



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

6th Session

Day 13

15th Assembly

HANSARD

Monday, August 20, 2007

Pages 405 - 450

The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

Speaker

Hon. Paul Delorey
(Hay River North)

Hon. Brendan Bell
(Yellowknife South)
Minister of Justice
Minister of Industry, Tourism
and Investment

Mr. Bill Braden
(Great Slave)

Hon. Charles Dent
(Frame Lake)
Government House Leader
Minister of Education, Culture and
Employment
Minister of Human Resources
Minister responsible for the
Status of Women
Minister responsible for Persons
with Disabilities
Minister responsible for Seniors

Mrs. Jane Groenewegen
(Hay River South)

Hon. Joe Handley
(Weledeh)
Premier
Minister of the Executive
Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and
Intergovernmental Relations
Minister responsible for the
NWT Housing Corporation

Mr. Robert Hawkins
(Yellowknife Centre)

Hon. David Krutko
(Mackenzie-Delta)
Minister of Public Works and Services
Minister responsible for the
Workers' Compensation Board
Minister responsible for the
NWT Power Corporation

Mr. Jackson Lafferty
(Monfwi)

Ms. Sandy Lee
(Range Lake)

Hon. Michael McLeod
(Deh Cho)
Minister of Environment and Natural
Resources
Minister of Municipal and Community
Affairs
Minister responsible for Youth

Mr. Robert McLeod
(Inuvik Twin Lakes)

Hon. Kevin Menicoche
(Nahendeh)
Minister of Transportation
Minister responsible for the
Public Utilities Board

Mr. J. Michael Miltenberger
(Thebacha)

Mr. Calvin Pokiak
(Nunakput)

Mr. David Ramsay
(Kam Lake)

Hon. Floyd Roland
(Inuvik Boot Lake)
Deputy Premier
Minister of Finance
Minister responsible for the Financial
Management Board Secretariat
Minister of Health and Social Services

Mr. Robert Villeneuve
(Tu Nedhe)

Mr. Norman Yakeleya
(Sahtu)

Officers

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Mr. Tim Mercer

Deputy Clerk
Mr. Doug Schauerte

Clerk of Committees
Ms. Gail Bennett

Assistant Clerk
Vacant

Law Clerks
Mr. Glen Boyd
Ms. Kelly Payne

Box 1320
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories
Tel: (867) 669-2200 Fax: (867) 920-4735 Toll-Free: 1-800-661-0784
<http://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca>

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRAYER	405
MINISTERS' STATEMENTS	405
34-15(6) - COOPERATION AND EXCHANGE AGREEMENT WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF QUEBEC	405
MEMBERS' STATEMENTS	405
MR. LAFFERTY ON JIMMY ERASMUS SENIORS' CENTRE	405
MR. YAKELEYA ON MACKENZIE VALLEY HIGHWAY	405
MR. BRADEN ON LONGSTANDING WORKERS' COMPENSATION CLAIMS	406
MR. POKIAK ON BELUGA WHALES ENTERING HUSKY LAKES	406
MR. RAMSAY ON DEH CHO BRIDGE PROJECT	406
MR. VILLENEUVE ON SUICIDE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION PROGRAMS	407
MRS. GROENEWEGEN ON SUPPORT FOR NURSE PRACTITIONERS.....	407
MR. ROBERT MCLEOD ON INCOME SUPPORT POLICY APPLICATION	408
MR. HAWKINS ON INCOME SUPPORT POLICY APPLICATION	408
MS. LEE ON ALL-WEATHER ROAD TO THE DIAMOND MINES	409
RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY	409
ORAL QUESTIONS	410
REPLIES TO OPENING ADDRESS	422
REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES	424
TABLING OF DOCUMENTS	428
NOTICES OF MOTION	429
10-15(6) - SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACTS AND BENEFITS OF THE DEH CHO BRIDGE	429
11-15(6) - EXTENSION OF APPOINTMENT OF MR. DENNY RODGERS AS CHAIR OF THE WORKERS' COMPENSATION GOVERNANCE COUNCIL	429
CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS	429
REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE	448
THIRD READING OF BILLS	448
BILL 9 - WRITE-OFF OF DEBTS ACT, 2007-2008	448
BILL 10 - FORGIVENESS OF DEBTS ACT, 2007-2008	448
BILL 17 - SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT, No. 4, 2006-2007	448
ORDERS OF THE DAY	448

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Monday, August 20, 2007****Members Present**

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

ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good afternoon, colleagues. Before we begin, as a notice to Members, we have translators in the House today, both Tlicho and French translators. The Tlicho will be channel two on your mics and French will be channel three. Orders of the day. Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**Minister's Statement 34-15(6): Cooperation And Exchange Agreement With The Government Of Quebec**

HON. CHARLES DENT: (English not provided)

---Applause

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

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**Member's Statement On Jimmy Erasmus Seniors' Centre**

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. (Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to speak on something very important. It is a seniors' home. I want to say a few words regarding that. I had mentioned this issue many times in the past. We are talking about the old folks' home in Behchoko. It's been in existence for over 20 years and we want that facility to be replaced. So I will question the Minister regarding this later. I have mentioned this concern many times. Many past leaders have mentioned this before. So today I want to ask that same question again. (Translation ends)

...on the most important thing for the elders of Behchoko and the surrounding communities and that's Jimmy Erasmus Seniors' Home in Behchoko. Mr. Speaker, back in March and May of this year, I spoke of the need for replacement of or repair of the Jimmy Erasmus Seniors' Home in Behchoko to ensure the well-being of the elders who made their home in the community. Mr. Speaker, during the May session, in questioning the Premier as the Minister responsible, it became apparent the preliminary consultant's report is recommending replacement of the facility.

Mr. Speaker, Premier Handley also stated that the plan was to repair the building so the building would last the five years it would take to build a new facility. Mr. Speaker, I having been here a couple of years now, I know that my job is to keep the Ministers' feet to the fire to

get a commitment that will benefit my people. I certainly hope the Premier is wearing good shoes today.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the Premier for the commitment, but now we need to move forward and make sure the Jimmy

Erasmus Seniors' Home gets into the capital and that the dramatic population growth is taken into consideration when designing a new facility, that a new facility meets the needs of the Tlicho elders.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I will have questions for the Premier on the final report of the facility, which was to be completed in June of this year, on the steps the Housing Corporation is taking to repair and replace this facility. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Mackenzie Valley Highway

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my Member's statement is on the Mackenzie Valley highway, the proposed highway that is being considered by this government and past governments. One of the key issues I want to hit on, Mr. Speaker, is the isolation the people in the Sahtu are feeling. There is an enormous amount of interest by oil companies, mining companies. More importantly, the people in the Sahtu are saying enough is enough. When is this government going to make a strong commitment in pushing down the Mackenzie Valley highway, bring jobs to the Sahtu, bring the cost of living down in the Sahtu, raise the standards of living in the Sahtu and bring our interest and free our people in the Sahtu...

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

MR. YAKELEYA: ...from the isolation, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the rest of the Northwest Territories, except for Nunakput, and my honourable colleague from Nunakput and other areas in the Tlicho area are also isolated; more importantly, in the Sahtu and up in Nunakput. Other communities enjoy discussions of paved roads, fixing the bumps here and there, putting a bridge here and putting a bridge there. We talk about the cost of living, Mr. Speaker. People in the Sahtu dream of your discussions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Dream!

MR. YAKELEYA: They can only dream of having paved roads. Even bring the standards of our goat roads up in the wintertime, Mr. Speaker. The cost of living is high. We want to contribute to the Northwest Territories. We want to be part of the Northwest Territories in terms of shaping our economy and contributing to the political structure. We can't do it in the dark. That's what this government is doing in terms of postponing the bridge, postponing the highway, not having a serious discussion with the federal government when they had a chance to and say open up the North.

Part of Diefenbaker's dream was to build a Mackenzie Highway right from Tuktoyaktuk. Let's put it through. Don't go sidetracking to another road. Put the money where it's supposed to be. Put the money there and free our people again in the Northwest Territories. The Sahtu people need to be free. They need to make a contribution to the Northwest Territories and bring that standard of living to

everybody in the North. That's what good government is all about. Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

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

Member's Statement On Longstanding Workers' Compensation Claims

MR. BRADEN: Merci beaucoup, monsieur le president. One of the most frequent issues that I have raised in this House and had a little bit of an inventory done 50 times, Mr. Speaker, in the last eight years, has been the plight of injured workers. It's not about those people whose injury or disability has been expeditiously handled by the WCB and the vast majority of cases have, indeed, been handled this way. Rather, my concern has been for those injured workers that have complex, unconventional injuries who have challenged the WCB for years. In their quest for justice, some of them have lost virtually everything in their personal and professional lives, everything that is except their dignity and their belief that the wrong that's been committed against them must be made right.

Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General's review in the performance of the WCB in this area discovered some 30 injured workers with longstanding, regrettable, unresolved cases. In the case of one worker, Ivan Valic, I was full of optimism in December of 2005 when the Supreme Court of the NWT ruled that Mr. Valic, whose injury dates back 19 years, ruled that Mr. Valic had indeed been wronged, his Charter rights have been violated and his right to natural justice denied. Even today, 18 months after this ruling, he still waits for justice. He's not alone. Longstanding unresolved cases like his will, I am certain, continue and should come before this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, on a forward looking basis, this Assembly, committees, the Auditor General for Canada, the Governance Council and Ministers have done excellent progressive work on new legislation that is now before this Assembly. This is a cause for optimism that our WCB will indeed improve in the way it meets the needs of all workers and employers.

It is important for this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, for workers and for employers who pay the cost of this vital part of the society to stay engaged and involved as the WCB moves through the important changes that it faces in the future. Merci beaucoup.

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

Member's Statement On Beluga Whales Entering Husky Lakes

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Beluga whales were spotted in the Husky Lakes area late last week and once again the Tuktoyaktuk Hunters' and Trappers' Committee are concerned they may stay trapped inside the Husky Lakes if the Department of Fisheries and Oceans do not do something about the beluga whales.

The Tuk HTC discussed the issue of beluga whales at the annual general meeting and I should note the superintendent of ENR from the Inuvik region was in attendance. Mr. Speaker, subsequently, we had an opportunity to speak with an official from Yellowknife and was provided with information that generally beluga whales migrate into Husky Lakes every five years. This is

the second year in a row that belugas have entered Husky Lakes, Mr. Speaker, and the HTC is concerned about their well-being.

Mr. Speaker, the Tuk HTC would like to do something about these whales. However, they do not have the resources or funding. The Tuk HTC have decided they will let nature take its course and hopefully these belugas will eventually find their way out of Husky Lakes.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, belugas were trapped in Husky Lakes last year. Fisheries Joint Management Committee and DFO decided to let nature take its course and hope the beluga whales will eventually migrate out. Unfortunately, they were trapped in ice that formed around them. Mr. Speaker, as...(inaudible)...as it was last fall, the HTC decided to harvest the beluga whales for distribution to other Beaufort-Delta communities. The harvesting of these belugas by the Tuk HTC was conducted only because they received necessary resources from the Department of ENR. The outlying communities were very thankful to receive the muktuk.

Mr. Speaker, the Fisheries Joint Management Committee is responsible for the management of fish and water mammals around the Beaufort-Delta region. I would appreciate and request the Minister of ENR to communicate with FJMC, DFO and Tuk HTC to resolve the problems of the belugas in Husky Lakes. Mr. Speaker, in the fall season, if something cannot be done to chase the whales out of Husky Lakes, there is a possibility they will remain in Husky Lakes and die eventually.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, beluga whales are one species that the Inuvialuit depend on for traditional meat. Let's hope the appropriate government will rise to the occasion to what is right: free the whales. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Deh Cho Bridge Project

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to speak again today about the Deh Cho Bridge project. In May, Members passed a motion in this House to come clean on what the costs and benefits would be for the proposed Deh Cho Bridge. Mr. Speaker, we had a briefing in July behind closed doors and as protocol would dictate, I can't publicly discuss what things I learned at this meeting. Mr. Speaker, the fact is, there was nothing new. The public still doesn't know what the impact is going to be and all we know is that the Deh Cho Bridge project is going ahead. The Premier and government have been quite clear about that since May. Mr. Speaker, I am having a tremendous amount of difficulty understanding how this project has gotten to the stage it is at.

The Premier is planning a groundbreaking ceremony this Friday, the day after the last session of this government is concluded. To my knowledge, Regular Members haven't even been invited to the party, Mr. Speaker. What is so hard to believe is why the government is relying solely on a five-year-old piece of legislation passed by the last government to build the Deh Cho Bridge. Nowhere in the Deh Cho Bridge Act does it say build the bridge at any price. That act was conceived and vetted publicly when the project was 60 to 70 million dollars and tolls would be under \$5 per tonne. At the time, a thorough cost-benefit analysis was done on the cost of the project. Mr. Speaker, that was five years ago. My motion in May and my

standing here again today is to ask the government where is the 2007 cost-benefit analysis? The government has yet to prove to me that a bridge built for \$150 million with tolls, when completed, of over \$7 a tonne would not have a negative impact on the cost to consumers in the North Slave region and the city of Yellowknife. At no time in the last four years have the Members of this House had any discussion on completing large infrastructure projects.

In his sessional statement, the Premier says the additional \$2 million the government required to put into the project would not come out of education, housing or health care. How is it possible for the Premier to say this? Just because we have a better formula financing arrangement with Ottawa does not mean the Members of this House said it's okay to spend an additional \$2 million a year on a bridge. That money could be used in education, health care or housing. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That money could be used in education, health care or housing. It's just that now future governments will have no say in the matter, and that, Mr. Speaker, is a shame. Mr. Speaker, once again I will state for the record that I do support a bridge being built across the Mackenzie River but not without substantial funding from Ottawa and not without the proof from this government that costs will not increase in the city of Yellowknife or in the North Slave region. I just cannot believe the government is moving ahead with this project when it's faced with so many questions that remain unanswered. There has been no transparency from the government on this project, Mr. Speaker, and that is the sad truth. Mahsi.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Suicide Awareness And Prevention Programs

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would just like to raise the very serious issue of suicide awareness and prevention here in the NWT. This issue has been raised many times here in the past four years, Mr. Speaker, but recently has become a very sensitive issue for myself due to the fact that my family has been affected by the suicide of a close relative.

We are all aware that the NWT has more than two times the national average of suicide rates in Canada. We have not seen any real improvement in programs and services related to suicide awareness, suicide prevention or aftercare services provided by this government over the last five years.

There is definitely a real need for ongoing community awareness, community counselling, and training to individuals and affected families who have been devastated by incidents of suicide. Even years after, families are still feeling the effects of such incidents, especially how it's affecting their families and siblings of suicide victims. As they grow up with these dark memories and without any good counselling or support networks to turn to, they may take it upon themselves to resolve their

issues themselves by contemplating suicide themselves, Mr. Speaker.

In my constituency, many people have been raising this issue and have been working to develop some on-the-land programs to address suicide amongst our youth, only to be informed that there is not even health and social services dollars to move forward with a plan or there are just too many hurdles in government to get access to dollars. Mr. Speaker, that has to change. If we do not take this issue more seriously for the future, Mr. Speaker, then the talk amongst our youth about suicide will no longer be about just talk, Mr. Speaker; it will be acted upon more often. To me, this is a very serious trend that we, as a government, seem to be taking just too lightly. We have to act now to address this issue and I encourage this government to seriously review their suicide prevention programs in all of our smaller communities across the NWT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Support For Nurse Practitioners

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to talk about the value of nurse practitioners in the delivery of health care in the North.

Availability of training for nurse practitioners in the North is still a relatively new undertaking. Although nurse practitioners have been present for several years in the North, their work in the larger communities is still in the pioneer phase. The primary health care model sees them as a vital part of clinics, hospital emergency wards and outpatient departments. Hay River has the good fortune of having two nurse practitioners operating in our system. We consider them to be a very integral part of the delivery of health services in Hay River.

With the relative newness of their presence in the larger communities, we believe that the model they are working with needs to be clearly defined in order to realize the maximum benefits of their training, skills and proficiency. This clearly defined working relationship with other health care providers would ensure that anyone new coming into our system would be oriented to that system whether they be administrative or front-line personnel.

Nurse practitioners have much to offer in terms of their ideas about the operation of the various settings in which they work. The network of nurse practitioners in the North are supported by professional development, resource materials, updates on best practices and conferring together. For reasons which I will pursue during question period today, Mr. Speaker, Hay River has been left out of that network to the despair of our nurse practitioners. They, too, would find benefit and opportunity to connect with their counterparts throughout the territory. This would only serve to enhance what they have to offer our community and as with all professionals, particularly in medicine, they want to stay apprised of ever-evolving best medical information and practices. Investment in this professional development is an investment that would benefit their patients.

It's very important that physicians, whether permanent or locums, understand the role of our nurse practitioners and would then work with them in a collaborative practice that

was intended. Failing to do so makes it virtually impossible for nurse practitioners to realize the unique role and responsibility that they can offer to enhance the health care delivery system.

I would like to thank all of our health care providers in Hay River and today recognize our two nurse practitioners Karen Benwell and Sue Balmer. The efforts that they have made to enhance their education and skills have been a tremendous asset to Hay River residents. Later today, Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister of Health and Social services regarding improvements to the support for our nurse practitioners. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Income Support Policy Application

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the subsidies that this government provides to its residents are probably the best in the Northwest Territories. We have over \$118 million roughly in subsidies and there are still some inconsistencies in the delivery of these programs that causes me some concern, Mr. Speaker. A good example is there is a young man that I know who is a summer student who is working for the summer. His family is on income support. This young man is getting his wages clawed back by income support because his family is on income support. That's not sending a very good message to this young man. He may be better off, he may think, staying with relatives and he's paying for his family for being on income support. We have to send a better message to this young man.

Another example would be land claim agreements are included in the assessment of income for calculating how much you receive. I was under the impression that land claims agreements were constitutionally protected and shouldn't be included in the calculation of income.

ECE, when they took over the assessments from the Housing Corporation, the policy says that summer students' wages will not be included in the household family income. Yet, ECE includes his in his family's income and they claw some of the money back from his family. That's not fair, Mr. Speaker. It's not fair, Mr. Speaker, especially to the young man who is trying to work through the summer and who is trying to get a good work ethic and make some money before going back to school. Yet, he is penalized because the support payments to his family are cut back because of the money he's making, so he's having to supplement his family's income with the money he's trying to make.

So I will have some questions, Mr. Speaker, for the Minister of ECE, because I think this is an unfair situation for the young man and we have to try to do what we can to send a good message out there and support him trying to work for the summer. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Income Support Policy Application

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to draw attention to the plight of a constituent who is falling

through the cracks of our system. This woman is suffering from a debilitating illness and, in her doctor's opinion, requires round-the-clock care. However, she is entitled to home care services for up to 10 hours a week. The only alternative beyond that is she has been offered to be hospitalized. In order for her to be able to stay at home, her partner had to quit work to provide the care she needs. As a result, the couple now relies on income support. This couple owns their own home, but they are not able to make the mortgage payments. A family member, Mr. Speaker, a father, stepped forward to help them with this. He stepped forward to help them make those payments. However, this assistance is clawed back from their income support, leaving them to struggle to maintain their home.

