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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Wednesday, May 16, 2007

Members Present

Honourable Brendan Bell, Mr. Braden, Honourable Paul Delorey, Honourable Charles Dent, Mrs. Groenewegen, Honourable David Krutko, Mr. Lafferty, Ms. Lee, Mr. McLeod, Hon. Kevin Menicoche, Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. Pokiak, Mr. Ramsay, Honourable Floyd Roland, Mr. Villeneuve

ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good afternoon, colleagues. Welcome back to the House. A special welcome to all our visitors today in the gallery. It's nice to see a full gallery. Orders of the day. Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 21-15(6): Investing In And Supporting Early Childhood Development

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon. Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories is committed to supporting parents and caregivers in their efforts to nurture children's development from birth. A better start in learning leads to greater success in life. With that in mind, I would like to share with you some recent changes to the Early Childhood Program.

Our Early Childhood Program provides contribution funding for both the start-up and operation of licensed day homes and childcare facilities. As of April 1, 2007, our government has increased the amount of those contributions by 30 percent. What does that mean for caregivers? As an example, in Gameti, the daily contribution for preschool space was \$11.20. As of April 1st, that contribution is now \$14.60. The daily contribution for an infant has increased from \$16.80 to \$21.80. Contribution amounts vary from community to community and are based on the cost of living.

In addition to this increase, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment recently provided one-time funding, under the program enhancement grant, that makes it possible for licensed caregivers to upgrade equipment and play space.

Mr. Speaker, I am also pleased to announce that \$125,000 will be available to assist licensed non-profit childcare facilities that are experiencing high rental costs. The funding will be made available on an application basis, taking into account the circumstances of those childcare facilities that are faced with comparatively higher costs than others. Details are being finalized and full information will be provided to each childcare facility in early June.

In addition to direct contributions to caregivers, ECE supports early childhood development in a variety of ways. For instance, we continue to invest in early and family literacy through the work of the NWT Literacy Council. The council has trained approximately 200

community people in the development and delivery of family literacy workshops.

The Language Nest initiative helps to support 20 community-based licensed early childhood programs that deliver aboriginal language and cultural immersion

programs and thus contribute to the revitalization and retention of aboriginal languages and culture.

ECE also partners with Aurora College to deliver the Early Childhood Education Certificate Program that combines distance and on-site delivery of courses. The program delivers early childhood development training for those working in early learning and childcare programs. Aurora College is also researching the development of an aboriginal early childhood education course.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the Healthy Children initiative, a partnership between the departments of Health and Social Services and Education, Culture and Employment, continues to support existing programs for preschool children. Funding is provided to community-based organizations to assist in the development of early childhood programs at the local level.

Mr. Speaker, early childhood education is an essential first step in the process of lifelong learning; one that we will continue to support. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Public Works and Services, Mr. Krutko.

Minister's Statement 22-15(6): Public Works And Services Energy Conservation Initiatives

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to give you a status report on the energy conservation initiatives undertaken by the Department of Public Works and Services. This work was initiated last year through the GNWT's energy conservation action plan and supports this government's action on climate change, as described in the NWT Greenhouse Gas Strategy, while upholding the principle of the NWT energy plan.

Earlier this year, I reported that PWS had been working with the Department of Justice to install a biomass heating system -- wood pellet boilers -- at North Slave Correctional facility. This has been in operation since December 1, 2006, and, to date, has realized heat savings of \$18,000 with greenhouse gas emissions reduced by 760 tonnes and a heating oil displacement of approximately 260,000 litres.

Since February 2007, the efficiency in the combined wood pellet and oil-fired heating system was improved and we expect more savings than originally forecasted.

Mr. Speaker, later today, at the appropriate time, I will table a report on the biomass heating system.

Public Works and Services also approached energy conservation initiatives through construction projects using federal government incentive standards in designing schools in Ndilo, Gameti and Tulita to optimize fuel and power consumption over the life of the buildings. It is estimated the resulting energy savings will save the GNWT about \$100,000 in operating costs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by about 200 tonnes per year.

Public Works and Services completed infrared thermal scanning on 177 GNWT and community buildings to

highlight areas with excessive heat loss including buildings in Fort Smith, Hay River, Hay River Reserve, Enterprise and Norman Wells. During this time, the department inspected mechanical and electrical systems in 145 GNWT buildings to identify opportunities for energy conservation with the results being analyzed for potential future energy reductions. This program is expected to continue into the fall of 2007.

PWS continues to work on the Fort Smith electrical heating project. The plan is to use excess hydroelectric power from the Taltson hydro dam to heat GNWT buildings currently heated by oil or propane. The most cost-effective option is to convert three buildings, which are the GNWT records storage warehouse, Breynat Hall, and JBT Elementary School in Fort Smith. The project is expected to be completed by the fall 2007. We expect greenhouse gas emission reductions of 805 tonnes per year as well as annual operations savings of about \$214,000 subject to fuel oil prices.

PWS has worked with people in Yellowknife to provide upgrades to the mechanical and electrical systems in three GNWT leased buildings. In addition to saving lease money in the future, these upgrades are expected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 270 tonnes every year. The department will be looking for similar opportunities for other leased spaces.

The PWS facility design standard, called Good Building Practice for Northern Facilities, is being updated to reflect recent technology advances and newly adopted energy saving strategies. The comprehensive new version of guidelines will be published this fiscal year and will include the requirement to apply the Commercial Building Incentive Program design protocol when designing new facilities.

Mr. Speaker, to date, the energy initiatives of PWS are expected to result in about \$500,000 savings to the government each year, with annual greenhouse gas emission reduction of about 2,700 tonnes.

Public Works and Services will continue to work on existing and new conservation initiatives and on identifying new technologies to help reduce energy costs and greenhouse gas emissions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Minister's Statement 23-15(6): Disability Awareness Week - May 27 - June 2

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Disability Awareness Week takes place from May 27th to June 2nd. The purpose of this week is to recognize people with disabilities and to highlight their abilities and contributions to our communities across the Northwest Territories. The month of May is also Speech and Hearing Awareness Month.

This year's theme for Disability Awareness Week is Building Access One Block at a Time, focusing on education, technology, employment, recreation, transportation and housing. This theme fits in well with the disability framework and action plan for persons with disabilities. That framework established five priority areas: education, culture, income, disability supports and housing.

The social programs departments and their regional authorities work with many non-governmental organizations and together we strive to improve services for persons with disabilities.

The NWT Council of Persons with Disabilities has expanded its community outreach programs into the Sahtu region this past year. This program is now operating in Wekweeti, Gameti, Fort Simpson, Whati, Inuvik, Hay River, Behchoko and Fort Smith. Mr. Speaker, every indication points to success for these programs throughout the Northwest Territories. Because of this expansion, more people with disabilities are accessing assistance and services.

The Canadian National Institute for the Blind, the Yellowknife Association for Community Living, the YWCA, the Autism Society and the Learning Disability Association are also vital organizations dedicated to serving the needs of disabled persons. This government has also partnered with the Rick Hansen Foundation. The government will provide the foundation \$20,000 annually for the next five years. This funding will be used to assist people living in the NWT with spinal cord injuries and other disabilities.

I encourage everyone to watch for activities that highlight Disability Awareness Week in their communities. I would also like to acknowledge the work of our NWT speech language pathologists, audiologists and the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association Yellowknife Branch during this week and applaud the help they provide throughout the year for those with speech and hearing challenges.

We honour and thank persons with disabilities throughout the NWT for their contributions and the strength they provide to our friends, families and communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Ministers' statements. The honourable Deputy Premier, Mr. Floyd Roland.

Minister's Statement 24-15(6): Ministers Absent From The House

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise the House that the Honourable Joe Handley and the Honourable Michael McLeod will be absent from the House today to attend the annual general meeting of the NWT Association of Communities in Norman Wells. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On Tribute To Hay River Teachers Bob And Susan White

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I want to take this opportunity, with Mr. Bob White in our visitor's gallery, to pay tribute to Bob and his wife, Susan, for their many years of teaching in the North with just three years experience teaching in Ontario and has added 30 years to that record in the North. His wife, Susan, has also taught in the North for 30 years.

The Whites are a part of the numerous outstanding teaching husband/wife teams that we have had in Hay River. Bob has taught all three of my children, and Jillian had him one year and then when Bob changed grades to the next grade up, Jillian begged to have him as her

teacher again the next year. I am not sure if her begging helped, but she did get her wish and she still talks about that.

The Whites are two of the most positive and encouraging people I have ever met. They are like that with everyone, student or neighbour, aspiring athlete at the track and field meet, at the cross-country ski trails or just with anyone they come in contact with.

If there is one thing our young people need today, it is teachers and role models who instil confidence, positive encouragement and positive thinking.

Regardless of social conditions or economic realities in the home, every child should have a dream, and I have watched with amazement as the Whites have tirelessly taken interest in their students and have followed their lives, with interest, through the good times and the challenging times.

Every child goes through stages of self-doubt and sometimes a lack of confidence. Who can really measure the impact of a caring teacher who motivates and celebrates their largest and smallest achievements? We need an education system with people like Bob and Susan White who choose to see the good and best in their students and who bring that out in them. When the Whites retire this year, the students of Hay River and the teaching community will greatly miss them.

There are those who have a job and those who have a gift and a calling to a career that reveals that gift to the fullest. They are the ones who enrich and change lives, and the Whites have gone above and beyond the call, as demonstrated by Bob's presence here today with 52 Grade 6 students. I don't know what new and exciting plans lay ahead for the Whites, but might I suggest that the Department of Education take a serious look at finding a way of engaging their extensive knowledge of teaching in the North.

Teaching is not easy. I have said many times that I could not do it. In the small and often remote communities of the North, our mostly young teachers might stay a little longer if they had a visit from a couple like Bob and Susan White.

For the record, Mr. Speaker, in these proceedings of the Legislature today, on behalf of my children and the many northern students who the Whites have taught over the years, I would like to...

MR. SPEAKER: Mrs. Groenewegen, your time for your Member's statement has expired.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you. I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude her statement. Are there any nays? You may conclude your statement, Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you. I didn't time that very well. I had one sentence left to say. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues.

I would like to tell the Whites today, on behalf of the many children who they have taught in the North, that they have earned our respect, our affection and our very, very heartfelt thanks. Thank you to them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Legislation For The Locksmithing Profession

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to speak today about how the Government of the Northwest Territories is dragging its heels on legislation that directly impacts the lives and the livelihood of northerners. Mr. Speaker, I would equate the government's history on developing legislation is as slow as molasses going uphill. Examples are the Wildlife Act, the Species at Risk Act and the long-awaited Liquor Act. With large pieces of legislation taking as long as they do, I am left wondering where, oh where, on the government's radar is legislation on locksmithing and massage therapy.

Most other jurisdictions in this country have legislation on locksmithing and massage therapy. With the recent passage of the Pharmacy Act, could we not look at using that as a guide or template to help other professions seeking legislation to govern their operations? Numerous meetings, letters, e-mails and conversations have taken place regarding new legislation for locksmithing, Mr. Speaker. It has been 20-plus years since this issue was first brought up to the then-Justice Minister and it's been brought up with every Justice Minister since then, including the former Justice Minister, the current Justice Minister and here we are, Mr. Speaker, four months from the next government being formed, and still there is nothing; no movement towards legislation governing locksmithing. Mr. Speaker,

Mr. Speaker, section 353 of the Criminal Code requires all persons in possession of lock picking equipment to be licensed by the Solicitor General of the province in which they live. Currently, as I know it, there are not licensing requirements that have been set out in the Northwest Territories. That means, Mr. Speaker, that anyone can order and possess lock picking equipment in the Northwest Territories to do whatever they wish with it and it's just not practical, Mr. Speaker. Is it just not good common sense that we should move forward and license and legislate the locksmithing profession?

The government needs to address these deficiencies in legislation and judging by the inability of many governments to act, the people out there in our communities, Mr. Speaker, are asking why. Why does it take so long for this government to move what would appear common sense, practical legislative solutions forward? Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister of Justice at the appropriate time. Mahsi.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Driver's Licensing Services In Small Communities

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on the issuance of driver's licences in smaller communities outside of larger regional centres. I raise this issue today because on a constituency tour on March 24, 2007, in Paulatuk, the hamlet foreman raised an issue with me regarding local residents having a difficult and hard time to take a written exam or take a road test or just upgrade their driver's licences. This makes it difficult for the hamlet to hire local people to operate the hamlet and municipal services vehicles.

We know that to operate a water or sewage truck would require at least a class 1, or to drive a bus would require a class 4 licence.

Mr. Speaker, in the smaller communities, except in the larger regional centres such as Inuvik, there are no driver examiners available to take written or road tests in Paulatuk and in the Nunakput communities. As an example, Mr. Speaker, for someone in Paulatuk to travel to Inuvik is very costly, especially if they want to write and take the road test to get their driver's licence. The cost associated to travel to Inuvik includes airfare, accommodation and meals. The local airline only travels to Paulatuk on certain scheduled days, and this means staying for a minimum of three days. The costs add up for the individuals and this is out-of-pocket expenses if they want to get their driver's licence. Mr. Speaker, will these people be able to be reimbursed for their expenses for having to travel to Inuvik to take the driver's examination?

