in the facility with them to provide hands-on training. But in some cases, it is a very short number of courses through the School of Community Government that would certify them. Mr. Speaker, it really depends on the level that the individual is at in the community and the level of education is certainly a factor.

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

Supplementary To Question 65-15(6): Tuktoyaktuk Water Quality

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. After the water is treated, how often do they check the levels of chemicals that they put into the water treatment plant? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 65-15(6): Tuktoyaktuk Water Quality

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have a multi-barrier approach to treatment of water. It is tested in a number of different ways. Our water plant operators are expected to be in the facility on a daily basis. The Health people test water I think on a monthly basis. The source of the water is also tested by ENR on an annual basis. So there are a number of different tests

that happen throughout. There are also tests that happen within some of the households to ensure that the water that is in the tanks in some cases is safe. So there are a number of different schedules that are out there. At the actual facilities, it is something that happens on a daily basis. Thank you.

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

Question 66-15(6): Aviation Fuel Shortage At The Yellowknife Airport

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions this morning are for Mr. Menicoche, the Minister of Transportation, about the urgent fuel situation at the Yellowknife Airport. Mr. Speaker, I have been advised by some of our airline carriers, one which supplies fixed wing scheduled charter service, that his company is now on rationing. He has been reduced from normal fuel consumption of about 24,000 litres a day to 7,600. He has been cut back by two-thirds. One helicopter company is rationed to only 400 litres of fuel a day. Mr. Speaker, I am advised that one of the two fuel suppliers at the Yellowknife Airport will be dry by Sunday morning. In fact, some companies are using fuel caches owned by their own customers to try to stay flying.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister yesterday advised the Assembly that the only contingency plan that he had in place was for companies to fly to Hay River, a 250 mile detour to fuel up. I talked to one of the mines, a representative of one of the mines this morning. This is costing them thousands of dollars a day, let alone the inconvenience. Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Minister really realizes the significance and the urgency of the situation. What steps is the department taking, Mr. Speaker, to ensure adequate fuel supplies are available in Yellowknife in this urgent and crisis situation?

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

Return To Question 66-15(6): Aviation Fuel Shortage At The Yellowknife Airport

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The department is closely monitoring the situation. As I indicated yesterday, we are not responsible for supply and monitoring the supply of aviation fuel. However, once again, because of our road shutting down early, it is becoming an imminent situation that we are going to have to monitor. I am not too sure who is doing the rationing. It is not a government initiative. I am sure it is the suppliers trying to watch out for all of their customers that are out there. Once again, Mr. Speaker, the positive light on this is that the ferry is going to be coming in on Monday. Suppliers are aware of it. They have staged trucks at the landing for the first trip that does cross at the Providence crossing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 66-15(6): Aviation Fuel Shortage At The Yellowknife Airport

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I certainly hope we can all count on the optimism that the Minister is projecting about a Monday service date. Mr. Speaker, in some other discussions with folks on this issue, I was told that the Mackenzie River was indeed clear of ice yesterday and could have accepted the...The boat could have been in service very plainly, but we ran into apparently some issues regarding maintenance or

inspection of the boat. Could the Minister advise why the Merv Hardie ferry was not in the water yesterday?

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

Further Return To Question 66-15(6): Aviation Fuel Shortage At The Yellowknife Airport

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not quite sure where the Member is getting his information, but the ice from Beaver Lake, which is a huge consideration for the ferry operations around Fort Providence, has always been taken into consideration. Just yesterday, that ice let go, so I don't believe that the river was free of ice where we could have launched our ship, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

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

Supplementary To Question 66-15(6): Aviation Fuel Shortage At The Yellowknife Airport

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, other information I have does indeed indicate that there have been delays in maintenance on the boat and getting it ready to launch. In fact, that has been a factor in the delay in getting the Merv Hardie ferry in the water. Can the Minister confirm that there have been maintenance issues that have delayed the launch of the ferry service this spring, Mr. Speaker?

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

Further Return To Question 66-15(6): Aviation Fuel Shortage At The Yellowknife Airport

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There have been some maintenance issues that have to be addressed on the ferry that is currently ongoing. We are proceeding as expeditiously as we can to get the ferry ready for this shipping season. I just might want to add that, even with the ferry running on Monday, that is well ahead of schedule. Every effort is being made to put the ferry in early. I can't make any commitments on that other than the expected date is still Monday. We are aware of the new pressing situation, the lack of aviation fuel and the safe transportation of our people of the North and we'll try to address that the best we can, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Time for question period has expired; however, I'll allow the Member one last supplementary question. Mr. Braden.