Mr. Speaker, is hospitalization really the best we can do for this woman for this family? Surely a hospital bed would cost our government far more than providing more home care service hours or, at the very least, allowing them to keep the financial support from their father in order to make those mortgage payments before they are clawed back. Whose interest, Mr. Speaker, is it possibly in? Are we helping these individuals to go forward? Haven't they been burdened enough? Why should we be making a choice: be with your family but be in poverty or go to the hospital? Mr. Speaker, those are not fair choices this family should have to make.

The system we have in place requires a greater deal of flexibility, sort of a real life real experience policy, Mr. Speaker, that takes into consideration that we are making sure we are allowing people to look after their families, not to penalize them.

Mr. Speaker, it is my hope that this government can see its way to find a solution to ensure this woman, Mr. Speaker, this family, can work together in this situation. It is my hope that this department can look through the situation and allow the dignity of this family to stay home and get the care they need. Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister of Health later today. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On All-Weather Road To The Diamond Mines

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it has been said that diamonds are a girl's best friend. I have to say I don't have enough of these best friends, but I don't mind because I know that the diamonds have become best friends of Yellowknife and the NWT. I know that our friends in Tlicho will also tell you that diamonds are a Dogrib's best friend. My colleagues in Hay River are working hard to make sure that diamonds become Hay River's best friend.

Mr. Speaker, but I have to say that I am not sure if this government has been diamond's best friend. The first thing is that the government has not done enough, in my view, to ease the logistical pressure in getting supplies to the diamond mines by extending the winter ice road season.

Mr. Speaker, I think they should be clear what this is about, because I am hearing a lot of confusion even in this House about what we need to do. Mr. Speaker, diamond mines and the resource industry are not looking for an all-

weather road to their areas at the expense of other capital projects. Also, this is not about the race between the NWT and Nunavut as to whether or not if Nunavut builds a deep sea port first, that we will lose our chance. The lead for the extension of the winter ice road exists whether or not the port in Nunavut is built.

Mr. Speaker, what we need to know is that the worst impact of the climate change and the global warming is sitting right on top of where these diamond mines are. We have the most warming pattern in temperatures in this area than any other area in Canada. This is really placing the viability of supplying the mines through the winter ice road into serious question and jeopardy.

Mr. Speaker, all of the information is there by the joint venture committee and it is imperative that this government takes a very serious look at the situation and become an active participant on how we address it. Mr. Speaker, the government, both the NWT and federal government, has an obligation to support the infrastructure for the life of mines for the next 20 to 30 years.

Mr. Speaker, again I need to say that this is not a competition with Nunavut because if anyone who is interested in getting to the facts even if Nunavut builds a port, they couldn't do all the work that the winter ice roads do now as efficiently or effectively. Mr. Speaker, may I seek unanimous consent to finish my statement?

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Even if there is a port, we will still need to supply the mines by road. The only way to do that in the most efficient way is by extending the winter road. The way to do that is to build some infrastructure in the entry point where there are soft spots and really shortens the winter road season. There are other parts throughout the ice road that needs enforcement that this government can do to extend the ice road and to be able to withstand some of the warming trends. So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say, for the record, that I support the joint committee's proposal to work on this issue. I urge this government and the federal government to get on it and take care of the business. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Members' statements. Returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

HON. CHARLES DENT: (English not provided)

---Applause

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased to stand here today and recognize my wife of almost 30 years now, Valerie;...

---Applause

...my mother of all my life, Esther; a great friend and teacher of many people across the North, Ed Jeske.

---Applause

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to recognize a constituent and leader in the arts community here in Yellowknife, Mr. Glen Abernethy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In this case I don't mind being scooped by Mr. Braden by recognizing our fine visitors, but I, too, wish to recognize Mr. Ed Jeske, Mrs. Esther Braden, and I will also recognize the other Mrs. Braden and a friend of mine in the gallery above me, Mr. Glen Abernethy. Thank you.

---Applause

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: I would like to welcome all of our visitors here today. A couple of individuals I would like to recognize: Mr. Darryl Bohnet, who was a long-time government employee and mostly worked for Diavik; and somebody who has developed a real high level of interest in politics in the last while and must be watching how much fun I have been having here, my brother Bob. I would like to welcome them both here.

---Applause

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

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize my constituency assistant, Ms. Donna Bernhardt, who is down here to assist me to chaperone my two Pages here from Ulukhaktok, Tyler Inuktalik and Trevor Okheena. Thank you.

---Applause

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to recognize Mr. Ivan Strang. Mr. Strang is a Member of the Legislative Assembly in Alberta for the constituency of West Yellowhead.

---Applause

He sits on a number of Alberta Legislative Assembly committees. Mr. Strang was born in Winnipeg but was raised and finished high school in Hay River and was also a resident of Yellowknife for a number of years and worked at Giant Mine.

---Applause

Mr. Strang is accompanied today by his mother. Thank you.

---Applause

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

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to recognize Bob McLeod today who I think has lived in Yellowknife South since 1988. That makes him one of the original Yellowknife South

constituents. The riding isn't that old. Welcome to the gallery, Bob.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's not too often you get to recognize your long lost relatives in the House. I would like to recognize Bob McLeod who is a relative of mine.

---Laughter

He just found out.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. If we have missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to the House. I hope you are enjoying the proceedings. It is always a pleasure to have an audience in here.

Acknowledgements. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

ITEM 7: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 150-15(6): Income Support Policy Application

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Minister of Health and Social Services on the heels of my statement today, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister to agree to look into my constituent's case to see if anything can be done to ensure this family receives the assistance they need without requiring them to move into a hospital for the rest of their life or requiring their partner to remain unemployed by making some discussions and headway on the income support policy we have. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like the question referred to the Minister of ECE. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 150-15(6): Income Support Policy Application

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Income Support Program being delivered by Education, Culture and Employment, it is probably more appropriate that I respond to questions around that program. Mr. Speaker, apparently the Income Assistance Program is one of last resort. In this program, the way it is set up right now, clients are expected to use up all of their assets and all of their resources before any supports are provided. I have recently announced, though, that there are some changes beginning on September 1st with the program which will allow clients to keep an increased level of assets going up to \$50,000 from the current limit of \$5,000 and you have a program that is going to provide increased supports. There is going to be a somewhat more flexible program.

With a case managed approach where ECE workers work with Health and Social Services staff as well as Housing staff, we are hoping that we are going to be able to find ways to more effectively deal with unique circumstances

that families may find themselves in. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 150-15(6): Income Support Policy Application

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, fortunately I was prepared in case the Health Minister didn't want to answer the questions. I was ready for the income support Minister. Mr. Speaker, my next question will be for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Will he look at addressing the shortfall that is created by this Income Support Program? The Income Support Program only allows the person up to \$1,200 a year as little extra money that they can declare without it being clawed back. Mr. Speaker, my constituent's mortgage is way more than that and has to be paid 12 times a year. So what is this Minister going to do to make sure this family doesn't have to use up all of their assets that he has cited and lose their home because we cannot find a simple balance to work through this problem? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 150-15(6): Income Support Policy Application

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is just a point of clarification. The current rules of the program don't allow for a \$1,200 exemption. The beginning of September the 1st, up to \$1,200 or \$1,200 of unearned income can be exempted by a family. That is in addition to the \$400 per family plus 15 percent of all earnings above that that can be exempt from the program. So the program is changing significantly from a program of simply last resort to one that is intended to better support people. But any program like this where government subsidies are given out is a balance between affordability and what people need. So the government has had to set some limits on what supports are available. We are quite confident, though, Mr. Speaker, that in any case we are providing adequate supports for families in the Northwest Territories.

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

Supplementary To Question 150-15(6): Income Support Policy Application

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the Minister would take time to look at this scenario and this specific case he would realize that this family is going to lose their home by these fair rules designed by the system. Mr. Speaker, because we do not exempt the mortgage that a family member is paying and this government doesn't pay the mortgage and fact that a doctor tells them that they need full-time care at home, that leaves no one left to go to work to pay the mortgage, Mr. Speaker. So when the father helps, they get it all clawed back so they lose any net gain they would have gotten from income support. The bottom line is, Mr. Speaker, will the Minister look at this specific case to find out what is wrong with this situation and find a balance to make it work so they don't lose their home? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 150-15(6): Income Support Policy Application

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are always prepared to look at cases of families in the Northwest Territories. As I said, beginning September 1st, we are hoping to be able to improve the services and the supports we provide to families in the North. In fact, we know we are going to improve the supports that we provide to families in the North.

We also need to make sure that we have all of the helping agencies at the table. We need to make sure that we have Education, Culture and Employment, Health and Social Services, and the Housing Corporation. Mr. Speaker, I can make sure that all three agencies are involved and looking at what is possible given our current rules. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 150-15(6): Income Support Policy Application

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, the Minister keeps pointing at September 1st that everything is going to be okay, but the fact is this family is in jeopardy of losing their house. I will tell you for a fact today, Mr. Speaker, that if they sold this house to a brother, sister or close relative for \$1, we could rent it from income support and pay the full cost of the mortgage through a rental program. But yet we can't seem to find a balance between getting help and solving this problem. So, Mr. Speaker, I want to hear a commitment today. Will the Minister go look at this whole situation and find some flexibility in this program so this family doesn't lose everything? In another month or two we will be covering every single cost, not just helping them here on this situation. We are going to lose and we are going to have to help them everywhere and this family is going to be broken up. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 150-15(6): Income Support Policy Application

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As things stand right now, the program is governed by regulations. Those regulations change on September 1st. So the rules may change then, but I can't arbitrarily change them today. There is no flexibility built into the program that allows a Minister to do that under our current legislation and regulations. As of September 1st, there may be a different method of looking at this program. In advance of that, there is no reason that ECE, Health and Social Services and the Housing Corporation can't be working together to ensure that all that is possibly available to a family in need is provided. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 151-15(6): Deh Cho Bridge Project

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Premier. I want to say the Minister responsible for the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation, which would be the Minister of Transportation, but for my arguments today and my questions, I would like to ask the Premier. Getting back to my Member's statement earlier, nowhere in the Deh Cho Bridge Act does it say that a bridge across the Mackenzie River should be built at any

price. What the Deh Cho Bridge Act does is give the government the ability to negotiate, on behalf of the residents of the Northwest Territories, an agreement. But the problem, Mr. Speaker, is that Regular Members on this side of the House have not been party to any of those negotiations. The project has gone from 60 to 70 million dollars to now \$150 million. What residents here in Yellowknife and the North Slave region want to understand and have is peace of mind. I think the government should come clean on a cost-benefit analysis on the Deh Cho Bridge project based on those current numbers. That is \$150 million and that is \$6.75 a tonne today and in 2010 when that bridge is going to be completed it will be over \$7 a tonne. I would like to ask the Premier how come there has not been a cost-benefit analysis on the Deh Cho Bridge project with current numbers? Mahsi.

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

Return To Question 151-15(6): Deh Cho Bridge Project

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The bridge is a result of negotiations for financing, contracting, consultant services, oversight and so on. There is a whole range of negotiations going on. That kind of analysis is an ongoing exercise. Mr. Speaker, I give the Members assurances that that bridge at today's prices is doable for \$6 a tonne in 2002 dollars. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 151-15(6): Deh Cho Bridge Project

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that is 2002 dollars. It is five years later. The cost of those tolls is going to be \$6.75. That is in today's dollars. When the bridge is constructed, it will be 2010. You can rest assured, due to inflation, those costs per tonne are going to be over \$7. Again, I would like to ask the Premier, where is a cost-benefit analysis of the Deh Cho Bridge project based on current factual information? That is \$150 million. That is \$7 a tonne. Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 151-15(6): Deh Cho Bridge Project

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am really disappointed that the Member is so reluctant to move ahead with an important piece of infrastructure here. Clearly, he hasn't seen the empty store shelves, the shutdown of construction projects because there is no material, the mines to construction industry, everybody being affected by this let alone the number of students who can't fly home at Christmas. There are no assurances and so on.

Mr. Speaker, when we come to negotiations, we don't negotiate this in public any more than we negotiate most things that are negotiable in public. We are elected. We will do the negotiations. We will assess whether or not it is viable. We will go ahead based on whether or not it makes good economic sense. Mr. Speaker, the bridge, as the Member has said, is roughly \$6.75 per tonne for heavy loads going North in today's dollars, exactly what it will be 10 years from now or five years from now, I can't give any assurances for 20 years from now, but it is indexed. It

was indexed based on a formula in 2002. That is all doable without having to ask anyone to bail out of the bridge somehow. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 151-15(6): Deh Cho Bridge Project

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, all I have been critical of with the government is I just want to see the proof. Show me the proof and I can support the project. The government hasn't been able, for whatever reason, to show me the proof that the cost of living in Yellowknife and in the North Slave region will not go up if this bridge is built.

I would like to ask the Premier if these numbers, that is \$150 million, that is \$7 a tonne or \$6.75 a tonne, has been shopped around to stakeholders here in the North Slave region. I am talking about industry, transportation companies, municipalities, chambers of commerce, the Tlicho Government and the Akaitcho Government. Has the government spoken to those organizations, Mr. Speaker? Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 151-15(6): Deh Cho Bridge Project

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just find it really odd that of all of the public infrastructure we build, the MLA would choose this one to say we need to have all of the facts. Are we going to have to do this every time we replace a culvert or pave or chipseal a piece of road? This is a piece of infrastructure. We don't do that often. We do our assessment. We run good government and we make sure that what we are doing is in the benefit of all of the people of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, I just don't understand the reluctance here. Mr. Speaker, do we talk to everybody? Yes, we have talked to everybody going back to 2002. We have talked to everyone about this. Now, as I say, we are not negotiating everything in public. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 151-15(6): Deh Cho Bridge Project

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is a big difference between building a culvert and building a \$150 million bridge, that is a kilometre across the Mackenzie River. There is a huge difference there. I think the government and the Premier has all but admitted it. They haven't gone back out with the new numbers. Sure, we talked to people in 2002. That is when the project was 60 to 70 million dollars. It is \$150 million now. Is the government going to go out and consult with the stakeholders? The cost of living is going to go up here in the North Slave region and the government should go back out and should consult with the public. That, to me, is good government, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 151-15(6): Deh Cho Bridge Project

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Some of us believe it is our job in this Legislative Assembly, it seems, to just keep consulting and consulting and

studying and so on. Some of us believe it is our job to do things. Mr. Speaker, we are going to do this. We are not going to every step of the way go out and get people's opinions again. We got people's opinions since 2002. We know we have a good deal. We know it is workable at the \$6 a tonne in 2002 dollars or \$6.75 today and something else in 2010 when it is completed. We know it is good for Yellowknife, the North Slave region and the mines. It is another important piece of infrastructure. We are going to go forward with this unless something really goes sideways on a final contract. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 152-15(6): Longstanding Workers' Compensation Claims

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, thank you. My questions this afternoon are for the Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board, Mr. Krutko. It regards the plight of longstanding unresolved cases of injured workers and specifically the widely publicized case of Mr. Ivan Valic, a worker who was injured while he was helping to build the Ruth Inch Memorial Pool here in Yellowknife some 19 years ago now.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Valic's case was a subject of a Supreme Court ruling that found the WCB's policies and procedures wanting and an instruction developed to make sure that his case was reheard at appeal. But my understanding is that even 18 months after that court ruling, Mr. Valic's case still remains unresolved. I would like the Minister to advise the Assembly what is the status of Mr. Valic's longstanding case with the WCB?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board, Mr. Krutko.

Return To Question 152-15(6): Longstanding Workers' Compensation Claims

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in regards to this case, the individual was compensated for the outstanding case, but also at this time there is presently a dispute in regards to some outstanding receipts that the member has had. The Workers' Compensation Board has, along with the client, taken that case to arbitration. It is before arbitration right now and being heard in regards to the outstanding receipts that are being disputed. The individual was compensated and settled. We thought that was taken care of. But he, at this present time, is disputing some outstanding receipts in regards to his medical receipts and those have been forwarded to independent arbitration. Again, because it is before arbitration, I will not be answering any more questions on this matter. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 152-15(6): Longstanding Workers' Compensation Claims

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, what steps will the WCB be taking to address the relatively large caseload of longstanding chronically unresolved issues for injured workers? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 152-15(6): Longstanding Workers' Compensation Claims

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as we all know, we have revised the payment policy that we have in place in regards to chronic pain which is now part and parcel of that policy. That will hopefully improve and clarify exactly the situation around chronic pain. Again, we are coming forward with legislation to this House which will improve the system that we presently have, which again is an improvement of what we already have. Again, Mr. Speaker, those are some of the efforts that we are working at. Again, we are doing our best to satisfy workers. Again, there have been commitments I made myself in this House to get information back to the House in regards to the number of outstanding cases and cases that have been resolved to date. Thank you.

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

Question 153-15(6): Beluga Whales Entering Husky Lakes

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier I talked about the beluga whales that are presently in Husky Lakes. It happened as well last year. We were fortunate, Mr. Speaker, that last year ENR provided assistance for the Tuk hunters and trappers to harvest the whales even though it was late in the season, some time in late November or early December. Right now, Tuk HTC made it very clear, Mr. Speaker, that they will not do anything at the present time. They will let nature take its course in terms of the beluga whales trying to get out of Husky Lakes. I would like to ask the Minister of ENR if he can work with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Fishing Joint Management Committee and try to find a solution to this problem. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. The honourable Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. McLeod.

Return To Question 153-15(6): Beluga Whales Entering Husky Lakes

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We certainly will commit to working with the hunters' and trappers' committee and the Fisheries and Oceans who is the lead on this issue. I think there are about 85 whales trapped in the Husky Lakes area again this year. We are hoping that they will find their way out this fall through the channel that leads to the Arctic Ocean. We have to wait until some time later this fall to see if that happens. Failing that, we will certainly work with the community, the hunters' and trappers' committee and the federal government. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 153-15(6): Beluga Whales Entering Husky Lakes

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A quick follow-up here. The Minister indicated they will wait until probably early September. I don't know at what point in time, but if it's decided that they require assistance for monitoring and trying to lead them out of the Husky Lakes, I'm just wondering if the Minister can sit down with the HTC at a certain point in time before it gets too late, unlike last year, and provide the funds required to either harvest or chase them out of Husky Lake. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 153-15(6): Beluga Whales Entering Husky Lakes

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are monitoring the situation. We are certainly aware of the issue and the concern from people in the community. We will have some early discussions with Fisheries and Oceans on this issue and also talk to the community as early as possible. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 153-15(6): Beluga Whales Entering Husky Lakes

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can I ask the Minister right now, at the present time has he talked with DFO and FJMC on the Tuk issue to see about this horrible problem? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 153-15(6): Beluga Whales Entering Husky Lakes

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've been contacted both by the federal government, the Fisheries and Oceans, and also we've had some discussions with the community members. It's still early, Mr. Speaker. The beluga whales might find their way back out to the Arctic Ocean. We'll continue to monitor. We'll certainly keep the Member and his community informed. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 153-15(6): Beluga Whales Entering Husky Lakes

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the worst-case scenario, will the Minister at least provide the...(inaudible)...funding if it has to come to that? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 153-15(6): Beluga Whales Entering Husky Lakes

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last year we provided support to the situation when we had the whales trapped in the Husky Lakes area. We'll certainly commit to providing the same level of support as we did last year. Hopefully it won't come to that, but we still expect the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to take the lead and provide the bulk of the funding required. Thank you.