Mr. Speaker, the smaller communities will need some kind of assurance that the driver's examiner can travel to these small communities so they can take both the written and road test. In closing, I will have questions for the Minister responsible for Transportation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I will use my Member's statement to talk about the proposed hydro development expansion project at the existing Taltson hydro facility.

Mr. Speaker, many people, myself included, are fully supportive of this project moving ahead as planned, not only because of the economic benefits and the impact benefits that will be realized by the people in my region but, more importantly, because they are...

MR. SPEAKER: Excuse me, Mr. Villeneuve. There's a piece on the Order Paper concerning this item. We should not be talking about it in the House right now. I rule your Member's statement out of order.

---Ruled Out of Order

Members' statements. The honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

Member's Statement On Maintenance Of Highway No. 3 Access Roads

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

Mr. Speaker, for many years, Tliche families have lived, and hunted, and trapped along the shores of Great Slave Lake. Many of these traditional camps were built near Highway No. 3 because it allowed families to maintain their traditional lifestyle while living in the town of Behchoko for part of the year. Still others maintained their traditional culture year round. When the Department of Transportation changed the structure of Highway No. 3, many traditional camps and homes were affected, Mr. Speaker. In the past, last fall, I raised that issue with the DOT servicing Highway No. 3 traditional cabin owners' access roads. Specifically I spoke about Charlo's camp, a camp that has been in a location for generations. Traditionally, families live at this site. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, this family is not able to access their camp because the road is deteriorating dramatically. The

access road is literally collapsing, Mr. Speaker. In the past, the road was maintained by the DOT.

Mr. Speaker, the department has the responsibility to clear these highway access roads. These families were there long before the highway was even built, the new highway. By preventing them access to their traditional camps, Mr. Speaker, we are preventing them from maintaining their traditional way of life on the land.

I will have questions for the Minister responsible for the Department of Transportation at the appropriate time. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Taltson River Water Levels

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi again, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again I'll use my Member's statement to talk about the proposed hydro development expansion project at the existing Taltson hydro facility.

Mr. Speaker, many people, myself included, are fully supportive of this project moving ahead as planned, and just not only because of the economic benefits and the impact benefits that people will realize in the region but, more importantly, because of the environmental benefits with the large reduction in greenhouse gasses that are currently being spewed into our sensitive northern environment by the mining companies operating in the Akaitcho territory.

Mr. Speaker, the future of economic development in this region only seems to be growing, and the damage to the tundra and to the wildlife will also grow and we can minimize this damage through projects of this nature. But there are grave concerns about the damage that has already been done by the old Taltson dam when it was first constructed in 1963, and these are concerns that are still around today, 24 years later, Mr. Speaker. I cannot see the people of Lutselk'e or Deninu Kue or the Salt River First Nations being fully supportive of any new developments until these old lingering concerns are put to rest and the people can see that the NWT Power Corp is exercising their due diligence and showing more respect for the hunters and trappers by doing more regular community visits on the current operations of this dam.

Mr. Speaker, the operations of this dam are still affecting the people who use the land downriver as a primary source for their livelihood by hunting and trapping, and they're still being flooded out and I have pictures here to prove it, Mr. Speaker. This was given to me from a trapper from Deninu Kue and it shows his doghouses and his cabins. They're all flooded out in the middle of winter and this cannot continue. If the Power Corp and this government wants these people to approve and expand on the existing facility, I want the Minister of the Power Corp to assure the people of the NWT that the NWT Power Corp will fulfill its legal obligations under their water licence to inform all communities and members of any changes in water levels at any time, that they will be consulted when these changes will occur. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On All-Weather Road System In The Tlicho Region

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the mines doing business north of Yellowknife continue to have a very legitimate concern about the winter road season and the ability to get all the supplies they need up to their mines impacted by an ever-unpredictable winter road season. The issue is now, once again, in the paper. There's talk of the Bathurst Port and the road down, about \$300 million worth; another option out of Gordon Lake. I'd also like to raise, once again, the issue, if we're looking at options for opening up the North Slave, that there should be a road that goes up through the Tlicho that will help hook into the communities that are there and across up to the mines. This would be an opportunity to do at least double or triple duty. It could truly be a P3 project where you have the Tlicho Government, the territorial government and industry working together to put in an all-weather road that would suit and meet all the needs of all the people in that region and allow us to open up a part of the territory where there's only going to be increased activity. Because of climate change and global warming, we know that the winter road season is only going to get shorter and more unpredictable, and more difficult for miners, the mines and other businesses to plan to get the ever-increasing amount of logistics that they have to get up that road through in such a short window of time.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to be asking the Minister of Transportation later to see that they include this option in any business planning process and work that's underway for the '08-09 budget so that the incoming 16th Assembly will have that option to look at as well as others. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Contract Negotiations For Aven Manor Employees

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to speak today about the ongoing contract negotiations between the YACCS board and the employees at Aven Manor. Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that we were not advised about the visits by the employees of YACCS and that they were here when the Members of this side had agreed to do a theme day on alcohol abuse, because I believe it deprived the chance for the employees to hear from all Yellowknife MLAs on this very important issue.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to let the employees know, and the clients of the Aven Manor know, that we, as Yellowknife MLAs, stand with them in asking for the government to step in and facilitate a fair and equitable wage and benefits settlement for the employees.

Mr. Speaker, it is not fair nor acceptable that these workers are being asked to accept anything less than their counterparts doing the same work in senior long-term care facilities in Fort Smith, Hay River, Fort Simpson, Inuvik and Behchoko.

Mr. Speaker, how could this be left to continue? They are not asking for more; they are just asking for equal treatment. Quite frankly, they are entitled to that, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I know the Cabinet is trying to find comfort by saying that they are not government employees and, therefore, this government has no direct

role to play. That position didn't get them anywhere in the case of Nats'ejee Ke'h just this past spring or during the labour dispute with ferry workers in Simpson early last year. In the latter part, the employees of the ferry were in the private sector, but still because of the importance of ferry services, the government had to step in and take over that service. In the end, they got a better wage settlement.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to add very strongly that the services that these workers provide at the Aven seniors complex is an essential service. For years, they have been providing exemplary service with commitment and dedication because they are good at what they do and because they believe in what they do. It is time for the government to step up to the plate and do what is required to enable them a failsafe settlement. Mr. Speaker, I believe the outcome we demand is clear.

Mr. Speaker, may I seek unanimous consent to finish? Thank you.

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, the outcome that we all expect is very clear. We would settle for nothing less than wage parity and fair and equitable benefits for these valuable employees. The only way to do this is for the government to put more funding to settle the package. Unless the government does this as soon as possible, we can expect a very long and hot summer. These employees can be expected to see all of us YK MLAs right by the workers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Contract For GNWT Employee Assistance Plan

MR. BRADEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to speak on behalf of constituents who are connected with Northstar Counselling and Psychological Services, a local northern Yellowknife business, Mr. Speaker, which, until the first of April of this year, were the providers of the GNWT Employee and Family Assistance Program. They successfully provided this essential service to us for the past seven years with very high employee satisfaction. However, they were unsuccessful when the contract was re-bid earlier this year and lost out to a large multi-national southern contractor Shepell-fgi. I became aware of this weeks ago, Mr. Speaker, with calls from several constituents and friends in the city expressing concern about the impact of the loss of this business on local service, on the reduction of skills and talents available because of the relocation of this service to an outside company. I have even heard that one of these professionals was going to be leaving Yellowknife because it was no longer possible for her to continue living here.

Mr. Speaker, there were several irregularities on the way this RFP was administered, assessed and awarded. For example, the use of assessment formulas that put local higher cost bidders at a substantial disadvantage to bigger outside lower cost bidders. The use of criteria for the size and the scope of this contract, Mr. Speaker, was based on numbers that were developed seven years ago in 2000.

The size of the public service, of course, has grown since then substantially. The volume request for this service has skyrocketed 42 percent just in the past year alone, yet the value of the contract was capped at its original seven-year level. Mr. Speaker, there was also the suspect inclusion of local health care professionals as associates on the winning contractor's bid. How this was handled should be cause for concern, not only in this contract, Mr. Speaker, but from the perspective of overall government operations. We should not support a process which is prejudicial to northern business. Based on these allegations, Mr. Speaker...

I would like to seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Based on these circumstances, Northstar has requested in writing to the Minister responsible for Human Resources that the matter be independently reviewed and the RFP be reissued. I agree with the owners of Northstar, and my constituents who have been adversely impacted, that this RFP should be reopened and re-bid. The Minister needs to ensure the process is fair and transparent and that this highly valued and effective service will continue for our employees, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Replacement Of Inuvik Softball Field

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in a little while, the construction of a new school is going to be starting up in Inuvik. On the proposed site where this new school is going to be built, there is a ball field, Mr. Speaker. That is what I would like to speak to today.

The Slow-pitch Association put a lot of money into this new ball field. My understanding is they raised close to \$150,000 and put it into this field. That is not including the in-kind donations they had for equipment and manpower. They have been told that, when they start building the school, they will build them a new field. Their problem is, Mr. Speaker, that they don't want to have another situation that happened over in Aklavik when they were building a health centre. They put it on the ball field and they said we will build you a new field. Well, when it came time to build a new field, Health didn't come up with the money. That was strike one. ECE didn't come up with the money. That was strike two. MACA finally stepped up to the plate and now I understand they have a base for a field. This has been six years in the making. Part of the problem was they didn't have a signed agreement in place. So when it came time to dish out the money, the players may have changed in the meantime and nobody had a record of any agreement that might have been made. This is the concern that the Slow-pitch Association has. The Department of Public Works and Services is going to have to work with these stakeholders in regards to a new school and make sure that they are all taken care of, the town is consulted on anything that is going on with the new school.

Mr. Speaker, in the overall picture of a project of this size, a ball field may seem like small change, but important enough, Mr. Speaker, for the people that built this field to have me speak about it. If it is that important an issue to them, Mr. Speaker, I find it is important enough for me to stand up here and speak to the issue and try and have some kind of a signed agreement in place so we don't have another situation that happened in Aklavik. That cost them six years of time on the field, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Members' statements. Returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. SPEAKER: Colleagues, I would like to draw your attention to a very large contingent of Hay Riverites in the gallery today, students and chaperones. They are Grade 6 students and chaperones from Princess Alexandra School in Hay River. I would like to welcome them here. They are on a bit of an educational journey. It has been a pretty busy two days for them. I want to welcome them to the Legislative Assembly and wish them a safe journey home. I would like to take this opportunity for myself and my colleague in Hay River to acknowledge all of them. I will start by acknowledging the Grade 6 students: Mercedie Beaulieu, Victoria Boyce, Brandon Cotchilly, Brandon Couillonneur, Christine Gagnier, Chelsey Giraldi, Connor Goudreau, Daniel Hache, Michael Hunkin, Andre Leblanc, Angeline Magtibay, Erin Martel, Jessica Martel, Amanda Moizis, Shirley Roloson, Dalton Atwell, Savannah Bryshun, Sydney Campbell, Danny Chambers, Shauna Cooper, Jonathan Gareau, Colton Glaicar, Lee Jones, Cole Loutit, Mary Ann Minoza, Chris Monson, Kristen Morin, Emerson Ondris, Weston Pinto, Logan Price, Marilyn Beaulieu, Blake Boutlier, Deanna Buckley, Lynn Buckley, and Rhona Cruzpe. I'll turn the floor over to my colleague Mrs. Groenewegen, Hay River South.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is, indeed, a pleasure to have Grade 6 students, their chaperones and teachers with us today. Very quickly I will go through the names on my list: Cole Dupuis, Wade Fabian, Krista Gardiner, Olivia Gibbons, Kelsey Hiebert, Skylar Horton, Aaron Hunt, Keiran Kipling, Christopher Lirette, Christian Longe, Dillan Maurice, Jesse McNeillie, Ian Morrison, James Morrison, Brandon Powder, Joel Skolny, and their chaperones: Roger Morrison, Susan Gagnier, Alex Pinto, Donna Dean, Sharon Ruttle, Mario Giraldi, Jeff Boyce, Kirsty Dupuis, Gertie Thompson, Barb Atwell, John Gareau, Heather Hirst, Jean Ruben, and their teachers: Elliot Johnson and Bob White. Also, Frontier Freightliners bus drivers Michael Gagnier and his daughter Paige Gagnier, and Ron Ruttle. Also, last but not last least, my constituency assistant, Wendy Morgan, for all her help with this trip. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to recognize Anne Clark, the new president and chief executive officer of the Workers' Compensation Board of the Northwest Territories.

---Applause

Along with Anne is her husband, Ryerson Clark, who is also accompanying his wife. Also I'd like to welcome them to the Northwest Territories. They have relocated from Nova Scotia. I wish them all the best and success in their time here and, more importantly, working with the Members of the Legislative Assembly in regards to workers' compensation issues. Along with them is Clarence Emberley, my executive assistant, also in the gallery. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize a local businessman, Jim Beckwith. With Jim are his father, John Beckwith, and Kristin Holt. Welcome to the Assembly.

---Applause

I'd also like to welcome all the children who have travelled up here and their chaperones from Hay River. Welcome to the House.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. I'd like to also acknowledge my constituency assistant, Deb Mageean, in the gallery as well.