Supplementary To Question 66-15(6): Aviation Fuel Shortage At The Yellowknife Airport

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister is quite correct; the service will hopefully be restored much earlier than usual. But the reality is, it's too late for the fuel suppliers here in the Yellowknife region. Mr. Speaker, the Minister has acknowledged there are indeed maintenance issues, and it's starting to think the Merv Hardie has been out of the water for more than four months now, but here we are at the cusp of the season and we're still fixing it. Mr. Speaker, what is the nature of the mechanical and maintenance issues with the Merv Hardie and how long is it going to take them to repair it?

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

Further Return To Question 66-15(6): Aviation Fuel Shortage At The Yellowknife Airport

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's just a timing issue, Mr. Speaker. I believe we have enough time to repair the ferry this weekend and

have it in the water running for the travelling public by 6:00 a.m. Monday. However, with the new pressing situation of the shortage of aviation fuel, the trucks and the tankers will be given priority when the ferry is ready to run. Transportation is closely monitoring the situation and will provide a travel advisory to pilots and the aviation industry if it really gets severely critical, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi.

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

ITEM 8: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Written Question 6-15(6): Aurora College Nursing Students

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Social Services.

1. Please provide a detailed accounting of the number of nursing graduates in 2006-2007 at Aurora College.
2. How many job offers were made to these graduates?
3. What is the number of placements that resulted?

Mr. Speaker, I want to note that the names of the graduates are not requested in the interest of privacy and personal information. I'm only seeking the numbers and results. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Written questions. Returns to written questions. Replies to opening address. Petitions. Reports of standing and special committees. Reports of committees on the review of bills. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

ITEM 13: REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON THE REVIEW OF BILLS

Bill 4: Northwest Territories Hydro Corporation Act

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to report to the Assembly that the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development has reviewed Bill 4, Northwest Territories Hydro Corporation Act, and wishes to report that Bill 4 is now ready for review in Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Tabling of documents. Honourable Minister responsible for Human Resources, Mr. Dent.

ITEM 14: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 16-15(6): Report On The Staff Retention Policy, Year Ending March 31, 2007

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document entitled Report on the Staff Retention Policy, Year Ending March 31, 2007. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Tabling of documents. Honourable Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bell.

Tabled Document 17-15(6): Agriculture Products Marketing Council 2006-2007 Annual Report

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled Agriculture Products Marketing Council 2006-2007 Annual Report.

Tabled Document 18-15(6): Northwest Territories Business Development and Investment Corporation 2007-2008 Corporate Plan

Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the document entitled Northwest Territories Business Development and Investment Corporation 2007-2008 Corporate Plan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Tabled Document 19-15(6): Summary Of Members' Absences For The Period April 1, 2006 To March 31, 2007

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Tabling of documents. Pursuant to section 19(1) of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, I wish to table the Summary of Members' Absences for the Period April 1, 2006 to March 31, 2007.

Tabled Document 20-15(6): Amendments Made To Schedule "C" Of The Legislative Assembly And Executive Council Act - "Indemnities And Allowances"

In accordance with section 21(3) of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, I hereby table amendments to section C of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act indemnities and allowances.

Tabled Document 21-15(6): Annual Report Respecting Members' Indemnities And Allowances For The Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 2007

Pursuant to section 35(a) of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, I wish to table the Annual Report Respecting Members' Indemnities and Allowances for the Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 2007.

Tabled Document 22-15(6): Annual Report Respecting Capital Accommodation Expenses For The Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 2007

Pursuant to section 35(b) of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, I wish to table the Annual Report Respecting Capital Accommodation Expenses for the Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 2007.

Tabled Document 23-15(6): Annual Report Respecting Members' Constituency Expenses For The Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 2007

Pursuant to section 35(c) of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, I wish to table the Annual Report Respecting Members' Constituency Expenses for the Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 2007.

Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

ITEM 15: NOTICES OF MOTION

Motion 4-15(6): Territorial Power Subsidy Program

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, May 14, 2007, I will move the following motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nunakput, that this Legislative Assembly strongly recommends the government immediately undertake a comprehensive review of the Territorial Power Subsidy Program, including a comparison of power consumption levels in the various regions and different months of the year, in examination of the option of setting an annual maximum subsidy consumption level as opposed to the monthly maximum to identify changes to the program to ensure that power is affordable to all residents and small businesses in all the NWT communities throughout the year while maintaining an

incentive for residents and small businesses to limit their non-essential power consumption; and further that this Legislative Assembly strongly recommends the government report back to the appropriate standing committee of the 16th Legislative Assembly as early as possible in that Assembly's term of office; and furthermore that this Legislative Assembly strongly recommends the government direct the NWT Power Corporation and Northland Utilities, Yellowknife, Limited, to develop an initiative to provide user-friendly real-time in-home meters which will allow residential customers to monitor and, where appropriate, reduce their power consumption. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Notices of motion. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Motion 5-15(6): Criminal Records Check

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, May 14, 2007, I will move the following motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, that this Legislative Assembly strongly urges the Government of the Northwest Territories to implement criminal records checks at least every year for all public service employees who have contact with children, youth and other vulnerable persons; and further that the government direct all its boards and agencies to adopt policies for criminal records checks of all volunteers who have contact with children, youth and other vulnerable persons; and furthermore that the government make it a condition of all contribution agreements that the recipient organizations implement criminal records checks for their staff and volunteers who have contact with children, youth and other vulnerable persons; and furthermore that this Legislative Assembly strongly urges the private and non-governmental sectors to adopt similar criminal records check procedures for their staff and volunteers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Notices of motion. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. Motions. First reading of bills. Honourable Member of Finance, Mr. Roland.

ITEM 18: FIRST READING OF BILLS

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Weledeh, that Bill 8, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2007-2008, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Motion is on the floor. Motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 8 has had first reading.

First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

ITEM 19: SECOND READING OF BILLS

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Weledeh, that Bill 8, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2007-2008, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill makes supplementary appropriations for the Government of the Northwest Territories for the 2007-2008 fiscal year. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Motion is on the floor. Motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Bill 8 has had second reading and is referred to Committee of the Whole.

Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 8, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

ITEM 20: CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS

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

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the committee wishes to consider Bill 8, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2007-2008. Mahsi.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed, thank you. We'll do that right after a short break.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Okay. I'd like to call Committee of the Whole back to order. Order. Bill 8, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2007-2008. I would like to ask Minister Roland if he would like to provide his opening remarks.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Yes, Madam Chair. Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2007-2008 requests authority for additional appropriations of \$58.169 million for operations expenditures and \$78.898 million for capital investment expenditures in the 2007-2008 fiscal year.

The request for operations expenditures includes \$14.037 million for investments in new initiatives for priorities identified during the 2007-2010 business planning process. Major items include:

- \$5.5 million to support initiatives identified in the GNWT energy plan and Greenhouse Gas Strategy. Of this amount, \$2.4 million will be funded from the federal government's eco-Trust for clean air and climate change;
- \$3.7 million for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment to implement the redesign of the Income Security Program;
- \$1 million for the Department of Health and Social Services to start the implementation of standardized foster care rates in the NWT;
- \$960,000 for the Department of Public Works and Services and the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation to establish apprentices in the GNWT to help address the shortage of skilled tradespersons in the NWT;
- \$560,000 for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to support initiatives identified in

"A Barren-Ground Caribou Management Strategy for the Northwest Territories 2006-2010;" and

- \$420,000 for the Department of Justice to provide policing services to the communities of Wrigley and Gameti.

Other items included in this request for operations expenditures are:

- \$3.8 million for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment for the provision of French and aboriginal language services in the Northwest Territories. The expenditures will be fully offset by revenues from the GNWT;
- \$3.5 million for increases to the northern allowance rate as provided for in the Collective Agreement between the GNWT and the Union of Northern Workers; and
- \$3.3 million for the Department of Health and Social Services to provide contribution funding to the Beaufort-Delta Health and Social Services Authority to fund \$1.3 million of the authority's 2005-2006 accumulated deficit and \$1 million of the authority's projected 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 operating deficits.

The operational funding request also includes \$22.1 million for contribution funding for the continuation of infrastructure projects not completed in the 2006-2007 fiscal period. Funding for these projects was approved and lapsed in 2006-2007.

The major request for capital investment expenditures is \$74.9 million in capital carry-overs from the 2006-2007 fiscal year.