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

Question 154-15(6): Income Support Policy Application

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the subsidies that this government provides are very generous and some of the questions that we have on this side of the House I think is in the inconsistencies in some of the delivery of the programs. They like to promote self-reliance and so do we. We've been self-reliant before and I think the day will come when most of us, or most of the people across the NWT, will be self-reliant again. The question I have for the Minister of ECE is I'd like to ask him if land claim agreements are constitutionally protected

when they're calculating income for the amount of benefit they may receive from income support. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 154-15(6): Income Support Policy Application

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my understanding that it's a matter of policy and not constitutional protection that has exempted some payments from consideration under the Income Support Program. So every government of Canada can make their own decisions about what is exempt and what isn't exempt for consideration when deciding whether or not to provide income support.

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

Supplementary To Question 154-15(6): Income Support Policy Application

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to the Minister for that. In this government, is it ECE's policy right now to exempt benefit agreements from calculating income support? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 154-15(6): Income Support Policy Application

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government's policy is not to exclude payments like IBAs. Treaty payments are exempt from consideration from family income.

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

Supplementary To Question 154-15(6): Income Support Policy Application

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hear treaty payments are exempt but the IBAs aren't exempt. I'd like to ask the Minister why there's a difference in what's exempt, the IBAs or the treaty payments. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 154-15(6): Income Support Policy Application

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure what reason the previous governments had for deciding that some money should be exempt from consideration. Under the new policy with income support starting on September 1st, clients will be able to exempt \$1,200 a year in unearned income, which means that going forward, whether it's an IBA payment or Inuvialuit Final Agreement payment, that sort of money the family can choose to exempt from consideration should they wish. But the limit will be \$1,200 a year.

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

Supplementary To Question 154-15(6): Income Support Policy Application

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Inconsistency is something that we speak about often. We want it to be the same right across the board for everybody. I'd like to ask the Minister, come September 1st -- the date we've been hearing quite a bit about lately -- what's going to be done to protect this young man that's trying to earn some

summer income and not have it deducted from the benefits that his family receives from being on income support? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 154-15(6): Income Support Policy Application

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this point, the policies between the public housing rental subsidy and the Income Support Program aren't the same. When ECE was given responsibility for public housing, the promise was that no changes would be made to those policies. If the intent of this policy is one to encourage attendance at school and continuation in education, there may be some grounds for us to take a look at whether or not we should adopt a similar policy under the Income Support Program. So that is something that, perhaps in this case, something that we can learn from the way the program was run in the Housing Corporation. Thank you.

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

Question 155-15(6): Support For Nurse Practitioners

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in my Member's statement today, we are very pleased to have two nurse practitioners practising in Hay River. But in a recent meeting with our nurse practitioners, Mr. Speaker, it has come to my attention, our attention, that there is a level of support that is provided to other nurse practitioners in the Northwest Territories. Granted, our nurse practitioners work for the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority, which is under a different regime and under a different union than the rest of the NWT health care system. But having said that, it escapes me why the same support and interaction and networking would not be available to the nurse practitioners in Hay River as it is to every other nurse practitioner in the North. I'd like to ask the Minister firstly today, what is the support for professional development and resources that is ongoing currently available to nurse practitioners? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 155-15(6): Support For Nurse Practitioners

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the Nurse Practitioner Program there are a number of areas that we are working on. One is through the education progress through Aurora College, setting up a program so we can have nurses enter into that program and receive bursaries. The other one is more through the process itself of once we have nurse practitioners in the system, and I must say that Hay River pioneered, I guess, with the processes. They hired the first nurse practitioner that came out of our program and has continued to work in that environment. We are, within the system, going through some growing pains where we're trying to find the proper fit for nurse practitioners throughout our system and we'll continue work with nurse practitioners in all of our authorities, including Hay River Health and Social Services Authority, in that area. The networking side of it, as well as the conference side, I've been informed that the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority falls into that program and works with all other authorities in the same area. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 155-15(6): Support For Nurse Practitioners

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Well, that is -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker -- a bit curious, because there are conferences, there are professional development workshops and things that are available, but apparently there is no funding under the health and social services authority in Hay River to allow our nurse practitioners to access things like that. There's no money for travel, accommodation, any tuitions or fees for workshops, there's no money for resources, books that they may need in order to enhance their practice in Hay River. So I'd like to ask the Minister, is he aware of any specific contribution to the budget of the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority that is specifically allocated for that type of thing? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 155-15(6): Support For Nurse Practitioners

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm not aware of a specific budget line that is transferred to the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority, but I've been informed by a public administrator down there that they're working with the senior management to encourage the networking that needs to happen throughout our system. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 155-15(6): Support For Nurse Practitioners

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as with so many health care providers and professionals right now that are in short supply and in high demand, there are recruitment and there are retention bonuses that are offered. Are there any such incentives or inducements being offered to other nurse practitioners in the Northwest Territories right now that are not being offered to ours in Hay River? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 155-15(6): Support For Nurse Practitioners

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in our process, there would be a bit of a difference between through the Government of the Northwest Territories workforce and the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority workforce, because both would, if there are, and I'd have to check to see if in fact there are some differences, but because there are negotiations through their negotiation processes, there may be some differences, but I'm not aware of any and I will look into that. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 155-15(6): Support For Nurse Practitioners

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do appreciate the Minister's offer to look into that, because we have been dealing, for some time in Hay River, with the issue of fairness and equity. Although we are an anomaly with our own health board and our own union --

we're different in Hay River -- at the same time, we want to make sure that we are not at a disadvantage when it comes to the professional development, the recruitment, the retention and wage parity, and parity on every level for our health workers in Hay River. So I would like to ask the Minister if he will assure us and that he supports the concept and the philosophy of fairness and equity to all health care providers in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 155-15(6): Support For Nurse Practitioners

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this issue around the health and social services authority and the workforce there has been one that has come up from time to time as it is in an anomaly in the Northwest Territories health care delivery system. It is something I do believe we need to look at. The fact is, through the department, through the Nurse Practitioner Program, the training initiatives, we're trying to incorporate all authorities into the same training criteria and standards as well as the networking that's available. So we'll continue to push that and work on that. But I think, as I had stated I believe earlier during a number of questions from the Member, that the Government of the Northwest Territories does need to look at overall what's the best way of delivering health care to all the residents in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

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

Question 156-15(6): Mackenzie Valley Highway

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to raise some questions with the Premier on the Mackenzie Valley highway and the discussion he may have with the Prime Minister or he maybe had some discussions with his fellow Premiers across Canada, especially the western part, in terms of really pushing for the Mackenzie Highway to come through the south to the north here, or from the north down to the south. Can the Premier tell me, is it in the federal government's eyes right now to put the Mackenzie Valley highway down the valley? Can we just do it? Enough talking.

AN HON. MEMBER: Just do it.

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

Return To Question 156-15(6): Mackenzie Valley Highway

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish the federal government would just do it, because I think it's a good idea to do it. I think Diefenbaker started that. Prime Minister Diefenbaker started over 50 years ago. We've got to build infrastructure. We can't just keep studying these things. We've got to get on with it.

Mr. Speaker, I've had discussions over the past few years with the Prime Minister, with Minister Prentice, with Minister Cannon, anyone who would listen to us. Myself and the Minister of Transportation have both been strong advocates of it. So we need to get on with it.

Mr. Speaker, the one thing that the federal government has always tied major investment in the Mackenzie Valley highway to is the pipeline. We've got to keep our eye on that file as well, because I think that will provide the

economic reason for a good highway down the valley. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 156-15(6): Mackenzie Valley Highway

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Imperial Oil indicated that if the federal government puts some money into infrastructure like the highway, it would bring down the cost of building the pipeline. Is there any update from the federal government on this angle? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 156-15(6): Mackenzie Valley Highway

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, it's true that those discussions did take place with Imperial. Imperial agreed that, yes, that would make a difference. I have not seen their latest model for how they propose to build the pipeline, but they're afraid of having their pipeline attached to a highway from an environmental review side, so they've been a little bit reluctant to engage in that. But, Mr. Speaker, we presented that argument to the federal government as well and I can tell you that all of our economy is going to be dependent on good infrastructure some day. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 156-15(6): Mackenzie Valley Highway

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm really puzzled why Imperial is so afraid of putting a highway next to the pipeline. They're not afraid of taking our gas out of the North here and taking it out of the Sahtu region and filling their pockets. It's a win-win proposition here. People in the North win; people in Canada win; Imperial Oil can win. Mr. Speaker, I'll ask the Premier on this point here. Would he bring it up again through his Department of Transportation, through the government here, and get this Mackenzie Highway bridge built, similar to the push that's going on for the Deh Cho Bridge?

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

Further Return To Question 156-15(6): Mackenzie Valley Highway

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, yes, I will bring it up. I'll bring it up right to the last day that I'm in office here, Mr. Speaker. It's my responsibility to do that and I will do it. Mr. Speaker, I believe that it is essential and that's why our government has spent millions of dollars building over 20 some bridges, why we're committed to building a bridge across the Bear River to extend the winter road, and eventually we'll build that into highway. But again, without our fair share of resource revenues, we're very limited in how fast we can move ahead with this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 156-15(6): Mackenzie Valley Highway

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm very afraid that this Northwest Territories cash cow is not going to get the Mackenzie Highway built up into our

regions here. Mr. Premier, I want to ask you one question. We went on a hike here a couple of times. Last month, in seven days we walked 90 miles and we just did it. We saw what it took from us to do, along with the young leaders and people that accompanied us, and we just did it. I'm asking this government here to look seriously at the Mackenzie Valley highway in the next couple of days you have, in terms of just doing it, put the numbers down, because we're sick and tired in the Sahtu for paying for two litres of milk \$6.45 in Fort Good Hope while Yellowknife pays \$2.27. Same milk, same cow.

---Laughter

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

Further Return To Question 156-15(6): Mackenzie Valley Highway

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I think the question was, will we continue to lobby hard for it. Absolutely, we will. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that not only have we lobbied, but there's a lot of the private sector and aboriginal corporations who are also lobbying and looking at how this could be done. In fact, they're looking at a P3 project. Is there a parallel to be followed similar to the Deh Cho Bridge that would be able to do it? So, Mr. Speaker, these are things that we can't just keep talking about forever. We need to get on with doing them and, Mr. Speaker, I'll do everything I can to make sure that we keep lobbying on this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Oral questions. Honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

Question 157-15(6): Suicide Awareness And Prevention Programs

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I just want to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services questions related to my Member's statement on the NWT Suicide Prevention Program. Just in the wake of the last recent announcement by the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment of the big increase in income support programs here in the NWT, which is good, Mr. Speaker, and I really commend the Minister for making that announcement, but I'm also disappointed that the NWT Suicide Prevention Program has not received any increase in any funding over the last few years, Mr. Speaker, and I think that the growing trend that I have heard from many of my constituents in my constituency in Lutselk'e and Fort Resolution in particular, that a lot of youth these days are walking around and talking about suicide and contemplating suicide, and that is really raising a lot of concerns and a lot of eyebrows of a lot of people in these communities, and they are asking me to address the territorial government in asking them why we don't have any more dollars allocated to families that are suffering from, or victims of, suicides. I just want to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services what this government is planning on doing to address this growing trend, which is not really easily measured in these small communities, therefore does not allow this government to provide more money or substantiate the reasons for providing more money in this area. Can this Minister provide me with any kind of indication that the department is seriously looking at this issue in the NWT and particularly in areas in my constituency I had a couple suicides in the last three months, Mr. Speaker? Is that concern raising red flags in the Department of Health and Social Services, the mental health division? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mr. Roland.

Return To Question 157-15(6): Suicide Awareness And Prevention Programs

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in fact the department can. I think we can say we are very involved in this situation through our Alcohol and Drug Addiction Program and community wellness initiative working with mental health workers as well. We have put more money on the table to hire new physicians for our communities so that people can get help directly in their own communities, and that's an initiative that's underway and continues to proceed. Mr. Speaker, it is sad in a sense that anybody would consider suicide as an alternative or a way out of a situation they may find themselves in. But in the Northwest Territories, over the last number of years, through our working with communities and mental health side of the equation, in fact we've seen a reduction in suicides in the Northwest Territories. It's something we need to see a day where there are no suicides in the Northwest Territories. But the fact is and for example, Mr. Speaker, in partnership with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, on October 5th to the 8th, 2007, there will be a Canadian Association Suicide Prevention Conference here in Yellowknife and bringing in some keynote speakers not only from the South, but here in the Northwest Territories. So we support those initiatives.

But directly in response to the funds; for example, in 2007-08, the department has provided almost \$380,000 to help with aboriginal youth suicide prevention and working with the federal government strategy, and that's available on an RFP process from any community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 157-15(6): Suicide Awareness And Prevention Programs

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to ask the Minister, during the October suicide prevention workshop, it's fine and dandy that we get a lot of keynote speakers there to make some presentations on suicide prevention especially amongst aboriginal youth, Mr. Speaker, but I want a commitment from this government that this government will support and provide these smaller communities not only with just community wellness dollars that will help these people find assistance directly in their own communities because a lot of youth don't want to deal with people in their own communities. A lot of these youth want to talk anonymously with a psychiatrist or a counsellor maybe from another community or from another region or just on a phone line. I want to ask the Minister if the department is looking at any kind of broadening of the program scope related to suicide prevention here in the NWT that would allow this non-amenity to be available to any youth that are contemplating suicide in any of our small centres, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 157-15(6): Suicide Awareness And Prevention Programs

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have worked with communities, we've heard a message that a lot of communities need to take care of

issues in their communities, so we've put a lot of our resources into community efforts and staff in communities to help that first line response. There's also a process established where people can call in and make a call if they feel that they don't want to approach somebody in their community directly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 157-15(6): Suicide Awareness And Prevention Programs

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just with the Northwest Territories Suicide Prevention Program that is available to community members who are I guess in a position to take up this sort of training, I want to know if this government is going to be supporting more suicide prevention awareness workshops in the schools, in the youth centres and even providing more funding to these youth centres to provide suicide prevention/suicide awareness workshops within their own communities, and not just providing training on suicide prevention to the counsellors or community social workers. We need that kind of awareness and prevention awareness provided right at the grassroots, right at the youth in the schools, in the youth centres, at community functions. Will there be more funding in that area as opposed to just training, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 157-15(6): Suicide Awareness And Prevention Programs

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the area that we have direct focus on, aboriginal youth prevention or suicide prevention, is the National Aboriginal Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy, and that has a number of focussed areas and projects that are aimed at certain areas. That's one, supporting youth and that's increasing resiliency as well as reducing the risk, and then supporting communities at risk, and that's prevention plans, skills training, leadership development, as well as crises response and knowledge development. So there's areas we're focussing on through that initiative right directly to communities. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 157-15(6): Suicide Awareness And Prevention Programs

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know that if we...I just want to talk about basically government dollars in general related to social issues such as unemployment, poverty, education levels and the lack of opportunities and cultural identity here in the NWT. All those factors have something to do with the rates of suicide that we have here in the NWT. I think the government has to take a holistic approach when addressing suicide prevention in the smaller communities, because it certainly doesn't work with just providing suicide awareness programs at the community level. This has got to be a broad government approach to providing opportunities, enlightenment, maybe some self-esteem to individuals, and it has to be a whole government approach to this thing. I want to know if the Minister will be providing some direction at the October workshop here in Yellowknife on suicide prevention on how this government as a whole is going to do its part in preventing a growing rate of youth suicides. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 157-15(6): Suicide Awareness And Prevention Programs

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think the Government of the Northwest Territories overall can show across a whole number of departments we've become very involved, whether it's a youth initiative through Municipal and Community Affairs, through additional funding through Education, Culture and Employment, and some of our programs that we offer through the Department of Health and Social Services. There has been a lot of initiatives focussed on youth and trying to lift up their esteem so that they can be more involved in their community, as well as leadership programs, and we will continue down that course. Thank you.

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

Question 158-15(6): Stanton Territorial Hospital Human Resources Review

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services and it's in regards to the human resource management review that's been going on for the last number of months. Mr. Speaker, as indicated in this House last week, we've had a chance to have some briefing on the update of the report and some of the findings, but most of the issues pertaining to the review are still in the works, and it's not finalized, and it's a work in progress, and it's going to be worked on while most of the Members here are occupied otherwise for the month of September. So I'm just wondering if the Minister could give us an update, for the benefit of the public, what the timeline and the work to be done is as we move forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 158-15(6): Stanton Territorial Hospital Human Resources Review

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in our previous sitting, I committed to bring back the results of those reports to the Members as well as present the reports back to employees. The first stage of that, employees have received their package now and there will be a process working through the Stanton territorial health facility and the employees there of getting back some feedback on that. The second part of that was a more in-depth survey that was done by an outside source, and we're hoping to have that done by near the end of September. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 158-15(6): Stanton Territorial Hospital Human Resources Review

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Further to that, I understand there will be other processes involved in allowing the staff to have an input into the process in the findings as well as hopefully in the plan of action. Mr. Speaker, I believe very strongly that there will be some issues that need to be worked out, and the best way to do it is to have as much input as possible from the stakeholders, especially the staff. So I'd like to ask the Minister what is the plan for the Minister and the hospital to invite that input. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 158-15(6): Stanton Territorial Hospital Human Resources Review

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are a number of initiatives that would be undertaken. Number one is first the employees will have a chance to take in the survey and the results of that. There will be a number of formal discussions. One through unit staff meetings is an initial phase, up to a formal discussion, one through unit staff meetings is our initial phase up to a formal get-together of a large number of staff with both the Bureau of Statistics that did the initial survey and the other consultant that did the second survey to sit down and go over those results, and then, from there, report back through the management to the advisory council that is in place that oversees the operations of our territorial facility. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 158-15(6): Stanton Territorial Hospital Human Resources Review

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I indicated earlier, there is still a sense out there that, from some staff members or people involved, they would like to see more transparent and a more inclusive process with this. I think if we are going to be successful in addressing some of the issues that may come about, that it is imperative that we make sure that everybody feels involved, that they had a real say and not only a real say on identifying issues but also on how to implement the changes. Could the Minister give me an assurance today that all of the staff who participated in this and anybody interested will be a part of that process right from now until implementation of any changes that will come about or recommended actions? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 158-15(6): Stanton Territorial Hospital Human Resources Review

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this process has been very involved. Out of the total number of staff working at that facility, 345 staff took the time to go into the initial survey portion. That is a significant number. Approximately 84 percent of our staff did take part in that initial survey. I think, number one, that shows a very good process where they became involved. The second set of processes will be direct involvement through unit staff meetings building up to the overall meeting with both groups. Again, as I stated, the Bureau of Statistics as well as our consultant working up through the recommendations out there. We have had representation from the nurses' side, staff themselves in that facility, from the doctors' side, from the union's side. We will continue to have that involvement as we go through this process. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 158-15(6): Stanton Territorial Hospital Human Resources Review

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't disagree that there have been good responses and a number of people being involved. My specific point is that often, or sometimes, people that participate in this process are left out right at the end. People may tell the interviewer what they feel are problems at workplaces or what could be improved, whether it be communication or otherwise, but when the solutions come about, they don't

have as much say on what the solutions are and how they should be implemented. I am asking the Minister to give us an assurance that those 345 people and more will be involved right to the end. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 158-15(6): Stanton Territorial Hospital Human Resources Review

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, all of the employees will have an opportunity to respond to the survey that is out there. We will have an opportunity to look at and make suggestions as we move down this path and look forward to coming up with a happy conclusion to this process. But as we have seen in every other circle, whenever recommendations come out and changes are being made, whether they are good or seen as large or small, it is an impact to individuals. Of course, as I stated through this process, we are looking to improve services to residents of the Northwest Territories and employees who took part in the survey will have opportunity to make their comments known in the survey and make recommendations to the loops within the facility. Thank you.