---Applause

If we've missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to the Assembly. It's certainly nice to see an audience and I hope you're enjoying the proceedings.

Acknowledgements. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

ITEM 7: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 90-15(6): Maintenance Of Highway No. 3 Access Roads

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

Mr. Speaker, as I outlined in my Member's statement, the importance of having those cabins on Highway No. 3, with the new road being in place just a few years now, that those cabin owners have been left out in the cold, unable to access their traditional road to their cabins. So I'd like to ask the Minister responsible for the Department of Transportation, can the Minister direct his department to repair this access road that I specifically embarked on -- Mr. Charlo's camp -- and dump some gravel in the open ditch that has been created through the lack of maintenance and is deteriorating every day, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Honourable Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. Menicoche.

Return To Question 90-15(6): Maintenance Of Highway No. 3 Access Roads

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just with respect to the issue the Member brings forward, the access roads that run off our highway systems, including the one he's talking about on Highway No. 3, are considered now private access roads and the department does not specifically maintain access roads off the highway system. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 90-15(6): Maintenance Of Highway No. 3 Access Roads

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, before the new highway was built, it was a public highway and we accessed those cabins by the old highway. Now we're saying no to these traditional trappers and hunters. We, as GNWT, have always stressed to retain and maintain our way of life. By importance of highlighting that in this House, on numerous occasions I have raised that issue. With that, Mr. Speaker, when I asked the Minister last fall, I do believe it was, that he was referring to opening up to other camp owners. At the same time, we're not talking about just plain old squatters. We're talking about those people.

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

MR. LAFFERTY: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Question to the department and the Minister: What responsibilities does the department have in maintaining the residential access roads? Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 90-15(6): Maintenance Of Highway No. 3 Access Roads

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With respect to this particular road access that the Member is bringing up, and many of them that are actually part of the Highway No. 3 system, the access roads were constructed. We dug up a lot of the existing highway system. But the ones where people were living, Mr. Speaker, they were reconstructed and maintained at that point for them to use. But any deterioration after that, it's still considered a private road and the individual is going to have to look at getting the access road up to accessibility for his access. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 90-15(6): Maintenance Of Highway No. 3 Access Roads

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. So what the department is saying, the Minister is saying, is no, we're not going to support our elders to continue their way of life. Mr. Speaker, we are talking about people who lived along the highway before the department changed its route, even before this department existed. Mr. Speaker, can we come to a consensus on which cabins and homes might be considered for nominal access roads in respect to their traditional usage, like a grandfather clause? Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 90-15(6): Maintenance Of Highway No. 3 Access Roads

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The intent is not, of course, to restrict any access to elders or anybody else that's living off the highway system. But our policy is that we do not maintain any privately owned access roads off the highway system, and our primary responsibility is taking care of our highway system, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 90-15(6): Maintenance Of Highway No. 3 Access Roads

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, policy is policy; it can be amended any time. The Minister has the responsibility to make changes to respect the traditional way of life. So I'd like to ask my final question to the Minister. Would the Minister be willing to meet with the leadership in Behchoko to find a solution for this ongoing issue that has been on the books for a number of years? Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 90-15(6): Maintenance Of Highway No. 3 Access Roads

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Some of the issue, too, is that we have private contractors that do maintain our roads and we do have some informal policies that can consider requests such as this, but in the past we've had objection by contractors, in particular in the Member's riding, saying the government is taking away private contracting work by opening access roads and plowing roads. So that's one of the issues. But just in general, Mr. Speaker, the access roads belong to the owner and the department is not responsible for maintaining and clearing of those roads. Mahsi.

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

Question 91-15(6): All-Weather Road System In The Tlicho Region

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Transportation as well to follow up with my Member's statement. In a previous session, I raised the issue of the road through the Tlicho into the North to hook up with the mines. At that time, the Minister committed to meet with the grand chief to discuss this issue. I would like to ask the Minister if he could update this House on the outcome of those meetings with the grand chief. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 91-15(6): All-Weather Road System In The Tlicho Region

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, indeed, we did have time to meet the grand chief and the leadership of the Tlicho region last month. It is an initial meeting and we are in agreement that we will move forward with looking at the improved access for the Tlicho region and its communities. Mahsi.

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

Supplementary To Question 91-15(6): All-Weather Road System In The Tlicho Region

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister indicated that that is an initial meeting, so I can only assume that there are going to be subsequent meetings to that. I would like to ask the Minister when those meetings are planned and if he is going to talk about the road through the North Slave. Would he also be prepared to talk and meet with the leadership about the access roads referenced by my colleague from Behchoko?

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

Further Return To Question 91-15(6): All-Weather Road System In The Tlicho Region

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Absolutely, discussing the access roads and the maintenance of it is an issue that certainly can be discussed the next time that we do meet with the Tlicho grand chief and the leadership. As well, I think the expectation is to be sometime at the end of June or towards the end of June to meet with regard to the Tlicho road studies. It is still early. We haven't even gotten out there to do some preliminary work just to discuss the particular overland routes to be chosen, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 91-15(6): All-Weather Road System In The Tlicho Region

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister, as well, whether there will be a reference to this particular option when we look at the all-weather access into the North Slave. Will that be built into the 2008-09 business plans that will be ready for the incoming 16th Assembly? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 91-15(6): All-Weather Road System In The Tlicho Region

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Having a submission prepared for 2008-09 business plans hinges on the study that we are about to conduct here. I am not too sure how much work has been done in 2008-09 or the timing that we want this road completed. As well, with the expectation of new roads, we expect federal contribution involvement, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 91-15(6): All-Weather Road System In The Tlicho Region

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, recognizing that these types of initiatives that are fairly complex and have a number of options to be investigated and developed, there are always timing, money and investigation money required. On that basis, will there be some dollars built in to further explore this issue? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 91-15(6): All-Weather Road System In The Tlicho Region

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Currently, with the federal contribution of \$400,000 and a contribution from our government, we are approaching about \$1 million for the study alone. It will examine all the areas that the Member was discussing this afternoon, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi.

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

Question 92-15(6): Ground Ambulance Services

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I had questions on a matter of \$200,000. It is actually in the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. I was hoping to be able to ask this question to the Minister of Finance today. The item is described as establish a community, equipment and training fund for community organizations interested in providing ground ambulance and highway rescue services. I was wanting to get the detail of the communities, if that \$200,000 has already been allocated and, if it has been, to which communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

Return To Question 92-15(6): Ground Ambulance Services

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the funding the Member has spoken about is part of our process of new initiatives and is in the system. Until we actually have final reading on our supp document, no money will flow. The understanding of that program is no communities have been selected as of yet, as I am aware of. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 92-15(6): Ground Ambulance Services

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Then Hay River wants some of that money. Can we have some of that money? Thank you.

---Laughter

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

Further Return To Question 92-15(6): Ground Ambulance Services

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the program, as it was set up and put through the process, is aimed at those communities that already, through the municipality, deliver services for ambulance. So that is where it is going to be focussed. The training aspect will be across the board for where we already have services. There are some communities, for example, that have services delivered through a health authority. Those will remain, as those are funded through authorities. This piece will go towards those communities that do deliver through the municipality and it is application based, as I understand. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 92-15(6): Ground Ambulance Services

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Hay River does get a very small amount of contribution through the health authority. I hope that is not going to preclude them accessing this additional money because, in fact, really the fire and ambulance rescue service is part of a municipal service as well. So I hope that little bit of money we get, I think \$24,000 a year, does not preclude. Could the Minister please confirm that would not preclude Hay River for more? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 92-15(6): Ground Ambulance Services

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would have to get more detail as to what communities are eligible, but I understand that, as we reviewed this work in this area through the reports that were made available, Hay River was one of those communities considered to be delivered by the municipality. I will get further information and provide that to the Member. Thank you.

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

Question 93-15(6): Legislation For The Locksmithing Profession

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my Member's statement, it has been over 20 years since the issue of dealing with legislation governing locksmithing was first brought to the attention of the then-Justice Minister. As I mentioned, it has perhaps been brought to every Justice Minister since then. I am wondering, the first question I would have for the present-day Justice Minister is, locksmithing regulations and legislation, where does it fit in the government's agenda? Mahsi.

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

Return To Question 93-15(6): Legislation For The Locksmithing Profession

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Member has indicated, there is a long history here. I have had a chance to go through some of the briefing on this. There was legislation enacted, I believe, in 1991 with respect to locksmithing and the security profession. That was never brought into force, that piece of legislation, and some eight or so years later was repealed. There was an act at that time which repealed several pieces of legislation that were considered to be of lower priority, I suppose, but also the measure was intended to reduce costs. I think it was felt, at that time, that it would cost about \$200,000 a year to properly regulate the industry, if I have some accurate numbers here. So it was repealed. There has been some discussion back and forth, some letters from the Association of Communities with respect to the security profession.

It is something that I think we need to consider going forward. There are a number of other professions, as well, that probably need to be regulated or there are groups making the case that need to be regulated. Massage therapy comes to mind. I know that has been raised on the floor of this House, but the long and the short of this, Mr. Speaker, is that we have a very full legislative agenda, only a few months left in the life of this government. There is no conceivable way for us to enact legislation to deal with this occupation before this government is done. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 93-15(6): Legislation For The Locksmithing Profession

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is unfortunate, I guess, in the way that it is going to fall to the next government. That is probably the fifth or sixth government now that has had to look at this issue. I am wondering how in trying to understand how it is as a

government we can let an occupation happen with contravention of the Criminal Code taking place on a daily basis because we don't legislate that profession. To me, there is something wrong with that. Why isn't that going to the top or near the top of our agenda? It is something we should target and something we should address. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 93-15(6): Legislation For The Locksmithing Profession

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, we would be prepared to sit down with committee and talk about legislative priorities. It is not something the committee has raised as one of the top priorities of the government from their perspective. So we have a number of legislative initiatives that need to be undertaken. There are a number of things that we need to do and know we can't get done in this government. As I have indicated, there is some past history here. For cost-saving measures, we have moved away from this. Locksmithing is a trade. It is not a certified trade yet in the NWT. It was pulled together with the security profession to give it some sort of critical mass. I don't know how many locksmiths there would be in the Northwest Territories, but only a few. That is why it was bundled with this other profession, Mr. Speaker. We would be prepared to sit down with the committee and talk about legislative priorities. If this is something we would like to pass on to the next government as a must do and urgent, then we can send that direction. But I would want to talk to committee about that. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 93-15(6): Legislation For The Locksmithing Profession

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In today's day and age where the onus is on security, I think it is important that the Minister of Justice and the government take security and locksmithing seriously and we move forward. If the Minister wants committee to come forward with a recommendation, then that is something we can do as well, but the government has known about it for 20-plus years, and I believe it is high time we move forward on this piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker. I am not sure if the Minister needs committee's approval to include it in the transition document for the next government, but if he doesn't, will he commit to at least getting it on the radar in the transition document for the next government? Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 93-15(6): Legislation For The Locksmithing Profession

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, I am able to do that. We can do that. We have a number of discussions, some of them formal with committee, some of them informal at a body like Caucus, where we discuss legislative priorities from time to time. There are many avenues that this could be raised to our attention, but I will take the Member's suggestion on the floor of this House. We will pass this on to the next government. Thank you.

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

Question 94-15(6): Taltson River Water Levels

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation. Just getting back to what I stated earlier in

my Member's statement -- and I did raise it before in this House -- the issue of flooding when the Taltson River, the dam is opening or closing to allow for more power during peak periods and low periods. Mr. Speaker, the Minister came back to me. He did say earlier that he wanted some evidence. I do have some evidence right here, Mr. Speaker. This is evidence right here. It clearly shows that a cabin is flooded out. There are doghouses under water. Not only do hunters and trappers get flooded out, but also a lot of wildlife suffer because of the changes in the water levels during the winter season, Mr. Speaker. It clearly states in the NWT Power Corporation water licence that community consultations have to occur when there are going to be changes in water levels and people downstream have to be informed by the Power Corporation. To date, the people can't even remember when the Power Corporation was last in the community to even tell them when any changes were going to occur to any kind of water levels that were going to be happening in the Taltson River. I just want to ask the Minister, can he commit to putting out a directive to the NWT Power Corporation that they have a legal obligation, under the water licence, to ensure that they go into these communities and inform the hunters and trappers that the water levels will be changing, especially around December when the peak period goes up? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 94-15(6): Taltson River Water Levels

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can direct the department to notify communities when the water levels will be raised by way of raising the water in the dam. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 94-15(6): Taltson River Water Levels

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will take the Minister to task on that because, basically, he told me that before and nothing has happened to date. The people want to know that the Power Corporation really does care about what they are doing to the trapping grounds. They would like to see even the president of the Power Corporation go into the communities, have a community meeting there, and let them know when the dams are going to open the floodgates and when they are going to close them. The safety concerns that are raised at the community levels are always coming back to me and the issue of damage to the wildlife is really big with the people around there, Mr. Speaker. I am going to ask the Minister again, when is this directive going to go out? Can the communities get a copy of that directive? We can then set some dates for some consultation periods. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 94-15(6): Taltson River Water Levels

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Suffice to the Member, I will do up a letter, cc it to all the communities, direct it to the president of the corporation to ensure that they have these consultations, inform the communities when they are going to release any water

from the Taltson hydro facility which may affect the water levels downstream. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 94-15(6): Taltson River Water Levels

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will thank the Minister for that. I look forward to seeing the letter and seeing some kind of a formal directive to the Power Corporation that this just is not a one-time occurrence. This happens every year, Mr. Speaker, and it is going to continue as long as the dam is there. So this is not just a one-time thing; it has to go on every year. The consultations and the water levels are going to change at different times of the year with this new expansion possibly happening. There are going to be different peak periods happening. So I would like this as an ongoing initiative by the Power Corporation to ensure that they are practising or operating the dam in good faith for the people downstream. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. I didn't hear a question there. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

Question 95-15(6): Replacement Of Inuvik Softball Field

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement I spoke to the concerns of the Slow-pitch Association in Inuvik. I would like to direct my questions today to the Minister of Public Works and Services. I would like to ask him what his department is doing to consult with stakeholders in Inuvik just to ensure that all their issues are taken care of. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister of Public Works and Services, Mr. Krutko.