That concludes my opening remarks. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. At this time I will ask Mr. Roland if he would like to bring witnesses into the Chamber for the review of the bill. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Yes, Madam Chair.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. I'll ask Mr. Thagard, our Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses to the table.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Joining me at the table here to my left is the director of budget management evaluation, Mr. Sandy Kalgutkar, and to my right is the manager of budget development evaluation, Mr. Charles Tolley. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Now I'll turn to the Members and ask if the Members have any general comments on Bill 8. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. The bill is quite large, as supps go in this Assembly, and it may be a little, deceiving is the wrong word, of course, but in its inclusion is a very large number of carry-overs, both in cash value and in quantity, from the previous year, Madam Chair. Some \$75 million of this is, in effect, for projects that this

Assembly has already approved from the previous year or, potentially, even years. These projects are, of course, uncompleted and what the Assembly is doing here is simply reaffirming the money that was unspent from last year can continue to be spent this year to complete these projects.

But in that context, Madam Chair, it seems that the numbers of uncompleted projects is quite large. Committee's been provided with detail that itemizes these and, without doing a line-by-line count here, I think we're in the neighbourhood of perhaps well over a hundred and maybe even a couple hundred projects spread across our various departments.

Madam Chair, I wanted to ask the Minister about this aspect of the bill in general comments, just to see whether or not there is, you know, is this on the Minister's radar screen here? Why are we having to cope with this number of uncompleted projects from previous years? Is this a trend? Are we indeed experiencing a growth in our capacity, our inability, to finish the jobs that have been presented to the Assembly, and here we are having to sort of reaffirm or revoke the money, Madam Chair?

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, specifically in the area of capital carry-overs, it is a concern and as we've looked at it I guess we look at a term of we're at the beginnings of a trend, I guess we can say. We've looked at significant growth, for example, in carry-overs from the previous years' budget process and this year again further growth in that area. It is a concern for us. It is on the radar screen. We are looking at a number of factors and working with the departments as to what we can do as a government overall to try and curtail the type of carry-overs and looking at the overall picture as to what are those effects. Is it because of the heated economy? Is it the marketplace? How much of the marketplace affects us? And is that marketplace, if it's as heated as it is, driving up the cost of all the projects? So those are a number of factors that we're looking at.

We're trying to look at making adjustments. For example, bringing in what we started last year and we'll continue to work on what we call banking days for the capital projects and looking at that scenario. As well, looking at how we can try and increase market participation in a number of our projects. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you. What does the Minister mean by market participation, Madam Chair?

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, we've noticed that on a lot of our projects in the Northwest Territories and our larger capital projects, we are at times receiving one bidder on a tender package. That can be some of the larger ones. Even in the city of Yellowknife, which is our largest community, we may get two bidders on some of our larger projects. That affects the way we can look at things. If we're going out for competition and finding there's little competition and there's one price, what do we do if it's, for example, twice the amount that was established in the budget? So we're having to look at that and see what we can do to try and

encourage more potential companies to bid on our projects. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Madam Chair, I certainly understand that we run a number of complex projects and some of them can't be guaranteed or predicted with absolute certainty that they can be done, so it's fully understandable that there can and will be some carry-overs. But I guess an aspect that I wanted to ask about is that, you know, as the implementation of some of these goes ahead and indeed, you know, the Minister or the department finds that, for instance, there is very limited uptake on a call for bidders or the cost of something comes in extraordinarily high, well above anticipated costs, do we have a way of looking at things to see if they are indeed achievable or doable or do they still have the value that we originally predicted? Are we routinely and regularly going through these carry-over projects to see whether or not they're, in effect, worth continuing given all these circumstances? Do we have a way of just taking some of them out of the mix because they don't meet our original expectations, Madam Chair?

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the process we have in place does allow for the review of the capital projects. For example, as we have recently gone through our budget process and approving the capital program that was established as part of our budget process there, when a project goes out and is tendered and prices have come in higher than anticipated, the department would have to come back to get more money or, for example, change the scope of work. So that would reduce the project itself. We would have to weigh that as to a number of the issues that are out there. One, can we delay the project a year to try to deal with the matter or look at more funds? Is it a safety issue where we would have to proceed? Those factors would come in working with departments.

As I stated earlier, the area we're working on further to that is the banking days where that process is looked at more often and trying to look at the scope of work. Is the project absolutely necessary in this fiscal year? So those things are looked at and then it would be brought back to the Cabinet table.