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

Question 159-15(6): Jimmy Erasmus Seniors' Centre

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker...(Translation)...in my Member's statement, I would like to ask those questions regarding the senior home. I would like to ask the Minister the question. He did state that after five years, this facility may be replaced. I would like to ask him the question. (Translation ends)

In my Member's statement today, I spoke of the need for short-term repairs and alternate replacement of the Jimmy Erasmus Seniors' Centre in Behchoko. The Minister has stated that an initial plan was to do the necessary repairs to have the present facility last for the five years it would take to build a new facility. I am also aware, Mr. Speaker, that a final report on the facility was due in June. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister please inform this Assembly of the recommendation of this report and the scope of work that will be undertaken on the Jimmy Erasmus Seniors' Home in Behchoko? Mahsi.

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

Return To Question 159-15(6): Jimmy Erasmus Seniors' Centre

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The engineer's report was received on August 1st. The recommendation from the engineer is that it would cost roughly 70 percent of a replacement building to completely renovate that one. He also commented that the site is not a good place for that building because of the elevation of that site. Mr. Speaker, the conclusion that he leads us to is that we should do immediate repairs and then plan for a new facility. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 159-15(6): Jimmy Erasmus Seniors' Centre

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell us whether the plan is still to replace the facility in five years? Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 159-15(6): Jimmy Erasmus Seniors' Centre

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Pending approval through the business planning process, then the plan is to do the intermediate repairs and then get on with consultation on a new facility, getting an architectural engineer to work on the construction and completion by 2011. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 159-15(6): Jimmy Erasmus Seniors' Centre

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just leading on to the business planning process, can the Minister tell this Assembly whether the Housing Corporation will have funding for design and consultation for a new facility in the year 2008-2009 business plan? Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 159-15(6): Jimmy Erasmus Seniors' Centre

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It will certainly be the recommendation from the Housing Corporation to, number one, do those intermediate repairs that have to be done to keep the building serviceable for a five-year period, and second is to put forward, as part of the business plan, a request for the money to be able to get on with the planning of a new building. In fact, I expect the Housing Corporation will begin the consultation on the type of facility beginning as early as this year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 159-15(6): Jimmy Erasmus Seniors' Centre

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am just curious to know when this intermediate construction will take place in Behchoko. The elders are waiting anxiously. There are places of residence that have mould and whatnot. So when is that going to occur? Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 159-15(6): Jimmy Erasmus Seniors' Centre

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand that some of the work on the roof, first of all, is being done as we speak. I am not sure of the exact detail of where they are at with that. During the 2007-08 year, there will be a flooring repair or replacement. I understand that some of that work is currently underway, and then some work on crawlspace, some repairs to the sumps, some minor interior upgrades, and inspection upgrade of the heating and ventilation system as well as piping would all go on during the 2007-08 fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 160-15(6): Increase In Home Care Services

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to continue along my line of questioning I had earlier today about my constituents who are being pulled down into

poverty because our government doesn't seem to want to help them.

Mr. Speaker, it is obvious the Minister of Education wishes to protect the bureaucratic approach when there is a special circumstance here that is required. So I am going to hopefully look towards the Minister of Health to maybe see some sensitivity in addressing this serious issue. Mr. Speaker, extra home care will help this family get on their feet. Would the Minister of Health and Social Services help this family with more home care so that the other partner can get out and work so they don't lose their home and family, because it is cheaper to keep them in their home together than it is to put this family in a hospital or break them up? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 160-15(6): Increase In Home Care Services

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the department has some flexibility. In fact, what we have found in a number of cases where we work on case management with either Education, Culture and Employment or the Housing Corporation is to look at the case and work together on trying to find solutions. It is not our practice to deal case by case in this scenario. But as the Member is aware, all departments have been very involved in this and looking forward to try to find some solutions that fit. That doesn't mean, as was stated earlier, that we can go beyond what our programs are, but we have been working together to find a solution that would work. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 160-15(6): Increase In Home Care Services

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will make it simple for the Minister because that sort of preamble didn't work. Will he send a message to his department to increase the home care services provided to this family so we can allow them to go to work, save their home so they don't lose their shirt and we end up having to take care of them through the income support process and this other person who is disabled in the hospital, so it is going to cost us a lot more? Will he increase the home care support? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 160-15(6): Increase In Home Care Services

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member raises some important issues around that, but I think, at the same time, he should be, as we respond to some of his inquiries here, we have worked on different cases and we have allowed flexibility. That is over and above what we have as our standard program. We will do that on a case-by-case scenario. The Member is aware of that. We are doing what we can, but there has to be some acceptance of the limits that we face as a government. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 160-15(6): Increase In Home Care Services

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, I have to admit that was a mirthless answer but yet I was intrigued because there sounded like something there. But, Mr. Speaker, the fact is this Minister could say today, yes, we will look into this and, yes, we will make something happen. That is all that we are asking for, because this family is about to lose everything. It is going to cost us a heck of a lot more if we mop up the mess later. So let's do something today. Let's be proactive and let's not see this family destroyed. Yes. That is all the Minister has to say. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Further Return To Question 160-15(6): Increase In Home Care Services

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, quite easily I could stand up and say, yes, we will look into it. But as the Member is well aware, we have looked into this situation. The fact is, as a government, as I stated earlier, we are not in the situation of dealing in this public forum on a case-by-case scenario. There are avenues for that. We have sat down as departments to work on a case management situation. We are trying to be as caring as possible, but there has to be some acceptance. There are limitations to what we can do as the Government of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Time for question period has expired. I will allow the Member a final supplementary. Mr. Hawkins.

Supplementary To Question 160-15(6): Increase In Home Care Services

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister is correct; a number of people have talked about this situation, but nothing has been put forward to solve the problem. The problem is that this lady in the wheelchair cannot be left alone. Her doctor says she cannot be left alone. We can do all the fancy designs, schematics, and make some adjustments in their house, but it doesn't change the fact that she requires full-time care. So does the Minister want to state today that we are going to give her 10 hours and that is it and we will let the family fall apart, or is he going to say today, Mr. Speaker, it is better to have this family broken up and put her in the hospital? Because he is also the Minister of Finance and he should be able to tell me which is cheaper. We should be able to do a better job by helping with better home care. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 160-15(6): Increase In Home Care Services

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member continues to not have listened to what is being done and provided. I am sorry. I guess in this scenario, we are doing what we can. We are offering...and as I stated, we are going beyond some of our programs to try to be caring in this situation, but there are limitations. I am sorry; I can't help the Member's campaign strategy. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Time for oral questions has expired. Written questions. Returns to

written questions. Replies to opening address. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

ITEM 10: REPLIES TO OPENING ADDRESS

Mr. Braden's Reply

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, colleagues, and every Member of this Assembly. Indeed, anyone who ever chooses to run for public office knows how intensely personal that decision is. For me, the choice was a combination of almost 30 years of interest and involvement in all sorts of elections and public affairs at every level of our country's government. It was my various work experience as reporter, tourism manager, a small business owner, a senior corporate director, all of it here in the Northwest Territories and the Yukon, Mr. Speaker, that gave me the sense that, perhaps, I could make a contribution here in this Assembly.

It was a combination of watching a lot of northern MLAs, town councillors and federal MPs over those years and seeing how their decisions, ideas and values affected me, my family and my community. Mr. Speaker, I came to see that most of them shared at least one thing in common. That was a belief that if our communities, regions and our nation are to be safe and prosperous places, good people need to get together and make the decisions that will help make this happen. That is why we have elections. That is what government is for. For the most part, Mr. Speaker, I found that these people did not carry some great manifest mantle of political destiny. If they did, it was usually quickly dispelled, sometimes brutally on election day. Neither did they aspire to be champions who are single-handedly going to turn the world upside down. For the most part, they were ordinary people who earnestly offered their time, skills and strength in the service of their community.

When I ran for my first term, Mr. Speaker, in the fall of 1999, that was a unique event that I wanted to be part of. I know a number of people here who ran in that election also wanted to be part of it. It was the creation of the new NWT as Nunavut had just been created months before, Mr. Speaker. Many new horizons were opening for us here at the turn of the century. I wanted to be part of it. This is what I wanted to bring to the table when I decided, now some 10 years ago, to run for office in this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, that is the public side. The personal side for me was really not whether I could handle losing an election. I had enough experience of that in several of the campaigns that I had worked with previously.

---Laughter

I figured I could handle that, but, Mr. Speaker, how was I going to handle winning? More specifically, how was my family going to cope with the demands of having a son, a husband, a dad, a brother and an uncle out there in public display every day for the next four years? I know it was going to be okay when my wife, Valerie, said this to me. She said, "Bill, go ahead. I believe in you. If you don't do it now, you will regret it. And so will I, because you will never stop complaining."

Mr. Speaker, when a candidate offers up their name on a ballot and a voter puts their "X" beside that name, it really is, in effect, a contract. If enough voters sign that contract, you have the job as their MLA. The deal is quite simple. It is to represent all constituents to the best of your ability. I hope I have done that for the constituents of Great Slave. I am grateful to the voters of my constituency and the chance to serve them for the past

eight years and, through their support, to serve the people of the Northwest Territories.

I have tried to give my voice, Mr. Speaker, especially to those who don't have a voice: the disabled and their families seeking equitable treatment and a chance to succeed on their terms; to those marginalized by illnesses, addictions and many other situations that our policies and budgets do not yet deal fairly with and compassionately with; to those who are captured in the cycle of poverty and hopelessness, all too often fostered in some part or to some degree, Mr. Speaker, by our own government's lack of progressive thinking. Perhaps most significant for me, Mr. Speaker, is the plight of those injured workers who have fallen through the cracks in our WCB system and who, in the future, will have a WCB that is more responsive and accepting of their situation.

Mr. Speaker, I have also tried to shed light on the arts, festivals and events across the North that help to define us, give us our identity and make us who we are: northerners with many great talents and a multilingual, multicultural heritage that is as strong and vibrant as any in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, in our consensus system, it is expected that each MLA will become very well versed in every aspect of our government and be able to respond to any and all ideas and issues. I know that I have disappointed some of my constituents in these areas. But I also know that I have satisfied others. On balance, Mr. Speaker, I believe that I have satisfied my own desire to have been a part of this Assembly and to have helped make the decisions that will make the NWT a safe and prosperous place. Thank you, voters of Great Slave, for your trust and your confidence.

Mr. Speaker, it would be presumptuous of me to tell the next Legislative Assembly what it should or should not do. I have chosen to give that job to the next MLA for Great Slave and I wish him or her all the best. But I do have a message to leave, Mr. Speaker, for the voters and all the candidates in the election coming on October 1st. Mr. Speaker, a consensus government is under threat. It suffers from complacency within the Legislative assembly here and lack of openness and transparency to the voters and from a federal government that has no real tangible agenda for the social and political role the North should play in the Canadian federation.

Being an MLA in this system is hard work. It demands unity to make our system work, yet it has virtually no discipline or authority to compel Members to do so. MLAs it seems are simply expected to work with each other. I believe that our committees and our Cabinet in this 15th Assembly have failed on many occasions to work together. The decision to relocate the Territorial Treatment Centre from Yellowknife, the toothless socio-economic agreement on the pipeline and the so-called letter of comfort to the pipeline proponents are all examples, Mr. Speaker, of where Cabinet and committee could have done a better job of working together for the people of the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, I have been a strong proponent of a more open and public system of consensus government, especially at the committee level. In this area, I believe we are actually one of Canada's most secretive assemblies. That could be remedied, in part, by having more public committee sessions so the public can see and hear our discussions and deliberations. Consensus, ironically, Mr. Speaker, actually allows too much

information to be cloaked behind closed doors. Our successor assemblies, I believe, can fix that. One of the things that is in the works here that I am very excited about is a new co-operative and television channel and broadcast network with our colleagues in Nunavut that can open up tremendous avenues for communication and information sharing and inclusion with the public of what we do in this Assembly. Please do not take for granted that consensus can continue. It's going to take constant care, hard work and forthright honest and open communication.

Mr. Speaker, the federal government, of course, holds the purse strings in the NWT but it also holds the increasingly complex controls of land claims, self-government and regulatory processes here in the NWT. Its lack of coordination and disjointed strategies have created enormous divisions across our political, social and economic agendas here in the NWT as Canada, the aboriginal claimant groups and the GNWT spar at each other at the expense of the whole.

I believe these rifts are at the heart of why we cannot achieve a collective devolution and resource revenue sharing agreement, Mr. Speaker. Canada has to declare whether it's ready to let the NWT truly come into its own. We must not stop in pursuit of that goal, Mr. Speaker, because when it happens we will be more than just an energy and resource bank for all of Canada. We will truly be a land of hope and prosperity that we all want and deserve for our children.

Mr. Speaker, I have many people to thank for the opportunity and the support I have received as the MLA for Great Slave. Let me start here with the people who are under your direction. Mr. Speaker, the staff of the Legislative Assembly and my first term led by the legendary David Hamilton, the Clerk from my first term; and a legend in his own time now, I believe, Mr. Tim Mercer, our present Clerk.

---Applause

Their teams of support staff including administrative, legislative and legal help have been outstanding. I would like to say a special thank you, Mr. Speaker, to the research staff; Robert Collinson, Regina Pfeifer, Susan Martin, and led by Colette Langlois for their tremendous backing.

---Applause

Loretta Sabirsh and Vera Raschke have provided constant support and attention to me and I know for many, many other Members, in library services. I also want to recognize very specially Verna Currimbhoy, Members' secretary, who toils selflessly on our behalf upstairs in our offices. Thank you very much.

---Applause

Mr. Speaker, no one gets elected by themselves. I have had the great good fortune to have a very experienced and a very conscientious campaign manager in Ms. Hilary Jones for both of my election campaigns and I had a schoolmate, Abe Theil, as my official agent, in both election campaigns. I want to thank them both very, very sincerely for their time, commitment and the belief they put in me.

Mr. Speaker, no one can do this job by themselves. Our constituency assistants, CAs as we call them, are people who do much of the legwork when constituents call. I have been especially fortunate to have one man, John Argue,

as my CA for all eight years here. I think that's a record that few of us can say.

---Applause

His intimate knowledge of the NWT, of government and of this city is unique. Above all, Mr. Speaker, his loyalty and wise counsel make me very grateful to have had him by my side working for me and the constituents of Great Slave.

I said earlier that this job is a very personal commitment and that could never have happened without my family at my side. Mr. Speaker, my older brother, George, former MLA in this Assembly and the first elected leader to the Executive Council in 1979, is a special inspiration and an ongoing support to me; my mother, Esther, my daughters Rae and Carmen who have joined us in the Assembly, Mr. Speaker; my sister, Sandy, and brothers Pat and Max and their families. You never let me down.

My wife and I will be married 30 years in October, Mr. Speaker. Now it is time to return to do some of the other things we want to do.

---Applause

Val and I will be relocating temporarily to Vancouver where I plan to go to school for a year and where she will have a chance to spend some real time with her family who reside in that part of Canada. We will return to the North.

The NWT is a great land with many great people, Mr. Speaker. I am proud to be part of it. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Replies to opening address. Petitions. Reports of standing and special committees. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

ITEM 12: REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Committee Report 4-15(6): Report On Community Consultations On Proposed Safer Communities And Neighbourhoods Legislation

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Standing Committee on Social Programs undertook extensive consultations on Bill 7, the Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act, also known as SCAN, in all regions of the Northwest Territories, and heard from 42 different persons and organizations.

Despite the initial excitement at the community level on the department's first round of consultations in November and December 2006, it became obvious to committee members as we proceeded that residents had serious reservations with the final version of the legislation.

The concerns raised by residents of the Northwest Territories centred on the social implications of enacting the SCAN; the rights of an individual to face their accuser and appeal orders made under the act, and the extent of the powers that would be given to officers appointed under the act.

Hearings were held in Yellowknife on April 19th and 20th and on August 14, 2007; in Inuvik and Tuktoyaktuk on April 23, 2007; in Ulukhaktok on April 24, 2007; in Colville Lake on April 25, 2007; in Behchoko on April 26, 2007, and, finally, in Fort Smith on May 30, 2007.

Residents of the Northwest Territories raised the following concerns with the proposed Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act.

Canada's Charter And The SCAN Legislation

Even though the committee received advice that Bill 7, as it is written, is in accordance with Canada's Charter, we should be mindful that Canada's Charter is an ever-evolving document that is constantly being reinterpreted by legislators and the judicial system.

With a program like the SCAN office, it would not be unreasonable to assume that it, too, would evolve, and that the actual practices in enforcing the act or the regulations could be in contradiction of the Charter at some point in the future.

With this in mind, the committee believes it would be beneficial to quote the concerns raised by the NWT Human Rights Commission in their written submission:

"Section 2(d) of the Charter protects freedom of association. Bill 7 could be seen as punishing individuals for freedom of association. For example, persons living in a unit under investigation may be adversely affected even though they are not engaged in criminal or other activities. Yet, their privacy can be invaded and residence taken away. The appeal mechanisms are onerous and do not provide for meaningful protection for an innocent occupant.

"Section 6(2) of the Charter protects the right of every citizen of Canada and every person who has the status of a permanent resident of Canada to move and take up residence in any province. The Minister of Justice has made it clear that "if the people who are causing the problem move to another house, we will gather evidence and evict them again. We will follow them wherever they go until they stop their illegal activities or leave the NWT" (Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Legislation: A consultation paper about a proposed new way to make their community safer, page 1). Bill 7 sets up a process where privacy can be invaded, due process denied, and persons can be harassed until they are forced to leave the NWT.