Return To Question 95-15(6): Replacement Of Inuvik Softball Field

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have been working through the Town of Inuvik with regards to the relocation of the new high school in Inuvik. We are working with the town in regards to the replacement of that ball field, again working with the Slow-pitch League in Inuvik. Again, we are basically working through the Town of Inuvik by way of a consultative process and allowing them to facilitate, organizing these meetings with the different interest groups so that we do try to minimize the effects on all interested parties in regards to this decision. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 95-15(6): Replacement Of Inuvik Softball Field

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Slow-pitch Association in the Town of Inuvik knows how important a new school is and the Slow-pitch Association had no problems giving up their ball field. Who would have the authority to enter into an agreement with the Slow-pitch Association to replace their existing ball field? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 95-15(6): Replacement Of Inuvik Softball Field

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are going through the Town of Inuvik because they have the lease on the existing ball field. In order for us to acquire that field, we will have to replace it with another field somewhere else. That is the reason we are going through the Town of Inuvik and allowing them to facilitate. We are willing to enter into an agreement with them by way of a written agreement and have it clearly spelled out that any resources needed for a new ball field...We will be able to approve that by way of building it into the budget of the new high school. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 95-15(6): Replacement Of Inuvik Softball Field

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister -- he said they would be able to enter into a signed agreement with the Town and the Slow-pitch Association -- who would have the authority to sign this agreement on their behalf so that it is a binding agreement five years down the road when all the players change? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 95-15(6): Replacement Of Inuvik Softball Field

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, we are willing to enter into an agreement with the Town of Inuvik, the recreation department, whoever that may be in regards to facilitating this issue and have a signed agreement to spell out exactly what the costs associated with the replacement, where the new field is going to be located, make sure it is in black and white because I think the Member made it clear. We learned from the mistake we made in Aklavik. We don't want to repeat that and make the same decision. Thank you.

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

Question 96-15(6): Contract For GNWT Employee Assistance Plan

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions this afternoon are for Mr. Dent, the Minister responsible for Human Resources. It concerns the awarding of the employee and family assistance contract earlier this year. Mr. Speaker, given the high quality of service demonstrated by Northstar over the seven years that it had this contract, and given the tremendous increase in the size of the civil service and the growth in the number of requests over these years, and given the intrinsic value of nurturing, protecting and enabling northern grown businesses to stay in business here to keep resident professionals in the NWT, what were the reasons that the government awarded the employee assistance contract to the outside company Shepell-fgi, Mr. Speaker?

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

Return To Question 96-15(6): Contract For GNWT Employee Assistance Plan

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There were three respondents to the public call for request for proposals and all were evaluated on four criteria: the

capability of the proponents, the methodology or approach proposed by the proponents, the level of service, and cost. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 96-15(6): Contract For GNWT Employee Assistance Plan

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, does the successful bidder, Shepell-fgi, have an office here in the NWT and resident full-time staff? Is it fully compliant with the conditions of the business incentive policy that is in place to, in fact, enable northern businesses to be sustained here?

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

Further Return To Question 96-15(6): Contract For GNWT Employee Assistance Plan

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Shepell-fgi does not, to the best of my knowledge, have a resident or an office in the Northwest Territories. They did, however, list a number of subcontractors who are registered with the BIP. So BIP would have been allocated for those subcontractors in their proposal.

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

Supplementary To Question 96-15(6): Contract For GNWT Employee Assistance Plan

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, to what extent is cost a factor in evaluating this kind of service? Do we have any sense of just how much of the value of this contract is going to be staying here in the North as opposed to being in the hands of a southern firm, Mr. Speaker? We know, for instance, from the Northstar folks, because virtually all of their services are supplied by resident contractors, but 92 per cent of the value of the contract stayed in the North. How much are Shepell-fgi's going to, Mr. Speaker?

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

Further Return To Question 96-15(6): Contract For GNWT Employee Assistance Plan

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the first question, the costs of the proposal was one of the four important aspects that was evaluated, one of the four areas. The proposal was put out with a fixed cost in it. The proposal was advertised as having a budget set at a certain amount, and proponents were asked to respond to tell us what could be provided within that budget.

The issue of how much of the expenditures will be remaining in the North, again, there will be some variety, I guess. We will have to watch and see how much stays in the North. We have a responsibility, now that the contract has been awarded, to monitor that the expenditures are as they were set out in the proposal and ensure that subcontractors who are resident northerners are used to the extent that were proposed in the proposal. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 96-15(6): Contract For GNWT Employee Assistance Plan

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, given the irregularities in the way the contract was administered and awarded, the principals of Northstar have requested that the RFP be re-bid, re-assessed and a new award considered under an objective and impartial process. I support that request.

Will the Minister take this and indeed reopen this RFP, Mr. Speaker?

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

Further Return To Question 96-15(6): Contract For GNWT Employee Assistance Plan

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When Northstar came to me and identified their concerns, I asked the BIP monitoring office in ITI to review the process. I have subsequently asked the Department of Justice to review the process, as well as the Department of Public Works and Services to review the process. All three have come back to me and advised that there is not enough that was wrong with the process to warrant overturning it. As Public Works has said, there were a number of procedural issues with the RFP, but while they may lend themselves to an error of public uncertainty about the process, they did not constitute any error in the issuance of the final RFP or in the resultant contract. So that is the advice that I have been given. Thank you.

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

Question 97-15(6): Contract For GNWT Employee Assistance Plan

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would also like to ask questions to the Minister of Human Resources with regards to the tendering of the contract on the EAP program to a southern company. Mr. Speaker, in answering questions to the Member of Great Slave, the Minister just told that his staff has advised that the fact that the winning bid used the principal operator of the competing contract which now has been replaced by this new contract, the fact that that name was used as one of the subcontractors and that the new contractor has apologized for including that name into that proposal, the Minister is saying that is not a problem. To me, that is a real big problem. There is something very wrong with somebody outbidding an existing contract by using that same person. It is like McDonald's bidding for a fast food contract saying Wendy's is going to do the burgers. Mr. Speaker, could I ask the Minister to answer how it is that he doesn't see a problem with that? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 97-15(6): Contract For GNWT Employee Assistance Plan

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The issue is not one of whether or not an individual had more merit to provide the services or not, because the individuals whose names were submitted as subcontractors were not assessed by the department as to their qualifications as long as they met the standards that were required. So whether one individual was removed from consideration in one of the RFPs, it didn't affect the outcome in any material way. Even after removal of that person from one RFP, the BIP office confirmed that it would not have changed the outcome in the application. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 97-15(6): Contract For GNWT Employee Assistance Plan

MS. LEE: Mr. Speaker, there are lots of problems with this contract, but let me just focus on this name that was added. Mr. Speaker, just to put it simply, because it is quite complicated, this could be akin to McDonald's

bidding for a contract to supply Winter Games 2010 and they use a competitor as a subcontractor that they will replace wrongly in a real intentional fraudulent manner, I may add. Mr. Speaker, if the subcontractor is not important, then why did the contract ask for names of subcontractors? What was the reason for asking for that subcontractor's name? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 97-15(6): Contract For GNWT Employee Assistance Plan

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am advised that there is a difference between a tender document and an RFP. The expectation of the tender is that the proponents who are bidding on the tender will have contracts in place with the subcontractors. An RFP is an identification of those who will be used. There isn't the requirement to have those contracts in place. In this case, as long as the successful proponent meets the set level of northern contractors to make sure that they were appropriately awarded the contract, the advice I am given is that we don't have grounds to redo the competition. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 97-15(6): Contract For GNWT Employee Assistance Plan

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister can correct me if I am wrong, but I am assuming that the reason why there was a requirement for northern contractors was so that there is northern content in this contract. The fact is we have no way of knowing, other than this very clear case, that there were not any other names added to put weight behind this contract. How could the Minister assure us that there were no other names included in there to give weight to this northern contract in a not transparent way? It puts a doubt to the entire process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 97-15(6): Contract For GNWT Employee Assistance Plan

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the deputy minister, when the issue was raised with her, did in fact ask Shepell-fgi to ascertain that the names that they had in their proposal were properly listed. Shepell came back and, at that point, said, we have mistakenly included one name, and apologized for that and asked us to remove it from the proposal. At this point, we are advised that there was one name, but that is the only one that we are aware of. Thank you.

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

Question 98-15(6): Driver's Licensing Services In Small Communities

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier in my Member's statement today, I talked about the issuance of a driver's licence. In a larger community, it is pretty simple to go into the office and write their exam and road test, but the example I gave is in Paulatuk where a few residents have to fly to Inuvik just to write and get their road test to get their driver's licence so that they can find employment, especially with the hamlets. I would like to ask the Minister of Transportation on whether these people that travel to Inuvik at their own expense for accommodation, for the airfare and for meals, to see if the

department can reimburse these individuals once I give him the names. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 98-15(6): Driver's Licensing Services In Small Communities

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The short answer is no for the honourable Member, Mr. Speaker. But I can commit to follow up with the community to see if we can alleviate those concerns about the best way to issue driver's licences and getting driver's tests done in that community. One of the ways of doing it, of course, is to set up a schedule to go into the community as long as everybody is aware when the driver examiner is coming. I know that some licences expire, but there is a grace period. But with enough planning, we should be able to address some of those concerns, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 98-15(6): Driver's Licensing Services In Small Communities

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Minister for that, but I still think, Mr. Speaker, that these people looking for employment in the local hamlet of Paulatuk, in order for them to find work, like I said earlier, they have to travel to Inuvik to get that done. Had the department been able to send someone to Paulatuk, they wouldn't have to pay the cost of flying to Inuvik, so I understand when the Minister said no, but can he at least look at...If I can give the names to the Minister at this point in time, will he at least contact these individuals and see what kind of reimbursement they can get for their travel expenses? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 98-15(6): Driver's Licensing Services In Small Communities

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We do not have any program for reimbursing people to get their driver's licences re-issued but, once again, Mr. Speaker, we are willing to look at the community of Paulatuk to go in there and discuss their needs with them. We do not, of course, have an issuing system in all of our communities in the North, but we are planning to provide support to the outlying communities and to deal with systems that the driver examiner and our department, what is the best way we can alleviate the concerns in the communities and getting people driver's licences so they can get to work. Mahsi.

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

Supplementary To Question 98-15(6): Driver's Licensing Services In Small Communities

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to follow up with the Minister. Can the Minister direct his department in Inuvik at least to try to make a scheduled service to these communities, not only Paulatuk but to Sachs Harbour and Ulukhaktok? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 98-15(6): Driver's Licensing Services In Small Communities

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, part of our plan is to support all outlying communities that do not have access to the issuing agents and driver's examiners. We are undertaking studies of a portable system which a driver examiner can bring into these smaller remote communities, as well as setting up a detailed or a consistent schedule to visit the communities will be part of the solution. Mahsi.

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

Question 99-15(6): Federal Gun Registry

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have been in the discussion with Ken Hudson, the Metis president from Fort Smith, also a very avid and capable hunter. He has been attempting to take advantage of the federal amnesty to register weapons, which ends today. He has been telling me that the 1-800 number is clogged with calls. You can't get through. When you go on the Internet, there are enough forms to choke a mule. The concern, Mr. Speaker, is I know this is a federal program, but my question to the Minister of Justice is, is there any way that representation could be made to the federal government? Mr. Hudson is of the opinion that he is not the only one, that he thinks a considerable number of aboriginal gun owners aren't going to be able to register their guns. They are not going to make amnesty. I just wanted to ask the Minister if there was any way he could make the case that there is going to be a bunch of people left out through no fault really of their own? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 99-15(6): Federal Gun Registry

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wasn't aware that there was a concern with the crush of number of people trying to get in and register their firearms. What I will do and propose to do is, the minute we are finished here in the House, I will call Stockwell Day's office, the Minister responsible for Public Safety, make the case, let him know that we are having difficulty here and appeal to him to either find some way to extend this or put more resources into accommodating the people of the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

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

Question 100-15(6): Mental Health Services Capacity

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask some questions to the Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Roland. It relates to mental health services and the demands that we are encountering here in the NWT. I was wondering if the Minister could give us a snapshot of the current level or the current demand for mental health services and our capacity to help people to deal with these, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 100-15(6): Mental Health Services Capacity

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't have a specific caseload that all of our

workers have in the communities across the Northwest Territories at this point, but, from the department's perspective, we have invested quite a substantial amount of money over the last few years in trying to strengthen this area of mental health and addictions. For example, in 2007, as I had stated yesterday in a number of questions, 77 positions were added and funding of about \$6.6 million through health and social services authorities to strengthen this area. That went towards community wellness workers as well as 24 mental health and addictions counsellors and eight clinical supervisors. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 100-15(6): Mental Health Services Capacity

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is interesting. I kind of contrast that investment with the decision by the Department of Human Resources to actually reduce investment in counselling services in mental health support to our own employees. Because of the decision by the Department of Human Resources to choose a southern-based contractor for our Employee Assistance Program, does it concern the Minister that we are subsequently going to be losing resident professionals who could be part of the mental health regime here in the NWT, Mr. Speaker?