Any work we're doing we would also work with committees if we're going to change any of the processes. One of the things we're looking at as we prepare for the next budget cycle is to look at the capital program, what we will need to do to make potentially any changes. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Madam Chair, another aspect of the volume of projects being carried over is that the expectation was that these would be completed within a given fiscal year and a time frame. We have already, of course, passed the budget for 2007-2008 and the hundred more projects, new initiatives that we want to get done this year. But yet we find ourselves dealing with many, many projects unfinished from the previous year. So a concern here, Madam Chair, is that our capacity to handle our own new work, let alone the stuff that's unfinished from previous years, is going to even more compound our capacity issues. So we continue in this Legislative

Assembly to consider and approve the work that the departments ask us to sign off on, but I'm looking more and more carefully and cautiously at the volume of work that we expect our workforce, our civil service, to achieve when we have this growing problem of uncompleted work that has to be picked up from the previous year.

So I wanted to put that concern on the record, Madam Chair, that we also have to look at our own capacity to manage this and if the process, for whatever reason, is starting to get out of hand, then we really do need to look very carefully at what kind of controls or curbs we can put into this so we don't in effect collapse our system, Madam Chair.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, it is, as we stated, a concern and the issue of capacity is a big one. As we're seeing potentially, we feel that as part of the impact on the competition side. Over the North overall is there capacity to do these projects in all of our communities in the time we have set out? If you look at the request for carry-overs plus the 2007-2008 budget we've just passed, the capital program we have sitting out there now is just under \$250 million. That's a significant amount of work that would be required in a year, so one of the exercises that we go through in the banking days process is looking at that capacity within departments, as well as what we're seeing out in the marketplace. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Next for general comments I have Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I do have a few opening comments or general comments on Supplementary Appropriation, No. 1 that's before us today. I won't ask any questions, I'll wait for the detail, but I just wanted to highlight a few areas of concern for me and it's nothing new; it won't come as anything new to the Minister. He's heard me say it many times before. I think some of the Ministers are paying attention over there. So, position growth in the public service. Again, in this supplementary appropriation there are new positions. There's positions that are being refunded. There's two with MACA, the resource impact development advisors, \$291,000. There's a number of areas that nobody's come back to this House and shown us the performance or these positions, which I questioned two years ago, we're not closer to a pipeline today, Madam Chair, than we were two years ago. Arguably a little bit closer, yes, Mr. Minister of ITI, but here we are, we still don't have a pipeline, we still don't have resource development, and we're going to fund these positions again. It was a question two years ago when they were supposed to sunset. I see there's \$291,000 in here to keep those positions. What have they done for the last two years, those positions? I'd really like to know that and I think the Minister should supply that information to the House, and the Department of MACA should supply that to the House.

Another, aside from the position growth, real area of concern for me is how we're managing our health care facilities in the Beau-Del, Stanton, and now I hear rumblings that there's some trouble with the Sahtu as well, with the board there, and deficits. Last year we approved through supplementary appropriations a bail-out for Stanton; and we're not talking \$50,000, \$100,000, we're talking somewhere in the magnitude of 10 to 15 million, when all is said and done, Madam Chair. It's not a small

matter. We don't have any plan to address how these health facilities are run. I'm not sure, and I've been left, you know, unaware of what exactly is happening. Are we chronically underfunding our hospitals and health boards which is forcing them into running deficits like they are and coming back here and us having to bail them out? Is it mismanagement? Is it the department not paying attention? Who ultimately, Madam Chair -- and I'd like to ask the Minister when I get a chance through the detail -- who ultimately is responsible for this mess? And it is a mess. If the department comes back to this House with a deficit recovery plan, the people who are going to be paying the price are the patients and the residents here in the Northwest Territories. To me, Madam Chair, that's just not fair. It's not fair. Not fair to the people we represent. They shouldn't have to deal with deficit recovery plans and cutbacks and things of that nature when deficit recovery plans are entered into. It's something that I really, you know, and the more I see of it, the more it bothers me. I'm not sure if we need to maybe take a look, a more macro look at how we're running our health authorities. Maybe we don't need all the boards we have. Maybe we need one board with a member from each region in the Northwest Territories to function as one health board. Maybe the time has come where we should seriously take a look at the money we're spending and, in effect, if we could administer our health system, we've only got 42,000 people. Why do we need all the health boards? Why can't we do it with one board? I think that's a question, Madam Chair, that I think we'll have to deal with. Maybe the next Assembly will have to deal with that question. But it's one we should ask ourselves.