"Section 7 of the Charter protects the right to life, liberty and security of the person and the right not to be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice. Yet, there are violations of the principles of fundamental justice in Bill 7. For example:

- Bill 7 can require self-incrimination. Failure to do so could result in being charged with a criminal offence and imprisoned for up to a year (Section 30 and 66);
- Bill 7 can allow the Director of Safer Communities (the "Director") to designate a fortified building as a threat to public safety in the absence of a hearing (Section 41). The Director can then impose a closure/eviction order without notice to the owner or occupant;
- Bill 7 requires a low standard of proof given the severity of losing one's home or facing imprisonment;
- Bill 7 denies the rights of the accused person to face their accuser or to have all information necessary to mount a defence. Indeed, Bill 7

does not even guarantee that occupants can argue in their own defence.

"Section 8 of the Charter guarantees the right to be secure against unreasonable search or seizure. The search and seizure provisions in Bill 7 are broad. For example, neighbours could gather video surveillance in support of their own application for a Community Safety Order ("CSO"). Government agencies and individuals could be forced to provide confidential information or face fines or imprisonment if they refuse. There is no requirement for a warrant for this information. Also, Bill 7 allows for an intrusive investigative process in which the Director can place dwelling houses and other places under video surveillance.

"Section 1 of the Charter states that a government can infringe upon Charter rights if the infringement is a reasonable limit "prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society." Bill 7 exceeds this reasonable limit."

Confidentiality ("Anonymous" Clause)

Many of the presenters, particularly in smaller communities, were concerned about the "confidentiality clause" because, while it does make it easier for people to report on what they see to SCAN investigators, there is no safeguard in place to protect innocent people from vexatious and frivolous accusations. Civil remedies and separate legal recourses are not seen to be practical. Such remedies should be available within this legislation.

In all communities, people told us that persons looking to settle old scores or vendettas could abuse the powers under SCAN. In particular, there are many persons in positions of authority and responsibility who need to deliver "bad news" to their fellow community members as a regular part of their work, e.g. housing association members and income support workers.

Many felt that they could be subject to false accusations from community members. Even if those accusations were eventually shown to be unsubstantiated, often an accusation or even rumours of an accusation alone can do a great deal of harm to one's reputation and career in a small community. The lack of properly legislated recourse that ensures those being accused are given proper notice and have an opportunity to answer to the allegations does not sit well with the vast majority of the people who came and spoke to us.

Ms. Dorothy Loreen of Tuktoyaktuk supports Bill 7, but was very worried how she would be able to defend herself, pay for a lawyer and still look after her family, if someone has reported her under SCAN, even though she doesn't drink, do drugs or gamble.

The right to face one's accuser, know the case against one, and defend oneself against any charges is a basic right, and fundamental to democratic principles. People have told the committee the government must respect these rights and reflect them in the legislation at the same time as addressing the core issues targeted by the bill.

Mr. Speaker, now I would like to ask Deputy Chairman Yakeleya to continue with the report. Thank you.

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

Legal Process

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Many people who came before the committee had concerns with the legal process under the SCAN legislation. One concern

raised by a number of presenters was the fact that the legislation does not have any provisions for the service of respondents prior to the SCAN officer attending court and obtaining a community safety order. It is possible that the first time a respondent would learn of a SCAN investigation is when they are served with a community safety order. The committee understands the Minister may propose such an amendment to address this concern, and Members may have the chance to review and debate this amendment.

Another concern with the legal process is that, although the act provides for the respondent to apply for a variation of a community safety order, section 10 restricts this application to the portion of the community safety order requiring the property to be closed. The committee feels that in order for a variation clause to be effective, it should permit a respondent to apply to vary all aspects of the order, including orders under section 8(3)(a) ordering individuals to vacate the property.

The committee also heard a number of concerns with respect to the appeal process. Under SCAN, an appeal of a community safety order may be made to the Court of Appeal on a question of law with leave of the court.

Alana Mero of Inuvik stated her concerns with the appeal process in the following manner: "So I can't prove I didn't do it; I have to prove you made a legal mistake. It's impossible for me to prove I didn't do something. So I can't tell you that, no, I didn't deal drugs because I don't know even who made the complaint. I don't even know what you have against me. I don't know if it is my sister-in-law who's mad at me for breaking up with her brother or whatever things may be happening. All of a sudden, I am in a courtroom hoping your lawyer didn't put an "i" in the right spot and made a mistake so that I don't lose my home."

A further concern with the appeal process is that an application for leave must be filed within 14 days after the day the order of the court is pronounced or within such further time as a judge of the Court of Appeal may allow. In most communities, it would not be possible to find a lawyer to file such a notice within this time. The same concerns were raised with respect to the variation process. By the time a respondent retained counsel and had the matter heard before the court, the order could be expired.

The Minister has noted in correspondence to the committee that experiences in other jurisdictions point to limited usage of the court processes in obtaining community safety orders. The concern of the committee is that legislation be properly crafted so that irrespective of the frequency of use, all northerners are treated fairly under law.

Our people have to live under laws that we, as legislators, enact. It is our duty to ensure that the laws we make are as good as they can be at the time of passage in this Assembly. If there are known defects, they must be fixed before a bill becomes law. This is not happening with the Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act.

Mr. Speaker, at this time, I would like to ask Mr. McLeod to continue.

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

Powers Of The SCAN Investigators

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The powers of the investigators were seen as excessive by many of the

presenters. One Member cited the provisions empowering SCAN investigators to obtain government records without a warrant and to share their information with the RCMP. The question then becomes whether the investigators could become nothing more than a tool for the RCMP to circumvent the existing justice system.

Another area of concern for some presenters and Members is the capacity of our government to manage and administer what is essentially its own armed and uniformed investigative force.

A case could be made for arming investigators in southern Canada, given the propensity for some gangs to use violence, however, it is not clear there is a demonstrable need for armed officers in the NWT. Some Members believe that if there is potential for violence, the RCMP should be called in.

Communities and Members also had concerns with the powers available to the SCAN office and their ability to determine the level of "punishment" each person determined to be in contravention of the SCAN legislation would receive.

Mrs. Eileen Beaver of Fort Smith offered the following observation on SCAN. "It reminds me of the Indian Act. A long time ago, if your dad signed out of treaty to drink, so was your wife and all of your kids, and this is the same type of act you are bringing forth."

A written submission from the NWT Human Rights Commission also expressed concerns with the broad powers that the director will have, without any corresponding accountabilities. This was mentioned as one of the many reasons that the NWT Human Rights Commission recommended that the Assembly not pass the Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act.

Members are not willing to support the discretionary powers available to SCAN officers without an extensive rewrite curtailing these powers or some other mechanism that clearly establishes a progressive disciplinary regime for SCAN offenders.

Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to pass it over to my colleague from Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

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

Social Implications Of SCAN Legislation

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Most of the presenters expressed a view that while they would like to see the government introduce better means to address illegal and illicit activities in their communities, evicting people from their homes may, in fact, cause more social problems in communities. There is also a question about how effectively SCAN legislation would address the issue it is designed to address.

In Yellowknife, Ben McDonald stated that "It seems like the act is designed as good politics but I don't think it's necessarily designed as good social policy or as good social development policy..."

We heard repeatedly questions like: What happens to a person when they are evicted in a community without market housing? Who do they stay with? What are the consequences for families that rely on the person evicted under SCAN as the primary breadwinner? To where do these families move?

Even in the larger communities, questions were raised about whether the SCAN legislation is the most cost

effective or efficient tool to address the issues we are all concerned about.

Lydia Bardak of Yellowknife, representing the John Howard Society, pointed out "Every bootlegger and every drug dealer that you remove will be replaced by someone else. So if this is an attempt to try and reduce substance abuse, it is not going to cut it. Restrictions don't work; prohibition doesn't work. The reasons persons turn to illegal substances or substance abuse are very strong and very compelling. Not addressing those reasons is irresponsible."

A common perspective is that there are severe housing shortage issues in all communities in the Northwest Territories, and Bill 7 would only compound this problem in the absence of a plan by government to address it in implementing the SCAN legislation.

Chief Leon Lafferty of Behchoko pointed out that if you want to clean up the communities, make sure that you do not hurt the people by making the social problems worse.

It should be made clear that the people do not object to holding the perpetrators under the SCAN legislation accountable. What they are saying is that in small communities, once these people are evicted under SCAN, not all of them are going to move out of town, which means that most of them will become homeless and ineligible for public housing. They will then rely on their families and friends to provide housing, and this would exacerbate overcrowding in situations where there are already housing shortages.

This was made abundantly clear in comments made by Veryl Gruben of Tuktoyaktuk in speaking of the impacts on a small community, who stated "If someone gets evicted immediately for something, some illegal activity, whether it be alcohol, drugs or gambling, they're only going to go to someone else's house and create more problems."

Saeed Shesheghar, a social worker in Tuktoyaktuk, said, "I have a concern about what would happen to people thrown out of their homes." He went on to say, "A lot of these people are going to end up at social services and trying to ask for help because they are homeless."

As well, there are questions about whether more than a million dollars that would be allocated for this program could not be better used by employing more police drug dogs or more RCMP officers in communities. Addressing the lack of treatment programs and services for those affected by substance abuse is another issue that people feel should be weighed against the priority of investing in SCAN.

Saeed Shesheghar of Tuktoyaktuk was quite eloquent in stating, "People are suffering here in this community. Bootlegging and other gambling problems are actually bleeding the whole community. If we haven't answered that question yet, trying to come up with an act like this is a band-aid solution."

The committee appreciates that justice, health and social services and housing issues are separate and fall under different departmental mandates.

However, our people do not understand why one part of the government would, in pursuing its mandate, create a whole set of new problems for other parts of the government that are working together to address the existing issues.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to turn the continuation of the report over to the Member for Monfwi. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

Impact Of SCAN On Elders And Potential For Abuse

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Many of the presenters were either concerned about or have themselves been subjected to elder abuse. In small communities, they could not see how the SCAN legislation would help an elder being taken advantage of by a relative or being kept awake and harassed by neighbours partying and drinking all night, without there being repercussions for the elder who reported the activity.

Many elders who came to speak to us are looking for solutions from the government to address the behaviour of those who are abusing substances and abusing them. However, they expect those resources to be based in their communities where immediate actions can be taken as events happen. Elders do not expect that they should need to call a 1-800 telephone number in Yellowknife, and have to wait for a SCAN investigator to travel to their community, conduct an investigation and make application to the Supreme Court in Yellowknife before they receive any assistance. They do not see how SCAN investigators can possibly address their concerns and have doubts about how effective a program like SCAN could be in responding to their important concerns.

Centrally-Based Delivery Model

Many northern residents, like Mayor Peter Martselos of Fort Smith, expressed concerns with the fact that all of the investigators will be based in a central office located in Yellowknife. Others have taken the time to contact members of the standing committee to voice their frustration with another service that is supposed to help the residents of smaller communities being based in an urban centre.

There is a concern that people will be reluctant to contact an office in Yellowknife because it is seen to be remote and to be slow in responding at the community level and, as a result, the service will end up being focused on Yellowknife and the larger communities with daily jet service.

Frustration With Courts And The RCMP

Some presenters saw the SCAN legislation as an attempt by government to be seen to be doing something without actually producing results.

The existing justice system was seen to be time-consuming and increasingly lenient in dealing with offenders. SCAN legislation could be seen as a way of warning offenders rather than prosecuting them under criminal law.

Members believe that while SCAN legislation may be able to speed up the justice process, it will do nothing to help alleviate the systemic problems in the justice system or to deal with the root causes of the behaviour that make legislation like SCAN desirable for some individuals.

The Committee heard a great deal of frustration in communities with the inability of the courts and RCMP to deal with crime at the local level.

How can the Government expect four officers to do what 150 RCMP officers have not been able to do? A community with a dozen RCMP officers still has to

dispatch calls from its residents through Yellowknife. Can Members of the 16th Assembly expect to see requests for further personnel if SCAN does not meet initial expectations of success?

Mr. Speaker, I would now like to turn it over to Mr. Pokiak.

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

Cost Effectiveness Of Proposed Legislation

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There were also the previously mentioned concerns with having all investigators located in Yellowknife. People who came to talk to us would like to see personnel in their communities. At minimum, a regional presence is required. This is not what is being proposed. From what we have been able to learn as to how this bill would be implemented, the committee is unable to see how it could work without substantially more resources and effectively setting up a second tier of policing services in the NWT. If the end result of this legislation is the setting up of almost a parallel policing service, there is a need for a public policy discussion on the merit of such a policing structure in the Northwest Territories. This would, in turn, require an in-depth cost-benefit analysis of whether this is how and where we need to invest as opposed to enhancing our existing policing and justice services.

In a presentation to the standing committee in the community of Fort Smith, Ms. Mary Pat Short, who is the chair of the NWT Human Rights Commission but was speaking as a private citizen, offered the following observation: "Manitoba has a population of one million people. They introduced SCAN in 2002. Initially, they had two investigators and four employees. Now they have expanded to seven. They have investigated 13,068 complaints, and this has resulted in 198 evictions over four years. Now, if we put these figures in terms of the Northwest Territories, the Northwest Territories has one twenty-fifth of Manitoba's population, which would be eight evictions over four years, if it was the same pattern. So we spend \$1.0 million a year for two evictions. Obviously, I don't know if that is actually what would happen here, but that would certainly not be a good use of public money."

In talking about the role of community in dealing with social problems, Yetta Finsborg of Fort Smith stated that, "So I can only agree that this legislation seems more or less a waste of money, a waste of time for everyone involved. It does take a community to raise a child. It also takes a community to deal with drugs. So that is where I think we need to look. We need to get together and decide for our community what we want to do about people who deal drugs and bootleg and whatever else."

Minister's Public Comments On SCAN Legislation

The committee has received advice that the SCAN legislation itself may not directly violate the Charter the way it is written. The committee does recognize that the evolving nature of the law believes that all steps should be taken by government to ensure respect for individual rights. One area of concern is public comments that the Minister of Justice has made with respect to the purpose of the legislation. The concern of the committee is that SCAN must not be an attempt to infringe on federal jurisdiction with respect to criminal law or be a vehicle to chase citizens from the Northwest Territories.

The NWT Human Rights Commission also pointed out in its written submission that the comments made by the Minister in the consultation document are problematic in

relation to section 6(2) of the Charter as it relates to mobility rights in Canada.

It has been suggested that if the government wants to ensure the viability of the SCAN office, it would be helpful for the Minister to clarify the comments that the committee has brought to his attention.

Mr. Speaker, at this time, I would like to turn it over to the MLA for Range Lake. Thank you.

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

Need For SCAN Legislation

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The committee agrees that there is a need for legislation and policy to deal with substance abuse, trafficking and bootlegging of illegal substances and other undesirable and illegal activities the SCAN legislation attempts to address.

However, the committee believes that Bill 7, in its current form, has too many deficiencies to be successfully amended and passed during the short time available to the Members of the 15th Assembly prior to dissolution.

Other northerners also thought that the process was too rushed, like Ms. Debbie Raddi of Tuktoyaktuk who said, "I myself feel it is too rushed. In order for something to work properly, it has to be properly looked into."

Ms. Raddi's comments are particularly relevant given the weight and depth of the concerns raised and the need to have the concerns addressed in a coordinated multi-departmental approach. The committee also believes that further work is required in program design to address the realities of life in the NWT, particularly in the smaller communities, and that further thought has to be given to the diversity and transportation challenges our vast territory presents for running a successful government program of this nature.

As Members, we cannot dismiss any of the concerns that are brought to our attention through the committee process without full deliberation and consideration. Nor should we, as legislators, characterize these concerns as representative of a vocal minority in order to justify the approval and passage of legislation like this. The committee believes that the questions and issues that were brought forward by the public warrant thoughtful and meaningful response.

We are disappointed that this government has chosen to ignore the committee process and the views of the many northerners who took the time to appear before committee and has decided to proceed without the concurrence of the standing committee simply because they have the numbers.

It is a sad day for consensus government in the Northwest Territories.

Motion To Receive Committee Report 4-15(6) And Move Into Committee Of The Whole, Carried

That concludes the Standing Committee on Social Programs report on community consultations on the proposed Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act. Therefore, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Sahtu, that Committee Report 4-15(6) be received and move into Committee of the Whole for consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

---Carried

Committee Report 4-15(6) will be received and moved into Committee of the Whole for consideration. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 93(4) and have Committee Report 4-15(6) moved into Committee of the Whole for tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The Member is seeking unanimous consent to have Committee Report 4-15(6) moved into Committee of the Whole for tomorrow. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Committee Report 4-15(6) will be moved into Committee of the Whole for consideration tomorrow.

Reports of standing and special committees. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Tabling of documents. The Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. McLeod.

ITEM 14: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 49-15(6): School Of Community Government Annual Report 2006-2007

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document entitled School of Community Government Annual Report 2006-2007. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Tabled Document 50-15(6): Proposed Amendments To The Maintenance Orders Enforcement Act, August 2007

Tabled Document 51-15(6): Proposed Amendments To The Residential Tenancies Act, August 2007

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two documents for tabling. They are proposed amendments to the Maintenance Orders Enforcement Act, August 2007 and proposed amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act, August 2007. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Tabled Document 52-15(6): Cassidy Point Land Lease Application

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a number of documents to table today. Application for federal Crown land dated July 6, 1970; a letter to Mr. Bill Malloch, February 12, 2000; a letter to the lands department of MACA, May 15, 2003; a letter to Randy Look from the Department of MACA dated June 10, 2003; a letter from the Member for Great Slave to Vince Steen dated July 17, 2003; a letter to Mr. Andy Tereposkey dated October 23, 2006; an application for Commissioner's land made out July 11, 2007; a letter to Andy Tereposkey dated July 11, 2007; a letter to the Morin family from MACA dated February 5, 2001 -- almost done, Mr. Speaker -- a letter to...

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. You can table those as a package.

MR. HAWKINS: Very good.

Tabled Document 53-15(6): Annual Report Of The Equal Pay Commissioner For The Northwest

Territories For The Period July 1, 2006 To June 28, 2007

MR. SPEAKER: Tabling of documents. Pursuant to section 23(2) of the Public Service Act, I wish to table the Annual Report of the Equal Pay Commissioner for the Northwest Territories for the period July 1, 2006 to June 28, 2007.

Tabled Document 54-15(6): Annual Report For The Calendar Year 2006 Of The Conflict Of Interest Commissioner Of The Northwest Territories

Pursuant to section 99 of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, I hereby table the annual report for the calendar year 2006 of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner of the Northwest Territories.

Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

ITEM 15: NOTICES OF MOTION

Motion 10-15(6): Socio-economic Impacts And Benefits Of The Deh Cho Bridge

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Wednesday, August 22, 2007, I will move the following motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Sahtu, that this Legislative Assembly strongly recommends the GNWT undertake and disclose updated economic modeling showing the Deh Cho Bridge project's anticipated socio-economic impact and benefits, as it did in 2003; and further that this Legislative Assembly strongly recommends the GNWT defer signing any further agreements concerning the Deh Cho Bridge until after the 16th Assembly is in office. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Notices of motion. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Motion 11-15(6): Extension Of Appointment Of Mr. Denny Rodgers As Chair Of The Workers' Compensation Board Governance Council

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Wednesday, August 22, 2007, I will move the following motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River South, that this Legislative Assembly strongly recommends the Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board extend Mr. Denny Rodgers' appointment as chair of the Governance Council to April 12, 2008. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Notices of motion. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. Motions. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 18 and Bill 15. By the authority given to me by Motion 9-15(6), I hereby resolve the House into Committee of the Whole to sit beyond the hour of adjournment until such time as the committee is ready to report progress, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Good afternoon, Members. I will call Committee of the Whole to order. We have several matters before us today. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the committee wishes to consider Bill 18, Supplementary

Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2007-2008, and Bill 15, Liquor Act. Mahsi, Madam Chair.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. We'll proceed with that after a brief break.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I will call Committee of the Whole back to order. The first item on our agenda this afternoon is Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2007-2008. At this time, I will ask the Minister of Finance if he will please give his opening comments.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Chairman, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2007-2008 requests authority for additional appropriations of \$6.004 million for operations expenditures and \$3.615 million for capital investment expenditures in the 2007-2008 fiscal year.