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

Further Return To Question 100-15(6): Mental Health Services Capacity

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the process we have used in trying to strengthen our mental health and addictions programs across the Territories is one we have worked in partnership with NGOs, ourselves, and health and social services authorities. I am not sure if this contract, the impact it would have on us. Of course, every link in the system will help strengthen our own position. So I would have to ask the department if there is going to be any spin-off to this. Of course, this program we work under is available to every resident of the Northwest Territories. As I stated, we are working to strengthen that.

One of the other things we are doing, for example, Mr. Speaker, as I stated yesterday again, is in March of this past year of 2007, there was a territorial advisory group that had a meeting and we are hoping to see their work by mid-summer to see where we are going with this whole area and strengthening how we deliver the program in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 100-15(6): Mental Health Services Capacity

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, we know that within our own Employee Assistance Program, the growth in the number of calls for support has increased substantially between 2005 and 2006 and 2006 and 2007, something like a 42 percent increase. This signals that we have got a substantial need here. I wanted to ask the Minister if he has any indication from the people in his department about this, but a concern is that, now that we have lost these resident professionals from the Northstar contract, there is going to be a much greater demand on other parts of our mental health care system because we will not have this direct support available on the ground here. It is

going to be from a southern contractor. Has the Minister heard any concerns of that nature from his department? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 100-15(6): Mental Health Services Capacity

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the department has not raised this issue with me in this area. We will continue to work on the program we have established in partnership with the NGOs and health and social services authority. This specific area hasn't been brought to my attention. Thank you.

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

Question 101-15(6): Dust Control On Public Highways

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Highway No. 8 is always a difficult highway to drive sometimes. There is a lot of dust and a lot of potholes. I would like to ask the Minister of Transportation how the Department of Transportation determines the amount of dust control they are going to apply onto a road in a year if there is a 152-kilometre stretch from Inuvik to Fort McPherson that needs it? How do they determine that? I would like to know if it is cost or safety. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 101-15(6): Dust Control On Public Highways

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As with any highway where there are many challenges to ensure the highways are as safe as possible for the travelling public, and the Dempster Highway that the Member is referring to is one of the ones that we are focussing a lot of our capital and energy on. We are basically reconstructing that highway. Also, another one of the big challenges is the amount of dust control that we can apply to those roads. One of our biggest barriers, Mr. Speaker, is the cost of application; whereas, down south, the southern sections of our roads, we can get away with \$1,500 per kilometre. On the Dempster, it is costing us \$5,000 per kilometre. It really impacts the amount of O and M we can apply to those roads. That is one of the deciding factors, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 101-15(6): Dust Control On Public Highways

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister for that. It just surprises me that we hear so much talk about cost and you do one stretch that is \$5,000 per kilometre. What happens if an accident happens on another stretch on another kilometre where it wasn't dust controlled? Are those people worth more than \$5,000? I would think so. We have been fortunate that we have not had as many accidents as we could have had on that highway. The Inuvik to Fort McPherson section of it is very bad. I would like to ask the Minister to be the Transportation Minister. He has to know all the highways. I would like to ask him if he has been on the Dempster Highway. If not, would he commit to taking a ride on the Dempster Highway, once the snow goes, with myself as the driver? Thank you.

---Laughter

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

Further Return To Question 101-15(6): Dust Control On Public Highways

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact, I did commit to the Member that I would certainly be glad to take a ride with him on the Dempster at the posted speed limit, of course.

---Laughter

I am certainly interested in the highway that we are spending lots of resources on. I do want to see for myself, Mr. Speaker. So I will be happy to commit to that. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 101-15(6): Dust Control On Public Highways

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister for that commitment. I look forward to the ride. I would like to ask the Minister, before I asked him, how does the department determine how much highway to dust control? Now I would like to ask the Minister, who decides how much of that highway we can apply dust control to? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 101-15(6): Dust Control On Public Highways

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not quite sure what the Member is getting at, if he is looking for a name or...but, typically, it is done by regional offices that makes a determination based on the condition of the road and engineering studies that we conduct periodically. That is how the highways are assessed for need for work, etcetera. Mahsi.

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

Question 102-15(6): Maintenance Of Highway No. 3 Access Roads

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I, too, offer the same invitation to the Minister responsible for the Department of Transportation to consider travelling on Highway No. 3 to visit these cabins. I would like to ask the Minister, Mr. Speaker, as a follow-up from my previous question in a different format. As Mr. Menicoche outlined, there was a disagreement on the private contractor. Is the Minister willing to sit down and talk about the potential contractor again, because that contractor he was referring to was before August, 2005, with a new Tlicho agreement? Mahsi.

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

Return To Question 102-15(6): Maintenance Of Highway No. 3 Access Roads

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In other regions, this is not too much of an issue because people do understand the application of their access roads and they do make arrangements with Transportation, but namely our contractors to have their

access roads ploughed. So that is something that has happened in this region. I know that contractors in this region have been complaining to us for using highways equipment. Highways does maintain this stretch of road. Often, the contractors complain that we are taking away work from them. That is why we are not using our equipment to provide for the services of helping people with their access roads. With respect to the first part of his question, I would be happy to commit, as well, to driving with the Member down Highway No. 3. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 102-15(6): Maintenance Of Highway No. 3 Access Roads

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am glad the Minister is taking up the offer. I am looking forward to that. Mr. Speaker, my next leading question is, when we identify a contractor in a community prior to 2005, there might have been a case at that time, but today, if you approach a community and say would you like us to clear your roads, they would be more than happy to take on the opportunity. Is the Minister willing to invest from his department to identify a contractor, whether it be DOT or in the community, to clear the access roads to the traditional cabins? Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 102-15(6): Maintenance Of Highway No. 3 Access Roads

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be glad to sit down with the Member and the leadership to discuss ways in which we could best address this issue. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 103-15(6): Awarding Of Contract For GNWT Employee Assistance Plan

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask another set of questions to the Minister of Human Resources with regard to Northstar losing the EAP contract they have had for seven years. Mr. Speaker, there are such differences in facts about this case between the government and Northstar. Northstar says they were never advised about this inverse ratio calculation. The government says they were, that it was included in the RFP. The government says there was only one name that was added inadvertently, but Northstar states that there are at least three people they know of who were included as part of the subcontractors. Mr. Speaker, we all met in the Legislature with these professionals and they all confirmed the position of Northstar. So this is a real predicament for us.

Mr. Speaker, in the larger picture, I understand that the way the pricing was done for this contract, the southern bidder went by bidding about a \$2,000 less than Northstar. Northstar feels as soon as they went over the limit of money that the government had in mind, that they were out of the running. In the interest of the social network and the counselling infrastructure that this business has built over the years, it's a real loss for us. Is the Minister not concerned about the impact of that in the whole scheme of things? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister of Human Resources, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 103-15(6): Awarding Of Contract For GNWT Employee Assistance Plan

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member said the government has taken a position that the proponents were all advised that an inverse ratio would be used. That's not the case. This was not a situation where the RFP was identified that an inverse ratio would be provided. According to the BIP monitoring office, that is not an unusual process to use when a fixed price or a set price is used in an RFP. So when you advertise that you are looking for a fixed price, it's quite common to use the inverse ratio.

According to Public Works, this methodology is not prejudicial to northern proponents because the cost of infrastructure is accounted for in the evaluation of the value of northern and local goods and services. In terms of the BIP preference, that was reviewed as well. The way in which that was calculated in this case for Northstar, and I am advised that there was a mathematical error found in the analysis, but it actually worked to the benefit of Northstar.

So I am afraid that while there is an assertion here being made that this is not fair and not right, the advice that we have gotten from Public Works is that it's quite standard and that, in fact, it doesn't prejudice northern contractors.

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

Supplementary To Question 103-15(6): Awarding Of Contract For GNWT Employee Assistance Plan

MS. LEE: Well, I guess it's a case of he said/she said now, because he's going by what the department is telling him and I am telling you, Mr. Speaker, from the perspective of Northstar, the government has to recognize that it costs more to run a business here. The counsellors for Northstar are paid more. They have their offices here. This other business could run a counselling service over the phone and keep all their administrative structure down south giving them an advantage. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister, is he not concerned about the fact of Northstar not having this contract and not having their presence in the community that we are seeing a complete destruction of a counselling service, social infrastructure in the North. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 103-15(6): Awarding Of Contract For GNWT Employee Assistance Plan

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, like all Members of government, I am a strong supporter of the business incentive policy, which is a policy that is set up to encourage northern businesses and to recognize the differential cost of doing business in the North. So this government does support northern business and we've set a policy in place to ensure that we do. In this case, the business incentive policy was applied and the results of the RFP are as they are. Yes, I would always prefer a northern business win a proposal, but our policy is set up to say that the government is prepared to take this much of a difference and provide that preference. Above that, it isn't something the government can arbitrarily add money to a contract to follow through on.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Time for question period has expired, but I will allow the Member a short supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 103-15(6): Awarding Of Contract For GNWT Employee Assistance Plan

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I feel like we had this discussion before when we were talking about constructing the jail where there are lots of benefits to having business being done in the North than just going for cost-efficiency. There is a lot of economies of scale that are going to be lost because there are so many more benefits having these businesses operate out of here that multinational corporations cannot provide. I am losing my question here. Mr. Speaker, Northstar's position is the cost of operating is so high here that even with the business incentive...Okay, let me just ask a question. Sorry.

The southern company that won the contract apparently used the subcontractors to qualify under BIP. They...

MR. SPEAKER: A question, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: ...thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 103-15(6): Awarding Of Contract For GNWT Employee Assistance Plan

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member talked about the similarities between the jail contract and this one. I would like to point out that in the jail contract, the government-of-the-day removed BIP from consideration and didn't protect northern businesses. In this case, the business incentive policy is applying to the evaluation of the contracts and, yes, the government agrees that northern businesses deserve that extra protection. But there is a limit to how much extra protection is allowed under the policy and the policy, I am advised by the BIP monitoring office and by Public Works, has been properly applied in this case. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 103-15(6): Awarding Of Contract For GNWT Employee Assistance Plan

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. But the point is, businesses like this can never play on an even playing field. It doesn't take into consideration the cost of doing business for the northern businesses here.

MR. SPEAKER: Question, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Did the government look at the added benefit of keeping such a northern business here as a cost of rendering the contract? If there was some amount of money set aside, why didn't they enter into a negotiated contract to keep the infrastructure in place instead of bringing up all...

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

Further Return To Question 103-15(6): Awarding Of Contract For GNWT Employee Assistance Plan

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government has a policy; it's the business incentive policy. If Members feel that policy needs to be reviewed and the percentages allowed in that need to be changed, we can do that. But at this point, there is no way to arbitrarily go beyond that once you have gone out for an RFP. Governments often go out for RFPs to ensure that we are getting good value for money. In this case, there is not anything else that we could have done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Written questions. The honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

ITEM 8: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Written Question 11-15(6): Highway No. 3 Access Roads

MR. LAFFERTY: My question is for the Minister of Transportation:

1. Can I request a detailed cost to repair and service the Highway No. 3 access roads, specifically to the Charlo's camp on a monthly basis?
2. Can I also request for copies of meeting minutes or documentations on the previous contractual discussion? Specifically the community/local private contractor's complaints.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Written questions. Returns to written questions. Replies to opening address. Petitions. Reports of standing and special committees. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Tabling of documents. The honourable Minister of Public Works and Services, Mr. Krutko.

ITEM 14: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 28-16(6): Biomass Heating System Project Report: North Slave Correctional Facility, Yellowknife, NT

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled Biomass Heating System Project Report: North Slave Correctional Facility, Yellowknife, NT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Tabling of Document 29-15(6): Letter From MACA Regional Superintendent To Hay River Mayor Regarding Transfer Agreement For Community Government Funding

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a letter from the regional superintendent of MACA to Mayor John Pollard saying sign the agreement or we are going to cut off your funding. Thank you.

Tabled Document 30-15(6): Pension Administration Report - Legislative Assembly Retiring Allowances Act And Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act At March 31, 2006

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Tabling of documents. In accordance with section 21(1) of the Retiring Allowances Act and section 11.1 of the Supplementary Retiring Allowance Act, I hereby table the Pension Administration Report - Legislative Assembly Retiring Allowances Act and Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act at March 31, 2006.

Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. Motions. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Liquor Commission, Mr. Roland.

ITEM 19: SECOND READING OF BILLS

Bill 15: Liquor Act

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, that Bill 15, Liquor Act, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill provides for the regulation of liquor in the Northwest Territories. The Liquor Licensing Board is given authority to issue licences and permits, and is assigned responsibility for the regulation of licence holders and permit holders, and the operations of licensed premises and manufacturing facilities. The Liquor Commission is assigned responsibility for the importation into and distribution of liquor within the Northwest Territories, and the Minister is given the authority to designate and enter into agreements with vendors for the operation of liquor stores.

Communities may, by plebiscite, approve the establishment replacement, modification or cancellation of liquor restriction or prohibition systems. Communities may also, by plebiscite, authorize the Liquor Licensing Board to issue licences, or require the board to close licensed premises. A municipal council may make bylaws regulating certain aspects of the operation of licensed premises.

The bill establishes penalties for contraventions of the act and the regulations made under the act, and provides for an enforcement regime. The existing Liquor Act is repealed and transitional matters are provided for. Consequential amendments are made to the Financial Administration Act, the Motor Vehicles Act and the Revolving Funds Act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The motion is on the floor. The 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 15 has had second reading and stands referred to a committee. Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 4, Bill 5 and Bill 16, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

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

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

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the committee wishes to consider Bill 4, Northwest Territories Hydro Corporation Act; Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Child and Family Services Act; and Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act. Mahsi, Madam Chair.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. We will do that after a short break.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Good afternoon, Members. Welcome back to Committee of the Whole. We are now dealing with Bill 4, Northwest Territories Hydro Corporation Act. At this time, I would like to ask the Minister responsible to introduce the bill. Mr. Krutko.

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: I am pleased to introduce Bill 4, Northwest Territories Hydro Corporation Act. This bill is necessary to facilitate the participation of the Northwest

Territories Power Corporation in a joint venture with the Akaitcho Energy Corporation and the Metis Energy Company to expand the Taltson Twin Gorges hydro facility to provide power to the diamond mines.

The passage of this act will not in any way commit the Government of the Northwest Territories or the NTPC to proceed with the Taltson hydro expansion project. The act only makes participation in the project possible. Many steps are still required before a final decision to proceed with the project can be made.

NWT Hydro Corporation is being created as a Crown corporation under NWT legislation. It will be a public agency subject to the Financial Administration Act and direction from the Executive Council. The Northwest Territories Power Corporation will remain a public agency.

The legislation would create an NWT Hydro Corporation that would be able to participate in the joint venture for the Taltson project. A separate Crown corporation is being used to protect the assets and regulated operations of NTPC from any risks that may be associated with the Taltson project.

The legislation to create NT Hydro has been kept as close to the Northwest Territories Power Corporation Act provisions as possible. Some highlights of the bill are:

- NT Hydro is an NWT Crown corporation accountable to a Minister and to the Legislative Assembly;
- Cabinet and the Legislative Assembly have the same control over NT Hydro activities as they do those of NTPC;
- NT Hydro is clearly authorized to enter into joint ventures and partnerships;
- NT Hydro will hold the common shares of NTPC while the GNWT will hold preferred shares. Cabinet can still demand dividends from both companies and NTPC's dividend will continue to be available for the Territorial Power Support Program;
- NT Hydro cannot pledge NTPC assets nor incur any debt that may put NTPC at risk;
- Any significant NT Hydro borrowing requires FMB approval; and
- The sale of power from the Taltson project to the diamond mines is exempted from Public Utilities Board regulation.

I feel that this legislation proposes the minimum changes necessary to enable the Taltson hydro expansion project to proceed.

I would be pleased to answer any questions that Members may have.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. At this time, I would like to ask Mrs. Groenewegen for her opening comments regarding Bill 4.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development conducted public hearings on Bill 5, Northwest Territories Hydro Corporation Act, in Yellowknife on April 18 and 19, 2007; in Fort Smith on April 23, 2007; in Fort Resolution on April 24, 2007; in Hay River on Wednesday, April 25, 2007; and in Inuvik on April 26, 2007. The clause-by-clause review was conducted on May 10, 2007, in Yellowknife.

The committee would like to thank all the witnesses for their comments and the Minister and his staff for

presenting the bill. The main purpose of the bill is to create a new Crown corporation, NWT Hydro, that has a clear mandate to continue the work and discussions the NWT Power Corporation has started with other partners towards the potential expansion of the Taltson hydro facility.

NWT Hydro will become the owner of NWT Energy Corporation (03) which will, in turn, own one-third of the shares of the Deze Energy Corporation, a joint venture between the NWT Energy Corporation, the Akaitcho Territory Government and the NWT Metis Nation. Deze Energy Corporation will be the proponent of the Taltson expansion project.

Many of the concerns the committee heard were related to the project itself rather than to the bill and appeared to stem from insufficient communications between Deze Energy Corporation and affected communities.

The committee was, therefore, pleased to hear from the Minister and his officials that Deze Energy Corporation will be stepping up its consultation and communication efforts. Committee also looks forward to regular briefings from the Minister on the status of the project.

Committee heard from a number of individuals with outstanding compensation issues dating back to the existing Taltson dam, in particular trappers who, as a group, have suffered financial hardship, property losses and, in some cases, loss of life due to the flooding.

Some trappers also expressed concern that despite water licence requirements, the NWT Power Corporation does not notify affected communities when changes in water levels will occur. These unexpected changes in water levels affect ice conditions and create unsafe conditions for people out on the land. Some presenters raised concerns about the potential environmental impacts of the project. Others pointed out that the project, if it proceeds, will significantly lower greenhouse gas emissions by reducing the amount of diesel fuel for electricity generation. It would also reduce environmental risks associated with hauling diesel fuel over long distances to the mine site.

The committee heard from representatives of the Yellowknives Tsastontine Society, Deninu Kue First Nation, the Salt River First Nation and North Slave Metis Alliance, who stated that they had yet to be consulted on the project. Many of the individuals who spoke at our hearings questioned how the project would benefit their communities.

The Minister indicated the advantages to the project include increased infrastructure, impact benefit agreements, employment and training opportunities, the potential for a low-cost energy grid and for the sale of surplus power. The project may also encourage more mining development and extended life for existing mines because of the access to reliable, clean hydro power.

In light of the concerns raised by community members, it should be made clear this bill is a first step only and in one way approves the Taltson expansion project. There are many conditions that need to be met before this project can proceed. Most importantly, it needs to have the buy-in of affected communities and aboriginal organizations and it needs to pass the environmental review process. The proponent needs to be able to demonstrate a strong business case, negotiate long-term purchase agreements with customers and secure project financing. We encourage Deze Energy Corporation to increase its efforts at consultation and open up dialogue with communities to

assure affected people are informed and have opportunities to ask questions and raise concerns about the project should it proceed.

The committee raised a number of questions on the specific wording of the bill. Members requested clarification of whether the objectives of the bill would allow for the possibility of other hydro projects. The Minister and his officials confirmed that amendments would not be necessary for NWT Hydro or its subsidiaries to become involved in smaller, local community-based mini hydro projects, however, larger scale hydro projects would like to require amendments to add to the objects.

Members questioned what, if any, impact the new structure would have on the GNWT's revenue from the NWT Power Corporation, which is used to finance, in part, the Territorial Power Support Program. The Minister stated the NWT Power Corporation must stay under its current legislation, but will become a subsidiary of the NWT Hydro Corporation. Legislation allows the GNWT the same dividend declaration powers on the preferred shares that it currently has with the common shares. This maintains the ability of the GNWT to demand dividends from NTPC to finance the Territorial Power Support Program, while recognizing the need for the parent company, NWT Hydro, to own the common shares of the subsidiary.

Members also asked the Minister why projects north of Taltson hydro expansion are exempted from the Public Utilities Act. The Minister replied the Taltson expansion is unique. For the foreseeable future, the expansion will only supply power to the diamond mines. The Public Utilities Board, PUB, process requires disclosure of business information, which would adversely affect the proponents' bargaining power with the mines. The clause refers only to projects north of the facility, because the intent is that the PUB process should continue to apply to other customers.

Mayor Pollard of Hay River raised the concern that the wording "north of the facility" could leave out industrial developments in other directions that should be on an equal footing with the diamond mines. During the clause-by-clause review of the bill, committee members supported a motion which amended Bill 4 to remove the words "north of the facility." The Minister did not concur with the amendment.

This concludes the committee's opening comments on Bill 4. Individual Members may have questions and comments as we proceed.

Following the clause-by-clause review, a motion was carried to report Bill 4, Northwest Territories Hydro Corporation Act, as ready for consideration by Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Yes, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses in. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Minister, can you introduce your witnesses, please?

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, to my right I have Lew Voytilla, chairman of the Northwest Territories Power Corporation; to my left I have Mark Aitken, director of legislation, Department of Justice.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you. Mr. Minister, at this time, I would like to ask Members if they have any comments. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to welcome the Minister and his staff that are with us this afternoon to discuss Bill 4. I want to provide a few opening comments if I could.

First of all, I wanted to publicly thank those individuals in the communities we visited for coming out and providing us the input that they did on Bill 4. It was much welcomed. A couple of other things Madam Chair alluded to in committee's remarks was an issue over compensation from the initial Taltson development still weighs heavy on the minds of many in that region. I think it's something that needs to be taken care of by working with the federal government and those folks that are involved in that.

I do want to say that I will be supporting the bill. I feel it is necessary to move forward and get on with things and this is the enabling legislation to allow the expansion at Taltson. Mr. Chairman, I wanted to add a couple of things here. They are important for me. We look at the expansion at Taltson and the Minister has said it himself and others have said it, it's strictly designed to supply power to industry. That's the mining companies north of Yellowknife. There is something about that that doesn't sit right with me. The Northwest Territories Power Corporation needs to have more of a social conscience, if you will, and needs to learn at getting the best power rates into our communities as we possibly can. By looking at an expansion at Taltson and not looking at providing lower cost power to communities in the South Slave, I think we are missing a key aspect of this.

I am happy to see the aboriginal component included in this, but from what we heard out on the road, Mr. Chairman, the consultation has just been somewhat abysmal really. I don't know if we talked to anybody who had actually been to a consultation meeting or a briefing. Some people didn't even know it was happening. It was news to them. In a small community like the Northwest Territories, specifically in the South Slave area, you would think people would know what was happening. So I am not sure if the Power Corporation has responsibility. I think they do have a responsibility in that area because they are a partner in that project at the end of the day, but they have to communicate with their partners that in order for this project to go anywhere, that consultation and the community involvement, the community buy-in, again if you can roll in a social component to this, I think that would be beneficial to be sure.

Again, it just pointed to the fact, again, Mr. Chairman, the Northwest Territories needs a comprehensive overall long-term vision on hydro development in the Northwest Territories. I know we are working towards one, but the sooner we can work out what we can do and how we are going to get it done, the better off we'll be, Mr. Chairman. So with that, I would like to thank the Minister and his staff for being here. Mahsi

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Krutko.

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With regard to looking at consultations and the aspects around compensation, again the corporation, Deze, has just

formed a couple of weeks ago. It will be that agency or board who will be the ones doing consultation in the communities through our partnership with the Metis and the Akaitcho. We feel that allowing that agency to do the consultation and filing and application to the environmental regulatory boards will now open it up to public scrutiny where the public now has a format where they can ask questions, they can debate issues, they can talk about the compensation issues. We are looking at almost two years of thorough regulatory review. During that period, it will be there.

Again, as a government, in most cases when we developed our energy strategies, this project was always mentioned in the House. It was debated in this House. We have also allowed for our different strategies where we are working on developing a territory-wide hydro strategy that we are hoping to bring forward within the next couple of months which, again, will add to the importance of hydro energy in the Northwest Territories and also ensure that we do have cheap, reliable energy that people can take advantage of. We do have to do a better job by way of consultation. Again, I think it's one of those things that we have to find a mechanism to do it with, and I think the ideal situation we are looking at is allowing the Deze board, which is our partner, where we have one-third say in that process to go out there, go into the communities, set up consultations. People have made attempts to go into different communities, and communities are busier having to deal with different issues. Now it's just a matter of scheduling, making sure we get in there and have these meetings. Now this is a public document by filing our application with the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board. It will receive public scrutiny through that process. We can talk about social issues; we can talk about compensation issues; we can talk about right-of-way issues.

It's important to do it right and do it in a way that we don't rush it. Now we have that process in front of us. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Next I have Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. I thank the Minister and his staff for coming in here and presenting Bill 4, Hydro Corporation Act. I would also like to thank the public for coming out during our round of consultations. It was unfortunate, Mr. Chair, that we couldn't get into one of the communities that would have liked a consultation hearing held on this bill. Due to some unfortunate circumstances, our concerted efforts to get in there wouldn't allow us to travel to Lutselk'e at this time. I hope the community will understand that during my extensive conversations with the chief on this bill, they fully understand this bill does in no way, shape or form commit the government or the Power Corporation to proceed with the Taltson hydro expansion project.