I think I'll leave it at that, Madam Chair. I again thank you for allowing me some general comments. I look forward to the discussion that will be coming up. Mahsi.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. As we've heard numerous times in this House the concern about position growth. Within FMB one of things that we send back to departments as we begin any budget preparation is growth and positions would be looked in a serious manner. We then deal with the request being brought before us.

Health care facilities and boards are a challenge. We have provided information to committee members. The deficits aren't always climbing; there are fluctuations. We have some health boards in a surplus situation. Some are right on the line. From time to time, there are some that are in a deficit position. We have begun to work with FMBS and the Department of Health and Social Services. For example, Stanton has developed a terms of reference for base to review funding. That will help us look at if there are some underfunding situations and deal with them in that manner. That baseline review process has now been established. The terms of reference has been set up. We are going to use that as well for every health authority. Ultimately, the buck stops with the Minister. That is where it stops. Thank you.

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

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I just would like to make a brief general comment. My question can be at a later point when we go in detailed discussion. I would just like to highlight the apprentices

that were addressed here in the opening remarks. I think this is a step in the right direction. Although the number is small, we must also take a baby step working with the communities, identifying apprentices in the communities; just fill in the gaps to meet the needs of the community. We in the Northwest Territories are lacking a trades workforce. This way, we can certainly work with Public Works and also the Housing Corporation. I would like to see that even enhancing the program even further. That is a good start. I call it in my language a baby step.

Madam Chair, the next item that I would like to highlight is aboriginal language services. As you recall, I questioned that with the Department of Education just the other day, the importance of having our own curriculum in our region. There are other regions that may have developed a curriculum. But at the same time, we do speak a different language. We deal with the culture aspect differently than other regions. I am glad to see some money allocated in this specific area.

My next item is on the policing, the justice. It took hard work to get to this point of identifying two isolated communities having a police presence. With the police presence, there will certainly be detachments, as well, down the road. This has been a long time coming. I would like to also highlight that there are other small communities out there that are still calling on us to get their police detachments, RCMP presence, as we heard in Colville Lake just over the past couple of weeks. We must support those small communities as well, continue supporting them. This is a step in the right direction. We highlighted two communities. I would like to thank the Department of Justice, specifically the Minister for his hard work in identifying this. It is a huge step in the right direction. Mahsi, Madam Chair. Those are my general comments.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Those were comments, not questions. Next for general comments is Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I just want to take this opportunity to just go on record that all of my questions will be in the detail. A lot of general items have already been covered by lots of other Members. I will have some specific questions as we go through the supp. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Next I have Mr. Yakeleya for general comments.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I make comments to the Minister's opening presentation. Also, I have specific questions to some specific departments that the funding is spoken for in terms of what their plans are for. Madam Chair, the remarks would be similar to my colleague Mr. Lafferty, in terms of ensuring that the small communities are looked after in terms of standards of services and programs. I know this government and past governments have struggled with how we balance in terms of having larger centres versus some communities, as Mr. Lafferty alluded to in terms of the RCMP issue here in terms of having RCMP in communities that do not have any detachment. How do we have that sense of balance and fairness and rights for people to feel safe and protected in communities? I know it has been a really hard struggle and issue to deal with because the little amount of funding that we have before us and the little amount of resources that could ride RCMP services to communities like Colville Lake and Tsiigehtchic. I am happy for the communities of

Wrigley and Gameti for receiving an amount to look at their communities. I am hoping that Colville Lake is on the list for something they can look at. It also requires lots of dollars, Madam Chair.

I am looking forward to some interim solutions that could be dealt with in terms of helping out the people in Colville Lake in terms of having some type of law enforcement be a little more consistent in their community and a little more on a regular basis. I am going to just make mention of that and I will get to the point when this comes up in the supplementary appropriation.

Madam Chair, regarding the supplementary, what I heard overall I like what the Minister presented to us. Madam Chair, in our small communities, we certainly look for support and help in our communities. We are looking at the issue of reducing our cost of living. How can we do that? A big ticket item issue is greenhouse. What are we doing to help with the greenhouse issue here, and the environment, the caribou, the training? I am certainly glad to look at the department's role in this to look at the aboriginal languages in our communities and support that concept here in terms of strengthening our aboriginal languages in our communities.