Major items included in this request for operations expenditures include:

- \$2.45 million for the creation and implementation of a Tourism Product Diversification and Marketing Program;
- \$1.98 million to fund the projected shortfall of the forest fire suppression budget for the 2007 fire season. This amount is net of recoveries through the Mutual Aid Resource Sharing Agreement for fire suppression activities within other jurisdictions;
- \$940,000 to provide appropriation authority to draw down funding provided by the federal government through the patient wait times guarantee trust fund;
- \$856,000 to fund the cost of immediate repair of a section of the Hay River runway; and
- \$533,000 to provide contribution funding to three groups under the Western Harvesters' Assistance Program.

Major items included in the request for capital investment expenditures include:

- \$1.6 million to fund the purchase of five modular classrooms for the Ecole St. Joseph School renovation project; and
- \$570,000 to cover a funding shortfall in the water and sewer upgrade project for the Ecole Allain St. Cyr and William MacDonald School.

Also included in the request are two reallocations from operations expenditures to capital investment expenditures, as follows:

- \$523,000 to fund a shortfall in the costs associated with the upgrade to PeopleSoft 8.9; and
- \$417,000 to begin preliminary work in 2007-2008 for a territorial dementia facility to be constructed in Yellowknife.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. There is no committee response to this bill. At this time, I would like to ask the Minister if he would like to bring witnesses into the Chamber. Minister Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Yes, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Roland. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. At this time, I will ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to escort the witnesses to the table.

Minister Roland, would you please introduce your witnesses for the record?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, to my right is secretary to the FMB, Mr. Cleveland; and to my right is Mr. Sandy Kalgutkar, director of budget evaluation of FMBS. Thank you.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Dealing with Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, there are a few things that I wanted to get on record as saying. I guess I'll start with the \$523,000 to fund the shortfall and costs associated with the upgrade of PeopleSoft 8.9. As the Minister and other Ministers have heard earlier in this session, in fact if you go back to 1997 when PeopleSoft was first looked at as a product for the Government of the Northwest Territories, the government has spent approximately \$8 million on PeopleSoft in total and that's implementation costs and the costs upfront. It's a substantial amount of money, Madam Chair. Given the problems that we've had with PeopleSoft and the implementation in the last little while, I am just wondering what assurances the Minister can have that an additional half a million dollars is going to correct the issues that are at play with PeopleSoft, and when can the employees expect that this system will be up and running without any kinks in it and be able to be fully utilized, Madam Chair.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. The PeopleSoft program does have a long history with the Government of the Northwest Territories as we had to renew our past system of payroll and dealing with employees. PeopleSoft originally came into the government, as the Member stated, back in '97 or '98 and the government-of-the-day was looking to replace an older system. What we found in the day was the fact that as the program was brought in, the government did not take the program in the form it was delivered. In fact, I guess the proper terminology is it would be customized to fit the existing government processes. At that point, it was felt that was the best way to go. Since then, with every upgrade that's come online we have found it more and more difficult. In fact, trying to save some dollars, we did not do an upgrade every year. We upgraded every couple of years and recently we found the old version was not going to be supported, so 8.9 was the program that we had to upgrade to. By doing that, we found ourselves in a fair bit of difficulty trying to rectify original customizations done to the program to fit the PeopleSoft program as it was designed, hence the problems we have found with it. We hope now that as we are in the process of going through the pure form of PeopleSoft 8.9, we will get away from the problems that occurred.

As for giving an actual time or deadline as to when things will be 100 percent okay, as we all know, to err is human; to really screw up, you need a computer. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland, for that profound enlightenment. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I haven't been given a real comforting answer by the Minister. If he spends half a million in additional money in implementing PeopleSoft 8.9, what assurances do we have that we are not wasting another half a million dollars and next year we aren't going to waste some more? We've come to a certain point with PeopleSoft. We've spent \$8 million and it's still not working. I think at some point in time somebody is going to have to answer some questions. Why isn't it working? Who customized it? Why did it happen and why are we still paying the price? Somebody has to take responsibility for it and somebody has to provide this House with some answers. There has been \$8 million spent over the past 10 years and we are spending another half a million. To what end, is what I am getting at, Madam Chair, to what end are we spending this half a million and should we be looking at an entirely new system? Let's start from scratch. Why should we be paying good money after bad and are we doing that? Are we paying good money after bad with PeopleSoft, Madam Chair?

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, more on the serious side of our transition, we can't turn the clock back to 1997 or 1998 when the decision was made at the time to customize the program to fit our processes as the Government of the Northwest Territories. Hindsight being 20/20, if we could do that again, we would stay with the pure form of the program and we would adopt our processes to fit it which would provide for a much cleaner process. Will that stop absolutely everything from occurring? As those of us who have home computers realize, that's not necessarily going to be the case. On an annual basis, there will have to be upgrades and new licences bought as we put in new systems and new computers in offices across the Territories, so that will be an additional cost there. But for the problem itself in the customization of the original program, I can't go back and try to justify why the decision was made back then and going to a customized version or creating that customization. We, as we found out now, are not in a position to continue with that customization. In fact, that program through the customization wasn't being fully utilized. That is the goal now, is to go to the pure form of 8.9 and use the programs as they were designed. We, as a government, will have to change our processes. For the majority of things, if you look at it, are cleaned up. There are a couple of modules that were causing problems as of recently and causing much grief for employees across the Northwest Territories. Once that is fixed, we should be able to proceed forward with minimal interruptions. But as for a guarantee of one going forward, I don't know if anybody can give that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am just following up to that. If I was a business owner and I had spent a substantial amount of money like \$8 million in one program area, and that is PeopleSoft, over the past 10 years and I was getting the service or the delivery of the program wasn't what I thought it would be and maybe some things had happened in the past -- maybe my employees tinkered with it too much or did something to it

-- I would want to get a third party, somebody to come in and tell me what has been happening with my investment of \$8 million. I am wondering if the Minister has ever gone out and got a thorough analysis of what exactly has gone wrong with PeopleSoft. If he hasn't, I would suggest that he does that. Has the Minister and the government ever involved the Audit Bureau in taking a look at getting into the fine details of what exactly happened? I think the Audit Bureau would be a good place to start. If you spent \$8 million and you don't get the product that it was intended for, well, then you have a problem. I think somebody, like I said, Madam Chair, should be responsible. Somebody should have to answer questions. If I was a business owner, again, and if I spent \$8 million and somebody went in and tinkered with my program and caused me to spend more millions of dollars, I would want to know what happened, who it was and when it happened. Do you know what? There would be repercussions because of what happened. In this instance, we don't seem to be there. We just continue to spend money and we don't go back. I really do think we need to go back and find out what happened so the mistakes of the past aren't repeated and there is proper protocol when somebody is going in there and chopping up a program that we spent millions of dollars on, Madam Chair.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, FMBS has gone out to do a review of the situation. Again, just for the record, I have to state that the PeopleSoft system itself, which is used by a majority of other jurisdictions in very similar circumstances through government and companies, the system itself isn't the problem. It is the fact that a decision was made when we first, as the GNWT, took on this new program and decided to customize it to fit our processes, not use the program as it was initially designed. The fact that the government-of-the-day used it in limited versions and customized it was okay when they did minimal upgrades every couple of years. But when the program itself became unsupportable unless going up to the newer version and then having to un-customize or to go the pure form of the program has caused many of the problems that we are facing today. So, ultimately, we do know what is happening. It is the fact that a decision was made in the past to customize a program and we are unable to continue with that customized program. Thank you, Madam Chair.

As we proceed forward, we will be using the program as it was designed. That is the PeopleSoft 8.9 without any customizations to it. We are going to change our process as a government to fit the program and be more functional. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Next on the list I have Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I would like to speak on a specific item on the Minister's opening statement. It speaks to a specific project, but I am going to make it into a general comment because it is included in his statement, Madam Chair. That has to do with an item in the budget for the dementia centre. Madam Chair, I just want to thank the Minister very much. I don't mind being effusive and being totally shamelessly thanking the Minister for moving this project forward. Madam Chair, I just want to say that.

All the Yellowknife Members here know, especially the ones such as Mr. Braden who has been here at the same time as me, this has been on the books for a long time. Even as of last summer, I couldn't really respond to a senior who said I don't think I am ever going to see this project get off the ground. I know that all of the Yellowknife MLAs have been working really hard to make this project happen. But I could tell you from sitting where I was as a chair of the Standing Committee on Social Programs, it really wasn't until the Minister got on board that he really looked at the project. After one or two briefings, he really came to a position on what he wanted to do with it. He set boundaries and directions. He put staff into it to have them look at it. He has made a lot of incremental decisions to make it happen. I just want to acknowledge that. I know lots of other Ministers here do a lot of good work. I think when the good work gets done, it should be acknowledged.

This facility is not just for Yellowknife. It is something that is going to be more and more needed as we go forward. You know that the dementia and other conditions related to that is something that is becoming more and more common. This is going to be a territorial facility that will serve all of the seniors in the Territories, but unfortunately as the numbers grow, we are going to be able to use that expertise and to enhance programs in regional centres. Already in Hay River and I believe in Fort Simpson and Fort Smith, services for our elders with a minor form of dementia are being serviced there. I know that the territorial dementia centre is only a start. We, as a government, have to prepare years down the road to serve our residents who are going to need our service more and more. I think we owe it to the Minister for taking it on last fall and really looking at it closely, looking at numbers and what was happening and really took control of it and put it through the Cabinet in a way that was affordable to the government. More importantly, he has been able to bring partners into the process.

Let me just say I know the Minister didn't do it all by himself. We have to thank our private partners, Diavik and, in particular, Mr. Zelinski who has really stepped forward in a big way. I do understand that the details have to be worked out, but I think we really need to acknowledge the fact that you could have lots of players wanting to do a lot of good, but you do need somebody in the middle, in the centre, who takes on the leadership role and makes everybody do what is right in the interests of the total project. I just want to take a moment to thank the Minister for what he has done and for the seniors of not only Yellowknife but the Territories. I have said enough to secure this for the next budget as well, but the big number is coming in the next Legislature. So thank you so much.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Lee. I didn't hear any questions there. Would the Minister like to respond? Minister Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I thank the Member for her comments but, at the same, I have to state that she has as well. This project has been under some review for quite some time. In fact, 2005-06 was when the Department of Health and Social Services started working with the Yellowknife Association of Concerned Citizens for Seniors and looking at the planning and design of this facility. When I became involved, there was a concern that this project had grown substantially and became unaffordable. At that point, I decided that we needed to sit down again with the group to revise the plan, to look at it to see if we can come up

with something that was workable for all parties and affordable for the Government of the Northwest Territories. Yes, it includes taking in partners in this. We have to thank them for their work, as well.

It is a territorial facility and will be treated as such, looking at residents from the whole of the territory. It is a much needed facility as are a number of other facilities that the department is looking at. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Next on the list I have Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, there are a couple of things in here that should be celebrated, as Ms. Lee pointed out, when we see good work, even if it is the result of years of hard slogging. When the paperwork actually lands on the desk and we are given the chance to say yes to it and really have it mean something, then that is something that makes this job worthwhile.

Ms. Lee has highlighted the territorial dementia centre, a long sought after program. Madam Chair, I think just about all Members, members of the general public, the media, have all heard the stories of families that are dealing with their parents and relatives who are undergoing the inevitable terrible devastation of these kinds of diseases and the lack of a facility here in Yellowknife. One that is capable of looking after people on a territory-wide basis is very welcome news. Ms. Lee has highlighted the work of other partners in here. This is a really innovative approach and one that I am proud to have had some part in, but I am much more proud and satisfied to see that we are actually going to be committing to it.

Madam Chair, I think that I would also like to celebrate the \$1.6 million that is earmarked for the purchase of modular classrooms for Ecole St. Joseph. This was done. Many factors are at play in the school agenda here in Yellowknife, but the principal one here was reacting or responding to the devastating fire of just about a year ago now at this school. So this is welcome.

Madam Chair, I also welcome the almost \$2.5 million for the Tourism Product Diversification and Marketing Program. As the tourism industry enlarge in one sector, which is the outfitting and sports hunting sector went through and is still going through some wrenching changes, Madam Chair. As Members know, I have been a vocal critic of the way our government has responded to this situation, in part because of the business agenda that I think we left behind. We left a number of operators really holding the bag for far too long. While I say I celebrate this move to look at how we can diversify our tourism product, it is something that is overdue. Let's just get on with the job.

Madam Chair, I want to take this opportunity to ask for some additional information and clarification on one item that committee found lacking in the development of this appropriation. That is the \$100,000 that is requested to enable the Premier, I understand, and officials and members of the private sector to go to China next month on a...I guess the best I know about it is that there is a largely business agenda. Tourism is one of the topics that is at its forefront. But, Madam Chair, usually committee is given ample notice, detail and information on the nature of these kinds of fairly high profile and, I would like to think, very beneficial visits. We have not had the benefit of that in this request for \$100,000. I would like to ask the Minister if he could at this time, or at some point over the next few minutes during our debate of this bill, supply us

with information about the nature, the objectives, the participants, the outcomes that are anticipated from this mission to China.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, if it is alright, I can go into the detail now or we can do it later on; but if it is raised now, work has been done on this initiative through the Department of ITI looking at a number of factors, the goals of it or working with the business community, looking at emerging business in the Northwest Territories as well as the tourism side of the equation in trying to grow that side of the economy here in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Is that the extent of the information that the Minister is able to provide?

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, for more of the detail, we will go to the Minister responsible for ITI.

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

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For the last several years, my department has been lobbying Chinese trade officials to try to build a program to go to China and open some doors for some of our businesspeople specifically in tourism and also some opportunities we see in transportation. But tourism, as we have seen with the aurora industry coming under additional pressure, Japanese numbers are falling off. We have been looking at a logical market to diversify to. All evidence points to China and its 1.3 billion people as being very prospective for us in terms of aurora tourism, but we are having difficulty getting an invitation at the appropriate levels that would allow us to build a trade mission to China, so we had the Premier speak to some Hong Kong investors in Toronto and some trade officials and investors in Edmonton. We were pleased that, on the heels of that, we did receive an invitation from the proper levels of the Chinese government for the Premier to lead a trade mission to China and to make the connections for a number of our businesspeople who could benefit from such a mission and such contact. So the reason it comes at the end of this government, we wish we had advanced further on this sooner because we know what great pressure our tourism industry is under, but we are still thankful that we did receive the invitation for the Premier to come and lead this delegation. That piece was critical in China. We needed to have it at that level in order to get the attention of business there and the proper protocol at the government level. So we believe that this can be very successful.

It certainly can't be the last China trade mission. The Department of Yukon I think has been there, in my recollection, over the last year or so three or so times to China on similar trade missions. So we know that there will need to be follow-up with more business officials, more departmental officials, but we have this opportunity here and we think there is some merit in seizing on it. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you for that information. Does it not seem a bit unusual, if I could continue to direct the question to Mr. Bell, that we are undertaking this mission, yes, at the very end of this Assembly and our senior official, Mr. Handley, I understand is going to be leading the delegation. He is not returning to this Assembly.

---Laughter

How is it, Mr. Chair, that this government wants to undertake this when the Minister quite rightly points out that this should only be the first of many delegations and building this market? It just seems quite unusual that we are putting this together under the direction of our senior politician who is not going to be here in the coming Assembly and who will not be on tap to follow up and carry through with this. My point is, as desirable a mission as this is, doesn't it make more sense to take this good planning, defer it and allow the senior people from the next Assembly to take it on?

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will defer this to Minister Bell.

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

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Chair, I think the important thing to note here is that NTCL, Aurora Village, Aurora World, Watta Lake Lodge, Mackay Lake Lodge, and Arctic Chalet, these are businesses that have a lot of history here. They will be here in the next government. The Premier's role is to open doors for these businesses and no slight to Mr. Handley, but what is more important is that it is the office of the Premier. That is the compelling issue here, not the person who is in that role. We have the ability to use our Premier and his office to open some very important doors. It can open up new markets to these businesses. We don't think that we can wait. We know that this winter, it is no secret, is going to be very difficult for our aurora tourism industry. They are under immense pressure. I don't think we have time to wait to start to look to diversify markets. So there will be follow-up and follow through. The next Premier and the next government hopefully will acknowledge and recognize that this is a priority. But more important than who is going is the fact that the office of the Premier is going to open doors for these businesses. I know they are very appreciative of that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Following along the lines of my colleague, Mr. Ramsay, with respect to the PeopleSoft fiasco, is what I would like to call it just because of all the problems we have had with it and all the money that we have spent, and a system that is still not up and running today, as we speak, properly when you take the leave component module out of it. That is still a deficiency of some fair significance. When I questioned Minister Dent earlier in this sitting in question period about if we would do a report on what has happened so that we would have a sense, as my colleague Mr. Ramsay said, of how we could avoid this, where we went wrong, if there were any liabilities, if there was any blame that needs to be assigned on this, it is just good to know these things. Anyway, Mr. Dent, in response to that, suggested that a report might be a good idea, but he didn't say there was a report, and now Mr. Roland has just said we have gone out to the Audit

Bureau. So I don't know what to think now. I didn't get the sense from Mr. Dent's answer that there was a report. Now the Minister says we have gone out to the Audit Bureau. What is the status of a report? What is the status of the involvement of the Audit Bureau? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I should clarify in response that FMBS has done a report but not on the latest change from 8.3 to 8.9. I believe it was done in 2000, but Mr. Cleveland can give details as to the work that was done. Thank you.