As the chair said in our opening comments, this is just the first step in allowing the NWT Power Corporation to move forward to develop a business plan, a feasibility study and a business case to allow any expansion of the Taltson should it be approved in the near future. I hope that through the next two years with extensive consultation processes going on through the Deze Corporation on this project, that they will be in all the communities that will be affected very regularly to update them and to hear their concerns on any new developments in the expansion project that they are moving forward on.

I just wanted us to make one point, I guess, with the Deze Corporation, just so far as the NWT Power Corp and this government's energy plan on providing cheap, reliable clean power to communities in the south that are on the hydro grid. I hope that this project, if it does go through with any type of expansion, we do have a lot of power there to distribute and we are putting some public buildings on electric power now as a pilot project, but I hope when benefits do arise to the Akaitcho Government or to the Metis Nation through their partnership agreement with the Hydro Corporation, that there will be no clawbacks of Power Subsidy Program dollars or the like for the people that are receiving benefits through the development and the realization of a new expansion project.

With that, again, I just hope that the Minister will ensure that there is sufficient communications at all times during all stages of the review process on the Taltson expansion and even before it even gets off the ground, I think right after the bill has been passed here, they should get into all these communities, talk to all the First Nations people that have been affected by the original Taltson 24 years ago, that they can rest assured that all their concerns will be dealt with including compensation issues and impacts and benefits moving forward. With that, I will be pleased to hear how this is going to fit into the big energy plan of the government. I know that hydro is growing. It's going to be big here in the NWT over the next 20 years. This is just a milestone that we are going to be seeing a lot more development on a lot more of our river systems here in the Territories in the future.

Again, I would just like to send out our apologies that we couldn't get into Lutselk'e and I know the chief and council really wanted us there, but, unfortunately, we couldn't fit it into the schedule and due to time constraints on pushing this bill forward and we didn't want to bring the Deze Energy Corporation to a grinding halt, but hopefully the residents will understand that we will still have a lot of input and a lot of say into how the expansion rolls out. With that, I would like to thank the Minister and his colleagues. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we are proceeding. The Deze board is going to be the key agency that we are looking at to do the consultation. They were in Lutselk'e on March 15th to meet with different groups and agencies. Again, they met with some people and other people had other commitments. I think also there is a legal issue that we are trying to deal with around Lutselk'e, because they have signed agreements with a southern firm by way of regional power. It is a legal, binding contract. Until that contract expires, we can't be seen to be competing with the same interest. I think that's an issue that we ensure that we inform them about.

Again, we are working with Lutselk'e on other issues such as the mini hydro stuff. I think that also is going on at the same time. So we are working along with them on the two fronts. I think it's important that we do a better job by way of consultation. Now this thing is out in public. It is in front of a regulatory agency and again it's crucial that we allow public consultation to take hold and ensure that we do have an energy grid and energy system that will bring cheap, reliable power to the Northwest Territories and its residents. I think one way we can do it is by selling power to large companies where they increase our customer

base, but, more importantly, bring in more revenues by way of profits to the corporation so that we can continue to pay on the subsidy.

I want to make it clear to the Member that we have no plans or intentions of not paying into the subsidy program. I think it's clear that this government owns the shares of the corporation and they request that we continue to pay into that program and we will continue to pay into that program. Again, it's of crucial importance that we do look at long-term planning for the hydro power as mines come off the grid system and what are we going to do with that surplus power in the future. I think the pilot projects the Member touched on in regards to electric power initiatives we're looking at in Fort Smith, I think two of those pilot projects we will be able to expand going forward and looking at the surplus that it is going to be there in the future by way of the diamonds, the life of the diamond mines will basically come off sooner than others.

In regards to BHP we know for a fact that they have somewhere in the range of about 10 or 15 years max of the time life, and the same will apply to Diavik and then also to the Snap Lake. I think that we have to plan for what's going to happen in the future for that surplus power. Where does it go? What is it going to be used for? I think that's something that we should also be considering in our discussions. Again, that's something we're building into our hydro strategy and I think that again will be, once it's completed, tabled in this Legislature. With that, I'd like to thank the Member for his questions.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. General comments on Bill 4. If there's no further comments, does committee agree to go clause by clause on Bill 4?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Bill 4, Northwest Territories Hydro Corporation Act, clause 1.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 2.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 3.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 4.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 5.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 6.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 7.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 8.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 9.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 5, clause 10.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 11.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 12.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 13.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 14.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 15.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 6, clause 16.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 17.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 18.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 19.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 7, clause 20. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We were just humming along there. So I just wanted to ask on the limit on borrowing the outstanding principal of amounts borrowed not exceed \$5 million. Is that the borrowing limit for the Hydro Corporation Act? If it is, how would they plan on financing an expansion with only a \$5 million borrowing limit?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Does committee agree to go back to clause 18?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll refer that question to Mr. Voytilla.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Voytilla.

MR. VOYTILLA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The \$5 million limit is just for the NT Hydro Corporation itself for working capital and operational purposes. It's not intended to be a source of financing for any particular hydro project. It might be funding that the Hydro Corp needs to do a little bit of research to keep operations going on a day-to-day basis, but any of the significant borrowing related to a specific project, the intention is, would be funded through a subsidiary; either through a direct subsidiary of NT Hydro or through a joint venture such as Deze. The provisions in the act in 19 make it clear that any borrowing of such a subsidiary must be approved by the Financial Management Board in advance. So if a subsidiary, either through joint venture or directly, has to borrow for a major project, a transmission line or a generation facility, then that borrowing is outside the \$5 million because the \$5 million is just for day-to-day needs. That has to specifically be approved by the Financial Management Board. So there is adequate check and balance on the borrowing of NT Hydro as well as its subsidiaries.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Voytilla. Clause 18.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 19.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 7, clause 20. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Okay, thank you, Mr. Chair. Now we're getting down to the subsidiary borrowing here with approval of FMB as accounted as debts restricted by limit approved by the governing council pursuant to the Northwest Territories Act. Is there a limit on this borrowing limit also, Mr. Chair, and, if there is, what might that be?

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

MR. VOYTILLA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The section 20 does not make a specific limit on the borrowing of the subsidiary other than to make it subject to Financial Management Board approval. The Financial Management Board, of course, is limited by the federal Order-in-Council limit on total GNWT debt. So there is a limit on aggregate borrowing that is reflected on the government's books, and that is the federal Order-in-Council limit. So that's why we ensure that any subsidiary borrowing has to be approved by the Financial Management Board to make sure that any borrowing by a hydro subsidiary does not put the government's overall debt limit in any jeopardy.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Voytilla. Clause 20.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 21.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 22.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 23.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 24.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 25.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 26.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 27.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 28. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a question on the investment and that goes back a little ways; sorry, but 22. If the Government of the Northwest Territories is going to backstop this project and it does cost whatever, \$180 million for the transmission line and whatever else for the actual plant expansion at Taltson, how is it going to be set out that the government gets that money back, the financing charges specifically, because obviously they're going to have to borrow the money? I mean we don't have \$180 million or even more to do this. So on the financing side of it, how do we get that money back, or are there arrangements to get that money back?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Does committee agree to go back to clause 22?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you. Mr. Voytilla.

MR. VOYTILLA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The specific arrangements between the government and Deze or another subsidiary that's doing the borrowing, at this point in time we haven't got those determined because that will be project specific. It will be what's the purpose of the borrowing and what's the circumstances around each one. The intent here is that the project would stand on its own. So the project would have to be able to finance the debt and the carrying charges on that debt out of the revenues associated with the project. So we're not looking for a direct government contribution towards the capital costs of the project.

Where the government role normally would come in backstopping or in supporting the project would be to give comfort to the financiers that the revenue flow in the long term will be there to retire the debt. So it's a potentially contingent liability for the government if, for some reason, the mine life didn't extend as long as possible, as long as required to retire the full amount of the debt. So that's the area where we may -- I use the term "may" -- need some government backstop because we don't know that yet. That will really depend on the structure of the project, the results of negotiations with the mines and the requirements of the financial providers as to what they need to feel comfortable lending that money. So I can't give you a specific answer other than to say it's not the intention that the government would be subsidizing these projects.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Alright. Clause 22. Thank you, Mr. Voytilla. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank Mr. Voytilla for that. If we are looking at a loan guarantee -- and that's probably what it will end up being -- there will be a cost associated with that. I don't know whether you want to call it a subsidy or not or whether or not we'll get those costs back or not, I mean those are things that are going to be worked out into the future, but the federal government recently increased the NWT's borrowing limit from \$300 million to \$500 million. I'm wondering if the GNWT does have to backstop and sign some loan guarantees for the Taltson expansion, what will that do to the debt cap at \$500 million? Is that something we're going to have to account for and is that going to push us close to the \$500 million mark? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Voytilla.

MR. VOYTILLA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We're in close discussions with the Department of Finance on that issue, because we do have to make sure that any debt that this project incurs, that in any way flows back into the GNWT's accounts, does not negatively impact on the GNWT's own basis and ability to borrow for its own needs. So that is something that we're working with GNWT Finance to work out how to address that issue. Either we have to keep the borrowing so small that it doesn't have a significant impact, or we would have to perhaps look at going to the federal government for a project-specific exemption to the borrowing limit. So those are all options that we are exploring at this time with the Department of Finance.

I would note that with respect to the costs, if you will, of the borrowing, that there are some models out there. We just recently met with Manitoba Hydro to talk to them about how their financing is done, and in Manitoba any borrowing required for a Manitoba Hydro project they

borrow the money from the province, the province issues the bonds and actually they go to the market and borrow the money and then re-lend it to Manitoba Hydro and they charge a fee for that to Manitoba Hydro that would have to be paid for by the project. So ultimately I don't want to put revenues necessarily in the Minister of Finance's hands, but that might be something he insists on. To give the backstop to the project, the government may want to charge a fee for that that the project would have to pay. So those are potentials that could work into the arrangements.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Voytilla. Clause 22, Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank Mr. Voytilla for that. Again, it goes back to the point where I wouldn't want to see a project like this tie the hands of the government for the next few years. If it's \$180 million, it would probably be more than that, but that would certainly put us up near \$500 million. So just be cognizant of that and if there's other financing models out there, I would encourage you to look at them. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Clause 22.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 23.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 24.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 25.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 8, clause 26.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 27.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 28.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 29.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 9, clause 30. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In terms of the annual report, I'm just wondering, will that come out as a supplement to the Power Corporation's annual report or will it be separate and distinct from the Power Corporation's annual report?

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

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Yes, Mr. Chairman. There will be two acts tabled, one dealing with the Hydro Corporation Act and one dealing with the Northwest Territories Power Corporation Act. So there will be two separate filings at the same time.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Clause 30.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 31.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 10, clause 32

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 33.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 34.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 11, clause 35.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 36, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Committee Motion 3-15(6): To Amend Clause 36 Of Bill 4, NWT Hydro Corporation Act, Carried

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I move that clause 36 of Bill 4 consequentially amending the Public Utilities Act by adding proposed section 2.1 be amended by deleting proposed section 2.1(2) and substituting the following exception:

This act shall not apply to the supply and sale of energy generated by the Twin Gorges hydroelectric generating facility on the Taltson River and any expansion of, addition to, or replacing of that facility and distributed to customers over transmission lines that have not been constructed on the day this section comes into force unless those lines connect with and branch off transmission lines that had been constructed before that day.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you. Motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Question is being called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Clause 36, as amended.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 37.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): As amended.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Does committee agree that Bill 4 is ready for third reading as amended?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Bill 4 is now ready for third reading as amended. Thank you, committee. That concludes Bill 4. I'd like to thank the Minister responsible, and the witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, can you escort the Minister and witnesses out please? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Alright, the Minister responsible is Mr. Roland. Okay, Members, we're onto now Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Child and Family Services Act. I would like to ask Minister Roland if he would please introduce the bill. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am pleased to introduce Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Child and

Family Services Act. The current act allows the Department of Health and Social Services to apprehend children under the age of 16 in specific circumstances where the safety of a child may be jeopardized, including the denial of proper medical attention. The proposed amendments to the act are required to meet constitutional obligations ensuring the rights of parents are protected and consistent with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. These amendments will ensure parents receive a fair and prompt hearing.

After the apprehension of a child, it is proposed that notice of a child apprehension be filed with the court within four days and an apprehension hearing be held within nine days of filing. The court may either make an order confirming the apprehension or dismiss the application. In medical emergencies, the process can be expedited to ensure timely treatment of a child.

Bill 5 also recommends a statement in the preamble of the act about the important role the extended family can play in a child's life. The proposed amendments support the current system of a plan of care agreements used in the NWT in child apprehension situations. This system provides an alternative method of dealing with child protection concerns outside a court setting and promotes community and family involvement in child protection decisions.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. At this time, I would like to ask Ms. Lee if she would please provide the committee's report on the review of Bill 5. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. The committee held public hearings on Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Child and Family Services Act, in Yellowknife on April 20th and on May 14th; in Tuktoyaktuk and Inuvik on April 23rd; in Ulukhaktok on April 24th; in Colville Lake on April 25th; and in Behchoko on April 26th, 2007. The committee would like to thank the Minister and all of the presenters for appearing before committee. The proposed amendments will provide for a prompt court hearing after the apprehension of a child, that is consistent with the rights of parents under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

In the simplest terms, the amendment to the act requires that a hearing be held within nine days of a child being apprehended. As the act is now, the department has up to 45 days to hold a hearing. As the committee understands it, the requirement or the amendment falls out of recent court cases in southern Canada where it was ruled that the hearing process in child protection matters was not timely enough to satisfy Charter requirements related to the rights of parents.