Madam Chair, I am really happy to hear from the Minister in terms of the apprenticeship programs that are going to be introduced back into the system to help our people and establish some strong skilled people that could be role models for people who are finishing high school. I think that is a real dead on bang on job in terms of how we get this type of work into our communities.

There are some good things about this. There are some things that I think need to be voiced. The Ministers need to hear that we need some flexibility in some of our regions. In my region, of course, we don't have the all-season road. We don't have a bridge. We don't have the luxury of some of the other regions. That is the nature of the Northwest Territories. However, we have to give some consideration to our communities who don't have these types of services available to them and make provisions in there to strengthen them. Madam Chair, what is the best part of equalization amongst our communities in terms of standards, programs and how we can help each other? Otherwise it is always going to be the small communities versus the larger centres in terms of programs and services. If the small communities do not see that that is going to be it, then they will be a little more boisterous and a little more persistent as to how funding is allocated in the government here. That won't be a good thing for us in terms of our Assembly here. I wanted to say that, Madam Chair, in terms of my opening comments. I will get to the specifics later on when we do clause by clause.

Overall, I think this is a good thing. I think the government is looking out for our smaller communities at the start. But for me, it is not enough yet. I am going to ask the Minister, I think he can do more. But that is another matter at another time.

However, Madam Chair, I just want to conclude my statement by saying I will get into the budget when it is the appropriate time. I just want to give my comments to the Minister. I think helping out in our region is a plus. Looking after certain things for us would benefit the whole North. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. General comments. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just have a few brief comments. I would like to say I am impressed and quite pleased with the Greenhouse Gas Strategy that is coming forward. I am very pleased to see some of the initiatives that I was asking for last year finally coming to life: hybrid vehicle credits, wood pellets and wood stoves. Those are very important things. I think we still have a long ways to go in this particular area. I think we still tend to focus in on the individual rather than the bigger problems, which are industry and the transportation sector. But I think we are certainly demonstrating that this government is serious about this problem and we are putting money up front to deal with it.

I have heard from parents who are foster parents, that is, and they will be quite pleased to hear that foster care rates are being looked at. Certainly, I think the Minister of ENR heard last session very well from all of the MLAs about the caribou problem. It is nice to see that money is going in to look at the bigger picture.

Madam Chair, just to close it off, we have some money going in for RCMP in Wrigley and Gameti. I look forward to the day that we can say, just like we say no kid left behind, well, no community left behind, whereas no community left behind without RCMP or legal services. I realize the difficulty. If something happens in that community, no one is going to say could we just pause while we fly in RCMP and then we will restart the whole incident over again? Sometimes nasty things happen at the heat of the moment. It is a real sad case by the time that the RCMP can get there; a lot of things have happened and it is too late to go back. I look forward to the day that we can have appropriate staffing levels in every community. That is all I have at this time, Madam Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Are there any further general comments? Detail, Members. Please turn in your books to Bill 8, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2007-2008 and turn to page 5. Mr. Lafferty.

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

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

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress. I would just like to thank Minister Roland and his witnesses for being with us today. Thank you.

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

ITEM 21: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the committee has been considering Bill 8, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2007-2008, and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

---Carried

Third reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bell.

ITEM 22: THIRD READING OF BILLS

Bill 1: An Act To Amend The Partnership Act

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Partnership Act, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Bill 1 has had third reading. Third reading of bills. Honourable Minister responsible for Justice, Mr. Bell.

Bill 2: An Act To Amend The Condominium Act

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that Bill 2, An Act to Amend the Condominium Act, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Bill 2 has had third reading. Third reading of bills. Honourable Minister responsible for Justice, Mr. Bell.

Bill 3: An Act To Amend The Legal Services Act

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Legal Services Act, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question is being called. All those in favour? Opposed? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 3 has had third reading. Third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

ITEM 23: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, there will be a meeting of the Accountability and Oversight committee on Monday the 14th at 8:00 a.m.:

Orders of the day for Monday, May 14, 2007, at 1:30 p.m.:

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

9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Opening Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
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 4, Territorial Power Subsidy Program
 - Motion 5, Criminal Records Check
18. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 9, Write-off of Debts Act, 2007-2008
 - Bill 10, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2007-2008
 - Bill 11, Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2007
 - Bill 12, Public Health Act
 - Bill 13, Change of Name Act
 - Bill 14, Employment Standards Act
 - Bill 15, Liquor Act
 - Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 8, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2007-2008
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 Monday, May 14th, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 13:12.