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

MR. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Following the implementation of PeopleSoft in the late 1990s, FMBS contracted with an external contractor to review the implementation and examine the strengths and weaknesses of the implementation. That report was completed in I believe the year 2000 and was circulated fairly broadly at that point in time. The suggestion, I believe earlier, was that there would possibly be a further post-implementation examination. I have actually talked to Human Resources about that. We are looking at how we would develop a terms of reference for that. That probably wouldn't happen for a couple of months yet, but that is the intention of our discussions. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Cleveland. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So when Mr. Roland just made specific reference to go into the Audit Bureau, then I am to understand that nothing has transpired since 2000 involving the Audit Bureau in a report to look at the issue of a human resource management software. That is my question. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I would have to go back to see if I had actually mentioned the Audit Bureau as being the one, but what we have done, as Mr. Cleveland has stated, is the initial look at implementation done in 2000. But while the systems were still within FMBS before we created or just shortly after creating the Department of Human Resources, there was another activity looked at. We hired an outside group to review the work that was being done and how we were using the PeopleSoft system and how we continue to use our processes. That was done by the Hackett Group. It was mentioned here in this House actually in a similar scenario in a supplementary appropriation of the money that was requested to have them do the review and the functions we were using and not using and the recommendations made on that basis as we proceeded forward. That is the process going from 8.3 to 8.9 as we are now in process. I have been informed that all modules are working except for the absence management module, which is a new module that wasn't being used previously. There were a number of them that were not being used. As I stated earlier, when the government had used it in a customized manner, there were a lot of pieces that were not being used. Instead, we continued to use our paper transaction style of doing business. When reviewing this, the question was why did we continue to do these transactions the old way when the program itself is

actually built to do these things? When we looked at that, as well as the fact that we had to go from 8.3 to 8.9, a number of versions upgrade, we had to decide that we needed to go with the vanilla version, as termed, or the pure form of PeopleSoft 8.9. I don't know if Mr. Dent may have further information to this, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think Mr. Roland has pretty adequately answered the question. The review in 2005, though, did determine that much of the functionality of PeopleSoft or the program had either been turned off or hidden and the recommendation was that when we got to a system that was not customized and could turn those on, it would make the system much more functional for us. As Mr. Roland has already noted, the big problem has been in trying to convert the data from a program where the program itself was modified in such a way that the new version of the program doesn't recognize the information coming forward in most cases.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. What I am hearing both Minister Roland and Minister Dent telling us is that there is no report except for the Hackett report which was done in 2005 with respect to the implementation of this new software. There has been no report by the Audit Bureau that would speak to things like the confidentiality breach or things like the protocol that should have been followed by the government when they were implementing these changes to the software. There was no report that talked about that protocol that wasn't followed before some of these pieces went live, so to speak. I just want to hear the Minister say that there is no report like that, because I have been told there is. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, as stated by Mr. Cleveland, in 2000 there was a post-implementation report done and 2005, after a number of issues that occurred, some of it not related to the program itself but to the equipment. In 2005, backup equipment and so on and realizing this fact that we're not going to be able to continue to use the 8.3 version, that we would have to upgrade to the 8.9 version. We had that looked at by the Hackett Group to see what was being done and our processes and how that would best fit with going to the newer version. As a result of some of the incidents that occurred that the Members raised, there wasn't any report done. The specific incident of the information that was out there as to a number of the problems that occurred, was looked at, not a report on the whole system but specific to that piece was done. Well, it was looked at. I don't believe the Minister himself has that, but I know we looked at that, but we haven't done a full implementation package. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Oh my goodness. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Now if that was not the most difficult thing to understand, that might win an award. Okay, so back to my question. Maybe I'm not calling it the right thing, but with respect to the recent difficulty that everybody is aware of, hello out there in the public service, everybody knows what I'm talking about, the implementation of the

upgrade and the changes and the patches and things that were all done pre and post this thing going live and there being problems with it, and the denial by the Minister in this House that there had been a breach of confidential information. There was a report done on this. If there's a report, I want to know where is the report? You said it is done, but the Minister doesn't have a copy of it. Does anybody know what I'm talking about here? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, there was not a full report, as the Member stated, about all of the factors and it doesn't go into the fact that the Member has raised about the Minister said no, there was no breach. There was a specific case looked at, but as a department we would look at doing a full review of the conversion back to 8.9 and implementation. Once it's complete we would look at doing that. The specific issue itself, the Minister hasn't been given a copy of the specific incident. That hasn't been supplied to myself as Minister. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Next I have Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I wanted to ask the Minister on the Health and Social Services operations expenditures specific to the \$150,000 that's going to the Nurse Practitioner Program in terms of this funding that we receive from the federal government on these patient wait time guarantees in terms of how is this going to help people in our regions and our small communities in terms of this specific initiative? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I have to apologize. I was conferring on that. Can I have the Member repeat what his question was? Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The patients' wait time guarantees in regards to how this will impact or have an impact in our communities in the regions. I know there will be some with the larger communities with the hospitals, but I want to focus on the ones that don't have that type of service in the larger centres, communities that are somewhat left out. I don't want to say left out, but that hang in terms of services. So how is this going to work with our communities in terms of this patient time guarantees for our people in the smaller communities? Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the patient wait times guaranteed trust funding, we've worked with the federal government to come up with a plan of how we think in the Northwest Territories would have best impact for front line and that is targeted at some of the smaller community issues. We have difficulty getting nurses into our smaller centres and having the adequate training to go into the smaller centres. So what we've worked on is a number of programs where we see front line being critical to the delivery of health care in the Northwest Territories. One is a Community Health Nurse Development Program and

the Nurse Practitioners Program. The Community Health Nurse Development Program is something where we're looking at taking our new graduates out of our Aurora College program or those from southern Canada, if they're willing to come north, and provide them additional education opportunities so that they can have the adequate levels of expertise to go into our communities so that we can have nurses in those communities and not have to rely on agency nurses as we proceed forward. So there's a couple of things there.

Another one is the Nurse Practitioner Program and that will also help in the delivery in our more remote communities as well as our larger centres. That funding is identified to help nurses in the field move to the Nurse Practitioner Program. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The other question I have for the Minister has to do with the \$2.5 million for creation and implementation of a Tourism Product Diversification and Marketing Program. I'll ask the Minister in terms of this project here in terms of I guess I'm curious as to where did this come out from in terms of a lot of questions around this here? So I'll ask the Minister in terms of a very brief, very brief summary.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Can I ask Members to stick to the opening remarks of the Minister? It seems like sometimes we get into detail. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, this request has come forward from the Department of ITI. The department itself came forward with its Tourism 2010 plan and it came forward for a request of funding. At that point there was not enough money identified as we felt and we gave it a bit of support. This is intended to increase that as well as deal with some of the impact of the changing environment that the tourism outfitters are working with in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: I apologize, Mr. Chair; I got ahead of the boat here so I'm going to leave the rest for details. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Next I have Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to put on record I raised the PeopleSoft issue last week and it's easy to sort of get all wound up and excited about a process and a problem, but when the Minister replied, it was Minister Dent at the time, that they were going back to the original platform sometimes referred to as vanilla, well I wish we would just clearly state for the record the original platform rather than mixing it up with all these odds and sod names.

I got some feedback from a constituent who actually is a government employee who was listening in and I want to say for the record...

SOME HON MEMBERS: ... (inaudible)...

MR. HAWKINS: Wait until I make the statement. It's a good news statement in the sense that there's some satisfaction that the government is dealing with it and I think our employees are the ones that feel the integrity was not there for some time, but yet the response being

the government has chosen to go back to the original program, the one that obviously works. So there is a satisfaction out there that it's being dealt with. I think that also needs to be highlighted here.

Now there are other questions Members are raising and I don't want to underscore the validity of those. They're very important questions, but from my point of view when I was raising it last week it was about what are we doing and what are we doing to go forward, because there was some confusion. So the long and short of it is, I think that point needs to be put on record. I mean if we're going to have a public service that has to have confidence in our system, we better make sure our system works very well for them because we can't abuse that trust. I'd like to think I highlighted very well last week the issue of if our pay and benefits systems is eroded and falls out underneath us, I mean that's a very important fabric of our life. If you can't make that mortgage payment, you can't make that child support payment, all those types of things, you know, your world almost ends to a larger part. No matter how many nice apologies you can get from the Minister of Human Resources, you're still in a whole lot of ugliness until those things get sorted out. Like I say, I just wanted to put on record there was some feedback, the fact that going back to the original program was a satisfactory step from out there. Anyway, I felt it was important to put it on the record. Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I, as well, have touched base with folks from my constituency and those that are involved. This program affects government employees and our programming is internal. A lot of the people outside hear it from those that they talk with in passing about the problems within government, computer programs and so on, but I've also heard from those who are involved in this process and feel that once the system is up and running the way it was designed, it will be a much better system. We're hopeful that we can get there and get there soon, but there are issues that we will have to look into and do an evaluation of the whole process from beginning to implement to where it is today. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. There is just one other area I wouldn't mind highlighting while I have the floor here, which is there was some mention made earlier about some training and wanting to make sure our employees are up to speed on the return to the original program, and if the Minister has some highlights he can point out in this particular area I think that will just sort of end the areas of questioning I have at this time. I just want to make sure that our employees have the proper training to the new PeopleSoft if that's the case or if we're going back to the old version, the new old version, whatever, who wants to look at it as. At the end of the day, I want to make sure our employees are skilled in this area so they are provided practical and proper service for the rest of the public service. Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, yes, the training is becoming a more and more important part of the whole program itself. The program that was designed had a training component that could be

used, but with the way it was implemented was not a usual function of the platform that we finally put in place. Version 8.9 does have that feature available and we will be using that and working with all departments as has been occurring recently. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Next I have Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Maybe in thinking about the time here, maybe we could go into detail and I can ask specific questions as we move through the detail.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Does committee agree to go into detail?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Okay, can I ask committee to turn to page 5. Bill 18, page 5. Executive, operations expenditures, Human Resources, Human Resource Strategy and policy, not previously authorized, negative \$523,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Total Human Resources, not previously authorized, negative \$523,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Total department, not previously authorized, negative \$523,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 6, Public Works and Services, operations expenditures, asset management, not previously authorized, \$64,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Total department, not previously authorized, \$64,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Turn to page 7, Health and Social Services, operations expenditures, program delivery support, not previously authorized, \$940,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Health services programs, not previously authorized, negative \$417,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Total department, not previously authorized, \$523,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 8, Justice, operations expenditures, courts, not previously authorized, \$21,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Total department, not previously authorized, \$21,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 9, Transportation, operations expenditures, airports, not previously authorized, \$856,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Total department, not previously authorized, \$856,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 10, Industry, Tourism and Investment, operations expenditures, economic development, not previously authorized, \$3.083 million. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Like some of my colleagues, I'm happy to see the new initiative role out for the Tourism Product Diversification and Marketing Program. The one thing I will say, and it's a lack of participation on behalf of the committee that looks at ITI, this is the first that we've seen of the program and I would hope, and I just wanted to get this on record, that as the program develops and it moves forward, that committee is involved in the rollout of this program because really this is the first time we've seen it. It makes it difficult for members on the Governance and Economic Development committee to go to committee when we look at a supp and other Members ask us about this new initiative and we know nothing about it, really. So I just wanted to mention that for the record, Mr. Chairman. Again, I think it's a move in the right direction.

The one question I would have in that, is it enough money? I think once we let the horse out of the barn so to speak, is this going to be enough money to help our tourism industry? I know sport fishing lodges have taken a tremendous downturn recently and we're looking at some lower numbers in aurora tourism; we're looking at lower numbers on the consumptive side of caribou. So is this going to be enough money, Mr. Chairman?

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, this coming forward at a late state, usually, as I stated earlier, we find departments...In this case the department did come forward, it was part of their Tourism 2010 package in request for additional support. At that point, it wasn't given. With the change in our process and a slightly better change in our fiscal environment, this came back to the table and was supported. Ultimately though, as the Member stated, is it enough? We'll probably find that the request still in total doesn't match the original request that was made, but it is a support for changing the way tourism business can be looked at and the type of tourism that is available in the Northwest Territories. But I would say at this point that we would still probably fall short of the total ask that would be out there, but it is an increase to what's existing. Thank you.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just following up to some of the questions earlier in regard to the trade mission to China, it is a little bit odd that it's taking place during an election campaign for most of us. The reason I wanted to bring this up, and I guess from where I sit on the Governance and Economic Development committee we first learned of the mission in June and that was via an invitation from the Minister to our chairperson to attend the trade mission. Obviously during an election, that's going to be almost impossible for the Member to commit to that.

AN HON. MEMBER: Trying to get me out of town.

---Laughter

MR. RAMSAY: Yes, trying to get her out of town. The interesting thing, Mr. Chairman, is we just haven't got any detail, any level of detail on who is going, what the itinerary is, who invited us, who we're seeing, who's going. I think in isolation of that information, it makes it difficult to

make a decision. I like to make a decision based on something. I just don't want to say yes, it's okay, go ahead. I haven't seen, like I said, except for an invitation letter, that's the extent of the information that the government has put forward to our committee and to Regular Members. So to support a trade mission to China if it's the right thing to do and if you can show us that you're going to be getting something out of it, and that's not too much to ask I don't think. Show us who is going, show us who you're meeting with and tell us what we're going to get as a result of going over there. Is it going to set up something in the future so that the next government and other business leaders in this territory can go over there and kind of pave a path for them? Is it going to accomplish that? I'd certainly support it if it's going to deliver that type of thing, but nobody has communicated that to us. It's just we're going to China, we're going in September, and that's all we've heard. I think we need more information before I would be willing to support that.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the department has been doing more work in this area and solidifying the plans. I believe Minister Bell may have some information he may be able to share.

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

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Chairman, thank you. No, I don't think it's too much to ask if committee could see the detail of this proposed trip. I'm certainly prepared to provide that. I indicated earlier that this was really focused on businesspeople and primarily they are the folks that are travelling. For instance, NTCL is very interested in some Chinese manufacturing opportunities, transporting modules down from Tuk and through the Mackenzie to the oil sands. Aurora Village and Aurora World will be present; obviously interested in diversifying their aurora tourism business from just Japanese. A couple of lodges, Watta Lake Lodge and Mackay Lake Lodge interested in, again, as we talk about nature-based tourism, ecotourism, adventure tourism and seeing if we can attract a Chinese market, and there are a few others, Mr. Chairman. I'm certainly prepared to come to committee, present the trip as proposed. The meetings and the itinerary is laid out. So I can certainly go through that with committee members. I think it's a very worthwhile trip given that time is of the essence given the pressure that our aurora tourism industry is under. So I'd be more than happy to sit down with committee members and talk about the trip program that we've built.

To the first question around the Tourism Product Diversification and Marketing Program, I have to apologize to committee for not coming back to committee after Cabinet approval late in July. We knew that there wasn't much time before the supp would see the House. We were on a very compressed schedule, but it was in fact committee's urging and questioning of me in front of committee and in the House about whether or not our Tourism 2010 targets were achievable given the pressure that we had seen that the consumptive tourism industry was under. There were questions and urging to broaden out and diversify and look at some of the nature-based tourism and take advantage of some of our obvious ecotourism advantages in the Northwest Territories. So we were trying to respond as quickly as we possibly could. I don't know if this will be, in the end, enough money. I think it's a very good start. I think future governments will

have to assess and take a look at the targets and see whether or not we're meeting those, but I think, again, this is a good expenditure. It is in response to committee's urging both in the House and in front of committee and I only apologize that we weren't able to come back to committee after getting the approval in Cabinet and realized that the first you've seen of it was in committee and then this discussion on the floor of the House. So that certainly is my failing in that respect and I hope that you can see that the program is worthwhile though. Thank you.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't know; this is just the way things work. I mean last week we had, and the public is going to be able to read this and I have to still be careful with what I say because I don't want to breach any protocol issues, but we have meetings, we had meetings on the supp last week, issues were raised at that meeting. The government had ample opportunity to come back and give us some information. We asked for information last week in regard to the delegation going to China. It's Monday; we haven't got that information. We were trying to get the information last week and here we are today discussing the supp on the floor of the House and we just don't have the information in front of us, Mr. Chairman. Ultimately somebody is responsible for not getting us that information. We asked for it. Where is it? Again, they just want us to come and say bang, it's okay, here you go. But just give us some information. That's all we're asking for. I don't think it's too much to ask, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Member is right and we do, through this whole process, sit down with committee initially to get some input and if there is a request for information, work on getting it together. But we just sat down with committee on Thursday and have requested that information as we do from the appropriate departments. As we heard, the Minister is prepared to sit down with committee and provide that information. Thank you.

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

MR. RAMSAY: I forgot, Mr. Chairman, how fast government moves. I'm sorry. Pardon me, but something like this you would think would be fairly straightforward, it would be easy to get. They probably already have an itinerary, they know who they've talked to, they know who the meetings are with, who invited them, who's going. Just give us that information. That's not too much to ask. Three days is a long time to me, Mr. Chairman, to be able to get that information. What are we expected to do, just say it's okay? We don't have any information, but they promised us some and, yes, it's okay. It just makes the decision-making difficult, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I believe Minister Bell can give a bit more information.

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

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Chairman, I could speak to a lot of this detail, but it's probably easier if Members had this in front of them. So what I'll do is make sure that you have copies of this information, you have the briefing note that I have in front of me, you can see who the meetings are with, who is on the list and we'll make sure that happens in the next half an hour here. Thank you.

---Applause

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

MR. RAMSAY: That's good. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you. Next I have Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Well, Mr. Chairman, I'm in a bit of a dilemma here because I have a motion that I wanted to put on the floor and perhaps I'll read it and we can at least engage in it then.

Committee Motion 10-15(6): Deletion Of \$100,000 From Economic Development Activity, ITI, Funding For Trade Mission To China, Defeated

Mr. Chairman, I move that \$100,000 will be deleted from the economic development activity under the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, operations expenditures, not previously authorized on page 10, for the provision of funding for a trade mission to China. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Motion is on the floor. Motion is being distributed out to the committee. Motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The offer that the Minister has made to sort of brief committee on the fly here on the floor in the dying days of this Assembly really falls short. It demonstrates a number of the things that we've talked about over and over in the life of this Assembly. I spoke to them this afternoon in my reply to the opening address; that communication issues have really dogged the relationship between just about every department or other and committee. I am sort of doubly frustrated here because at heart I am a tourism guy, Mr. Chairman, but I also have a responsibility to be a steward of the resources and the needs that we have over here to make sure business is done thoroughly, openly and in decent time and that has not been the case. Minister Bell advised us a little while ago that this mission has been in the works for some time now. I am assuming that is months, perhaps even longer. My understanding is it's years. It takes a long time to set up protocols with the Chinese officials to do this. I can appreciate that accessing this is going to potentially further delay our chances of getting a foot in the door at China. But I am still sitting here, Mr. Chairman, saying I am going to sign off on \$100,000 without the benefit of information or performing or doing my job, doing the committee's job as oversight and as partners and contributors to this kind of thing. I have been denied the opportunity.

Mr. Chairman, I am going to ask a couple of questions here. Why didn't the department come to committee and distribute the information? I am speaking to the motion. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Can I ask committee to keep to the motion? To the motion.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you. Wow, I have the floor. Thank you very much. We can't ask questions. I had my hand up to ask questions when it was still being

called as an item on the paper, but I guess we went to the motion instead. Anyway, I have questions that nobody is going to answer, but let me ask them anyway.

If we can have all the details in half an hour, why couldn't we have it when...I am yelling in my own ear here. Why couldn't we have had it in the last three days if we could have them in a half an hour? If we only have to wait half an hour to get the answers to the questions, I say we wait for half an hour to get the answers. I don't think this is a \$100,000 trip, for everyone's information. This is a \$200,000 trip. I think there is another \$100,000 coming from somewhere. I would like to put that in a question, but I will put it in a statement. I think this is a \$200,000 trip. Furthermore, how did you select the people who are going? Of course, I am all for tourism and I am all for aurora viewing and I am all for NTCL, the shipping from Asia. I am a supporter of all that stuff.