In Yellowknife, the committee heard from Mr. Brad Enge, a lawyer in private practice, who stated that Bill 5 was a good amendment, as currently there is no way for parents to contest the actions of a child protection worker prior to a full court hearing, which can take up to 45 days to occur.

Mr. Enge also had concerns, which are shared by the committee, on the strains that these required amendments to the Child and Family Services Act will have on the justice system in the Northwest Territories. It was pointed out that this will increase the workload of the Territorial Court, and Mr. Enge wondered if the NWT has enough Territorial Court judges and if we should not hire

considering another judge to deal solely with child and family law matters.

Mr. Enge also raised the issue of the ability of the legal aid system to absorb the workload that will result from the implementation of the amendments. He stated that that the system is hard pressed to respond to the current workload, that parents who wish to consult with their lawyer prior to initial hearing on the apprehension of their child may not get that opportunity. Mr. Enge also made the committee aware of a number of other concerns he has with the Child and Family Services Act that are outside the ambit of this bill.

In Tuktoyaktuk, we heard from Mr. Saeed Shesheghar, a social worker who understood the intent of the amendments but was worried about the practicality of the hearing process and the ability of the Territorial Court to hold the required child protection and apprehension hearings in the communities within the timelines proposed in the bill.

In Inuvik, we heard from Ms. Alana Mero, who has worked as a child protection worker in another jurisdiction. Ms. Mero expressed concern over the use of justices of the peace and wanted assurances that justices of the peace will only be used at the first stage hearings and not for hearings on temporary or permanent custody.

The majority of other presenters that we heard from were generally pleased with the new hearing timelines and the opportunities that this provided parents to contest the apprehension of their children.

During the clause by clause, Members heard from the Minister that he was working with the Minister of Justice on the implementation plans in order to roll out for January 1, 2008. It should be noted that, like Mr. Enge, the majority of presenters that spoke to this bill raised concerns with the application of the Child and Family Services Act that were outside the purpose of the proposed amendments.

Committee heard about the lack of interpretation services for parents who have had their children apprehended; the fact that non-custodial parents are often not considered as a suitable placement option where the child has been apprehended; concerns with how the present two-year temporary custody term imposes an arbitrary deadline that may set some parents up for failure; that there are no consequences of people who make malicious accusations under this act; that there is a requirement for the Department of Health and Social Services and its authorities to do a better job in developing and supporting child and family service committees in all communities in the Northwest Territories; that the extended family is now always acknowledged and utilized in providing care for a child who has been apprehended; that there is a need to ensure that aboriginal children stay in their home communities whenever possible, close to their language and culture; and, finally, the department and the authorities need to do better in recruiting, encouraging and training people to be foster parents in all communities.

To deal with these concerns and recognizing that they are outside the privy of the proposed amendments, the committee has prepared a report on matters relating to the Child and Family Services Act. This report will be read into the record on Thursday, May 17th, 2007, and a number of recommendations will be debated in Committee of the Whole at the appropriate time.

Following the clause-by-clause review, a motion was carried to report Bill 5 to the Assembly as ready for Committee of the Whole.

Madam Chair, this concludes the committee's general comments on Bill 5. Individual committee members may have questions and comments as we proceed. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Lee. At this time, I'll ask Minister Roland if he would like to bring witnesses into the Chamber. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Yes, Madam Chair.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. With me at the table I have to my immediate right, Mr. Chuck Parker, deputy minister, Department of Health and Social Services; further to my right is Mr. Dean Soenan, director of child and family services; and to my left is Patricia Gall, legislative counsel. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. I'll now turn to Members. Are there any general comments on this legislation? Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just briefly, something that's not mentioned in this report as I'm presenting this is the fact that we do recognize the important and difficult work that the child protection workers do, and we do, just in case there is any sense out there from hearing our report that we are only pointing out perhaps the problem areas, it's probably due to the fact that our committee hearing process, in our process we are just reporting what we heard in our public hearing process. But I do understand that there are children in our communities that find themselves in a position where they have to be apprehended in order to protect their interest and keep them safe, and we do appreciate and honour the work that child protection workers do. It is difficult work and we wish that a lot less of that would happen. But when they do happen, we need to have a system in place and we know that the child protection workers take care of that. So I just want to add that to the statement that I presented here.

As a Regular Member, I'd like to know if I could ask a question to the Minister about the role of justices of the peace. Once again, we know and we appreciate the work that justices of the peace do. They perform an important function in our judicial system, but their scope of work and practice is different than what the judges do. The witness we had in Inuvik spoke to us, and I think she had a valid point in saying that she would have a problem with a justice of the peace doing a court hearing on child apprehension matters, but that it would be okay for them to get involved in the initial stage. So could I ask the Minister to clarify that? Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the act, as we're amending it, would allow

for the use of justices of the peace during the initial stages, and that's the apprehension hearing, up to a temporary hearing. After that it would be through a full judge process. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you. Thank you for that answer. My second question is to do with the input we received from witnesses about the pressure our judicial system is under. Just yesterday, under our supp, we approved additional funding for sheriff services and other court officer services. I think it's very likely that with the shortening of the process that we're amending here, that there might be additional pressure being put on judicial systems. I'd like to ask the Minister if he could make a commitment to work with the Minister of Justice to see whether we could somehow forecast the workload and look at the possibility of addressing that. Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, we have worked with the Department of Justice the potential impacts of these amendments, and our calculation, looking at the existing caseloads that we have out there right now, is about 120 to 130 additional cases at the existing level. We've worked with the Department of Justice; they're aware of that and feel that we are able to handle that and they would, as well, be looking forward into our business planning process if there is a concern in that area. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just a last follow-up and it has to do with the potential additional work being placed on child protection workers. While there's mention of a social worker who came to talk to us, we've had occasions to meet and talk to other government workers, some of them being child protection workers, during our public hearings. It was obvious to us that they're not fully aware of these amendments. In one way, I could understand that because the government workers would be advised of the change to process once it's in place and they may not be advised of it at the front end. But I want to just ask the Minister to, for the record, tell us what steps are going to be put in place in order that not only the front-line workers are informed about these changes, but that the upper management would work with the front-line workers to be prepared for this condensed time period. Because while we are not experts, I think we could foresee that there will additional pressure put on these workers on a process that already is quite high pressure. Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, this area, indeed, is one where there will be additional workload. As we've stated through this process, that the department, through these amendments, will be held more accountable for their actions and we'd have to be prepared for that. The department has looked at a number of areas. For example, there's first the coming into force which, if passed, would be looking at January 2008. With that in mind, we're working to meet that date by revising the documents and materials that can be provided to families when children are apprehended, as well as public information documents,

revised policies in the child and family services standards and procedures manual, along with the new court forms and administration processes for handling the apprehension hearings, and then upgrading the child and family services information system. As well, specifically for our staff in the field is training for over 70 social workers and supervisors from across the territory, as well as regional training, and then the development of a curriculum and materials to offer that initial training, as well as changes in addition to the existing statutory training program for new child protection workers. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Any further general comments? Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Child and Family Services Act. Clause 1.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 2.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 3.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 4.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 5.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 6.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 7.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 8.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 9.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 10.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 11.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 12.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 13.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 14.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 15.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 16.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 17.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 18.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 19.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 20.
SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 21.
SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 22.
SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 23.
SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 24.
SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 25.
SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 26.
SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 27.
SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 28.
SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 29.
SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 30.
SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 31.
SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 32.
SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 33.
SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 34.
SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 35.
SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 36.
SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 37.
SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 38.
SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 39.
SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed, thank you. Bill as a whole.
SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Does the committee agree that Bill 5 is ready for third reading?
SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed, thank you. Bill 5 is now ready for third reading. Thank you, Minister Roland, and your witnesses.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. We will now consider Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act. I'd like to ask the Member responsible for Bill 16 to introduce the bill. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Bill 16 amends the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act by updating the criteria whereby Members are eligible for a transition allowance when they leave office. The amendment clarifies that Members are eligible for a transition allowance when they voluntarily resign their seat.

Mr. Chair, I view this amendment as a clarification of the original intent of the Legislature when it introduced the allowance. Members may, from time to time, be required to resign their seats for a wide variety of reasons including illness, personal tragedy or family concerns. In my view, Members should not lose their entitlement to the allowance they have accrued, due to unfortunate circumstances such as these. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. I'm wondering now if you'd like to bring in witnesses.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chair, Mr. Mercer will assist if need be, and Mr. Boyd.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Okay. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Agreed, thanks, committee. General comments on Bill 16. Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just for the record, at this present time regarding Bill 16, I don't think I will support this. Personally, I think it's coming in at sort of a late stage in the game when we're almost completing the 15th Assembly. I understand the intent of the bill but, again, we've only got four months to go for the 15th Assembly and I think something like this would be more entitled for the 16th Assembly. So I'd just like to let you know, Mr. Chairman, that I will not support this bill. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Are there any further general comments on Bill 16? Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Chairman, thank you. I'd like to add my thoughts and also indicate that I won't be supporting the bill at this time. I think there is some merit to having this debate about the updating or the amending of this provision, and we've had this discussion at Board of Management. My feeling, though, is that the debate would be better held by the 16th Assembly's Remuneration Commission. Every four years we do strike a committee to look at Members' benefits and pay, and while I don't believe this provision was considered by the last committee, it could very easily be considered by the next commission. When I sit down and think about the number of people in my memory anyway going back that have left the Assembly, obviously they haven't been eligible for transition. Some have left to pursue other employment. I can think of one who resigned to become a Supreme Court judge. Some have left under less than ideal circumstances. But without getting into the merits of why somebody leaves or those kinds of things, Mr. Chairman, my feeling is we do have a process for these kinds of things. There may be a very good reason, and I'm not indicating that I wouldn't be supportive of this shift to look more at a severance type of arrangement than transition, but I do think this is something that should be taken up by

the next Remuneration Commission of the 16th. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Minister Bell. Any further general comments to Bill 16? Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will support the bill. It is a good piece of housekeeping and I think, Mr. Chairman, in virtually any field of endeavour of employment you will find that under almost any circumstances, even those that are less than ideal, that employers or workers will have some remuneration based on length or term of service on which they and their family can rely if and when they decide or it's necessary for them to leave. MLAs are without this right now; of course, in the circumstance that they should decide to, or be forced to, resign. I don't think that is a realistic or a fair situation and I'm recognizing that it is there. Waiting for the next Remuneration Commission, as Mr. Bell suggests, is fine, but that is another two years out there. I think I'd feel better about supporting this bill and having this provision in place should this kind of thing happen to an MLA and, perhaps by circumstances beyond their control, leave them and their family without a backstop, again, as is consistent in many, many other fields of employment, based on their length of service. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Braden. General comments. No more general comments. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to clarify that this particular motion and bill and the timing, I just, probably through an oversight of my own part, became aware of the fact that this particular clause was set up in such a way that if I or one of my colleagues, Mrs. Groenewegen or Mr. Roland or Mr. Dent, and any of us had to for some reason unforeseen had to leave, that they would lose all the accrued benefit not only for this term but also the previous term, and I don't believe that was the intent when this particular clause was drafted. Given how life can change on an instant, when I became aware of this I thought it was important enough to make the effort to try to bring this forward to clarify it in the best interests of all of us and hence it being here today. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. General comments, Bill 16. If there are no further general comments, clause by clause?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thanks, committee. Clause by clause, Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act. Clause 1.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 2.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. That concludes Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act. To the bill as a whole.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. Does the committee agree that Bill 16 is ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. Bill 16 is now ready for third reading. Thank you, committee. At this

time, I'd like to ask what is the wish of committee. Mr. Lafferty.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Motion to report progress. The motion is not debatable. The motion is in order. All those in favour? Those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

I will rise and report progress. Thank you.

ITEM 21: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Committee has been considering Bill 4, Northwest Territories Hydro Corporation Act; Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Child and Family Services Act; and Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act. I would like to report progress, with one motion being adopted, that Bills 5 and 16 are ready for third reading, and that Bill 4 is ready for third reading, as amended. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Do we have a seconder for the motion? Honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent. The motion is on the floor. Motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Third reading of bills. Honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

ITEM 22: THIRD 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 Frame Lake, that Bill 8, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2007-2008, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. 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 8 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): Orders of the day for Thursday, May 17, 2007, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
5. Returns to Oral Questions
6. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
7. Acknowledgements

8. Oral Questions
9. Written Questions
10. Returns to Written Questions
11. Replies to Opening Address
12. Petitions
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
 - Motion 6-15(6), Extended Adjournment of the House to August 15, 2007
 - Motion 8-16(6), Commitment to the Deh Cho Bridge
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
 - Bill 4, Northwest Territories Hydro Corporation Act
 - Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Child and Family Services Act
 - Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act
23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Thursday, May 17, 2007, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 17:08.