I went on a trade mission once to Germany. The government paid for translation, they paid for some of the logistics and that, but operators all had an equal chance to participate by contributing to the cost, it was a cost-shared thing. Then more people got to go. I don't have any sense -- because I haven't had a chance to check this out -- but there might have been other tourist operators in the Northwest Territories involved in lodges and outfitting and aurora viewing who might have been interested in doing this. How was this particular group, and this group only, selected to go on a \$200,000 trip to China? Why are we doing this now? There have been years of preparation go into this. Why aren't we doing this in the new government? Why are we rushing off now during election period when people like the chair of the Governance and Economic Development committee can't go? Even the MLAs might be interested in this particular thing. They might have constituents involved in activities who might want to go. I am not a big international traveler myself personally, but that doesn't mean there aren't other Members of the Assembly who might have wanted to attend this.

Anyway, \$200,000 is a lot of money and somebody pointed it out the other day in committee that there are other NGOs struggling here. Mr. McLeod mentioned a few in Inuvik that were short of funds. Think of \$200,000 and we can't even get information. Anyway, I think we should get information. Call a break, postpone. Thank you. No.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you. To the motion. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am going to be voting against the motion. As far as I am concerned, if the communication plan didn't work out in this particular case, I don't want to put the whole plan at risk. We should write maybe a strongly worded letter, but the bottom line is if we put our industries at risk, take our aurora industry, they are barely surviving as it is and here they are trying to open up new markets. For over three and a half years, I have been saying let's find new opportunities and try to expand it. Yet, here we are saying no when they are looking at a new opportunity and trying to build some bridges. As far as I am concerned, if we can get everybody working, it will help support the investment we have here on the ground.

As far as transportation logistics, I have even heard of the mini airline groups' interest in this opportunity. Although it doesn't sound like it from Minister Bell's description when he said NTCL is going, that doesn't sound like one of the

airlines. But at the end of the day, I would encourage him to reconsider so we can get some airline groups in there.

As far as I am concerned, I think it has merit and it's a mistake to say no. I think it's okay to put more demands on this and find a way to get those demands realized, but the fact is saying no to this opportunity right now may be a mistake when our tourism industry is hemorrhaging in the sense of lost opportunities. It wasn't that long ago we were losing the hunting of caribou and now aurora is falling apart. How much more of our tourism industry do we have to lose before someone realizes its tomorrow's opportunity? So we need to be doing that today. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. To the motion. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will be quick on this. Like Mr. Hawkins says, in the absence of information, it's so difficult to make a decision. I have constituents who are interested in the tourism and industry side of this. I really don't know what I am turning down if I vote in favour or the motion and turn down \$100,000 and the trade mission gets scuttled. I have no idea what I am turning down. It's not fair to us, as decision-makers, to put us in a position where we have to turn something down not knowing all the details.

So, Mr. Chairman, I don't know. This is an interesting one, but I am going to have to vote in favour of the motion because the government just has not provided us with the level of detail I am comfortable with. I don't think the work is going to be wasted because it can just be transferred over. The government is officially over on the 30th of August or 31st of August. A new government is coming in after October 1st. The work that was done by ITI staff and the existing staff surely is not going to go to waste. It's only another eight weeks, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): To the motion. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Chair, the comments are probably similar to mine and Mr. Ramsay's. The trade mission is with Industry, Tourism and Investment. I, myself, don't have enough information in terms of this trade mission. You know Husky Energy has invested in the Sahtu region. Husky Energy is closely related to the productions in China. There is tourism in our region that needs to be looked at.

I don't know. I don't have the information. I don't know who is going or for how long. This is new. I am having a very difficult time supporting this here. I am going to have to support the motion as we go forward. So I need some information and I do not appreciate this and asking us to give you a blank cheque for \$100,000 like this one here. Give me the goods. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you. To the motion. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, this is another good example of the lack of communications sometimes between Cabinet and Members on this side. We are asked to vote on a motion and we don't know the details of the motion. We are scrambling down on this side trying to figure out who is going, what is going to happen at the end of this Legislative Assembly. So you come forward and you ask us to approve something. If we are just going to approve anything that is put before us, let's approve this and be done with it. But we are put there to question things and if we have concerns and legitimate concerns, this is my

understanding of supposed consensus government where we get some input into what is going on so, like Norman said, we can make an educated decision. But to come before us and say you need \$100,000 for a trade mission to China without providing details isn't good enough for me. So that being said, I am going to support this motion if we decide to go ahead today. If they want to do it in the 16th Assembly, they can send somebody to China then. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chairman, this is information that was requested a while back, two days ago. Now we are scrambling around, like everybody else is saying. I think it's critical that we get advanced information. We wouldn't be going through what we are going through now, waiting. We are asking questions here and nothing has been provided at this time. Some Ministers are getting information as we speak. This was a major decision you are making here. Whether it be \$100,000 or \$200,000, that is a lot of money that could also go to communities. Without backup documentation, it's hard for me as a Regular MLA to approve it or to go against it. I need detailed information that breaks down attendees or expenditures, who is going or who is meeting with who, departure dates, an itinerary and so forth. So I just want to reiterate what other Members have been saying here. We do need the documentation as a backup to make our decision, Mr. Chair. Without information, I would have to support the information that is in front of us. Mahsi.

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

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. I also wanted to speak in support of this motion. It's simply due to the fact of all the reasons Members have provided today, but also one big reason is due to the recent developments in the outfitting industry relating to caribou harvesting for outfitters. I think there is money to be put towards assisting outfitters dealing with the shortage of tags they have been allocated for this year and next year and years to come. If they had this \$100,000 or \$200,000 and used it to promote their own ecotourism initiatives, whether it be in China, Japan or anywhere else in the world, it would be put to better use and we would get better bang for our buck if we directed the money towards the people that are in the front line of tourism, which are the outfitters. That is why I support this motion. I have no information. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. To the motion. Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just briefly, although we were provided some information, a lot of information isn't before us with regard to the trip to China. I think it's important that although the mission seems like it would be a good one, I think at this time, without the information required, I will have trouble supporting the motion. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Question is being called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is defeated.

---Defeated

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. Industry, Tourism and Investment, operations expenditures, page 10, economic development, \$3.083 million, total department, \$3.083 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 11, Environment and Natural Resources, operations expenditures, special warrants, forest management, \$1.980 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. Total department, \$1.980 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 12, Executive, capital investment expenditures, Human Resources, not previously authorized, employee relations, \$523,000, total Human Resources, \$523,000. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to follow up where I left off asking questions under general comments of the Minister. I don't have Hansard in front of me, but the Minister, to summarize where we left off, was talking about a report that was all-encompassing of the chronology and the history of the implementation of this software. However, he made reference to a report and the exact two words he used were "specific incident." So what I would like to ask the Minister is what specific incident is he referring to? Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to clarify this position, there are a number of different reports. There is the 2005 implementation one; the 2005 Hackett review of the situation and the issue that was raised in the Assembly about the information being let out about our employees through our system. That incident or the situation that we reviewed was to do with information being let go and if it was a breach of any of our protocols or policies. That is the one I am speaking of. There is an additional report coming that will be a more encompassing one and that is still in the works. So the one I am speaking of is the one that was looking at the issue of information being let go because of part of a failure in our system. Thank you.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe that the Minister said that that had not been shared with the Minister of Human Resources. He had not received a copy of that report. I would like to ask if that's true, am I correct in that? Also, what's the date of that particular report dealing with that efficiency? Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would have to go back and look at the actual date of the correspondence that I received. I do not believe it was shared with the Minister at that point. It came to my desk because it was an issue looked at through FMBS. I would have to look at the actual correspondence when I received it in my office, but I haven't forwarded it to anyone else. I thought initially that it may have gone to committee, but I believe that is not

accurate. If it is, it is still within my domain and department or within my office as Minister responsible for FMBS. Thank you.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to make sure that the Minister understands why I have a concern with this. I have a concern with this because I specifically asked the Minister of Human Resources in this House if there had been any breach of any confidential information regarding GNWT employees as a result of this new software upgrade going live on the system. Of course, we know at the time, the Minister said absolutely not. I pursued it and subsequently found out that, in fact, there had been. That was conceded or agreed that it happened. Now you are telling me that there is a report that came out subsequently on that particular matter and it was not shared with the Minister of Human Resources. At the time, I questioned. People monitor this in the public service, but there are people who monitor Hansard and what we are saying here in this House. Why wouldn't the deputy minister have picked up the telephone and called the Minister of HR right away and said we do know there has been a breach of the system? I asked that question at the time. I never really did get a satisfactory answer because it was the end of session and people left. But people knew I asked the question. They knew he denied it and nobody set out on their own initiative to set the record straight. Now, here we are. There is a report that has come out about this and I believe it also includes a few other things. It talks about the implementation of this not following a GNWT model or any other software model in terms of the rollout of some of these changes. I think the same report talks about that as well. Why would that report not have been shared with the Minister of Human Resources? This looks like two incidents where something has happened under something that was within the Minister's purview and he wasn't even told about it. Now a report has come to you. It hasn't come to us. I would like to know about it. Why are we not being kept informed of these things? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the report does not go to the issue of the Minister and his deputy minister. It goes to the policies that we have in place, the programs and it is very specific to that situation. I would be prepared to sit down with committee to go over it. Thank you.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would have to tell you, I certainly have some questions still linger in my mind with respect to the integrity and the quality of the information that we get when we stand here and ask questions like this in the House. I understand that the incident report you are talking about does not go to why the deputy didn't inform the Minister and things like that. But it does go to the issue of the breach. To me, again, why wouldn't the Minister of HR be aware of a report that would speak to that? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, again, just for the record, the correspondence I saw

come across my desk was on the issue of our processes, policies and if there was a breach on information being leaked, and I am prepared to sit down with Members to go over that. I believe you will see that information, though there was a problem with our system at that point, it does not go to a breach. I would be prepared to sit down with Members and go over that. Thank you.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you. I will just say this again. I have said it before in this House that we have an obligation as a government to ensure that the most basic things such as confidential information, timely paying of employees for the work that they do for us. HR is a very important function in this government. I think it needs to be done right. At the end of the day, when you look at the issues and the incidents, as you call it, that have occurred in the HR department, somebody is responsible. Maybe some of it is software. Maybe some things are a sequence of events that have transpired which nobody is trying to turn back the clock. But I will tell you, it makes more doubting of the system and wondering what is going on when we can't get straight answers or straight information. I do appreciate the Minister's offer to talk to us about this, but it is too bad that we have to find out about it through this process. As MLAs and as a Minister, I think we just need to be shown the respect to be kept apprised of these things. We are trying to serve our constituents. Our constituents are raising these issues with us. We don't have the answers. If we have to go these lengths to get those kinds of answers, I just think it doesn't speak well for this government and this department and certainly some people in the HR department are responsible for this mess on our hands. Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I believe the Minister, in further response in the House, talked about the processes of implementing the latest version and some of the modules in the work and the transfer from the old system to the new version and some of the problems that occurred in that. He has corresponded with Members in a letter regarding the latest in that area. Beyond that, I am unable to comment on the information. As I stated, and probably oversight on my part, is when I saw that initial correspondence come to my desk, looking at that and seeing the results of that didn't tie the issue there. I have to look at my correspondence to see how far it had gone, but I am prepared to sit down with Members on that. Thank you.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you. Is the Minister prepared to share that correspondence with Members? Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: I am sorry, Mr. Chair; I missed that last question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): The question was whether you would be willing to share the correspondence, Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would be prepared to sit down with committee members regarding that and go through it with them. Thank you.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In the interests of transparency and unless there is some reason why that report or that correspondence could not be shared with Members, unless there is some personnel reason or some other type of reason, again, for us not to see that correspondence leaves one wondering and asking what is being hidden. What are we hiding? I just want to know about it because this has been a big concern to my constituents. I am not making this up. I am not trying to raise this to cause trouble. I am not on a witch hunt. I think it is a big problem. It is an expensive problem what we've had to deal with. Unless there is some reason why, that the Minister could give me, we couldn't see that correspondence, I think it would be in the interest of good government to uphold a standard of transparency and share that with Members of this Assembly. Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, as I had stated, again, I would be prepared to sit down with committee and go through those findings. Upon having a second look at it, decide where we can go with that if there is further release of that information. I would have to have a better look at that before I can make that commitment. Thank you.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you. That is everything. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Committee, we are on page 12, Executive, capital investment expenditures, Human Resources, not previously authorized, employee relations, \$523,000, total Human Resources, \$523,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. Page 13, Health and Social Services, capital investment expenditures, not previously authorized, community health programs, \$417,000, total department, \$417,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. Page 14, Education, Culture and Employment, capital investment expenditures, special warrants, education and culture, \$2.170 million, not previously authorized. Mr. Dent.

Committee Motion 11-15(6): Addition Of \$3.05 Million For Gameti School, Carried

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I move that \$3.050 million be added to the activity education and culture under the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, capital investment expenditures, not previously authorized on page 14 for the purpose of constructing additional classrooms and adding a gymnasium to the Jean Wettrade Gameti School.

---Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you very much, Minister Dent. Motion is being distributed. Motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

---Applause

Thank you, committee. We'll continue on page 14, Education, Culture and Employment, capital investment expenditures, education and culture, special warrants, \$2.170 million, not previously authorized, \$3.555 million, total department, special warrants, \$2.170 million and not previously authorized, \$3.555 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. We're going to defer the preamble and the clauses and deal first with the schedule. Schedule, supplementary amounts appropriated for the 2007-2008 fiscal year, part 1, vote 1, operations expenditures, total supplementary appropriation for operations expenditures, \$6.004 million; part 2, vote 2, capital investment expenditures, total supplementary appropriation for capital investment expenditures, \$3.615 million; total supplementary appropriation, \$9.619 million. Mr. Dent.

Committee Motion 12-15(6): Amend Schedule To Bill 18 Regarding Additional Funding For Gameti School, Carried

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that the schedule to Bill 18 be amended to:

a) increase by \$3.050 million the supplementary appropriation amount set out in part 2, item 16, Education, Culture and Employment, by striking out \$2.675 million in the column entitled appropriation by item and substituting \$5.725 million;

b) increase by \$3.050 million the amount set out in part 2 as the total supplementary appropriation for capital investment expenditures by striking out \$3.615 million and substituting \$6.665 million; and

c) increase by \$3.050 million the amount set out at the end of the schedule as total supplementary appropriation by striking out \$9.619 million and substituting \$12.669 million.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Thank you, committee. The motion is passed.

---Carried

Thank you, committee. To the schedule, supplementary amounts appropriated, as amended, supplementary amounts for the 2007-2008 fiscal year, part 1, vote 1, operations expenditures, total supplementary appropriation for operations expenditures, \$6.004 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Part 2, vote 2, capital investment expenditures, total supplementary

appropriation for capital investment expenditures, \$6.665 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Total supplementary appropriation, \$12.669 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. Now if we could go back to page 1, Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2007-2008, to the preamble. Oh sorry; before we deal with the preamble, we'll go clause by clause. Clause 1.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 2.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 3.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 4.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 5.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 6.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 7.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Now, committee, can we agree to the preamble?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. To the bill as a whole?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): As amended. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. Does the committee agree that Bill 18 is ready for third reading, as amended?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. Bill 18 is now ready for third reading, as amended. Thank you, committee. Thank you, Minister Roland. Thank you, Mr. Kalgutkar and Mr. Cleveland. Thank you, committee.

We'll keep rolling here. We're on Bill 15, the Liquor Act. For that I'd like to ask Minister Roland, the Minister responsible for Bill 15, to please introduce the bill. Minister Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to present Bill 15, Liquor Act. This bill is a complete rewrite of our existing act and represents the first major revision since 1983.

---Applause

The revised Liquor Act will provide a liquor system that is more effective, balanced and consistent with the priorities of NWT residents. It provides strong legislation that protects youth, controls the illegal sale of liquor, and provides for safer conditions in licensed premises. Bill 15 represents the culmination of more than three years of work that included a review of the current Liquor Act, a

comparative analysis of other provincial and territorial legislation, and consultations with NWT residents about their views on changing liquor legislation.

In 2005, the Department of Finance undertook an extensive consultation process. A detailed discussion paper was circulated that summarized the main issues and provided a series of questions to stimulate debate. Meetings were held in nine communities to solicit the views of NWT residents. These communities were chosen to represent a cross-section of liquor access and regulation circumstances based on size, presence of liquor stores and/or licensed establishments, and liquor status. In addition, on the recommendation of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight, funding was provided so that outlying communities were able to send two representatives to attend the nearest session.

Early in 2006, Improving Liquor Legislation in the NWT, Final Report of the 2005 Liquor Act Review was released. This report included 38 recommendations for change, most of which are reflected in this bill.

One of the main conclusions of the report was NWT residents, while largely supportive of the existing governance structure of the liquor system, also wanted to see more control at the community level. Consequently, the bill retains the existing shared governance responsibility between the Minister and the Liquor Licensing Board, and includes provisions to devolve more control over liquor to communities.

Bill 15 does not contain specific legislative or regulatory provisions regarding addictions or treatment. Social responsibility and an attitude toward alcohol cannot be legislated. Each individual is responsible for his or her own actions.

We are all aware of the effect that alcohol has on our communities and residents, as Members indicated during our debate in May about the need to denormalize alcohol abuse in our communities. This bill supports GNWT policies and programs to address a number of elements of social responsibility in the liquor system. For example, the NWT Liquor Commission participates in numerous inter-jurisdictional initiatives to promote the responsible use of alcohol and has a program to place healthy message labels on all liquor bottles sold in the NWT.

Bill 15 includes a number of provisions that were suggested by the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight during committee review of the bill, including the inspection of liquor stores by liquor inspectors, stronger inspection tools for sales to minors, and higher maximum penalties for store operators who sell to minors and for minors who use false ID to purchase liquor. I would like to thank committee members for their very valuable input.

The bill proposes a number of major areas of change to the Liquor Act:

- The bill provides strong legislation that protects youth, controls the illegal sale of liquor, and provides for safer conditions in licensed establishments. A number of measures are included to prevent minors from accessing liquor, including stiffer fines for minors using false or altered ID to attempt to purchase liquor;
- It provides for a much clearer distinction between the adjudicative, enforcement and governance functions of the liquor control system. Consistent with standard practice, all regulation-making powers will

rest with the Commissioner on the recommendation of the Minister;

- It strengthens the control that communities have on liquor within their boundaries. Communities will be able to directly request the Minister to conduct a plebiscite to determine which type of restriction or prohibition system will apply within their municipal boundaries, without having to first provide a petition from residents. The threshold for approving a question on a plebiscite is being reduced from 60 percent to 50 percent plus one, which is more democratic. The revised act would recognize the ability of communities operating under self-government agreements and exercising jurisdiction in this area, to pass their own bylaws with regard to liquor control;
- It clarifies who is able to purchase, consume, sell and possess liquor;
- It strengthens the penalties for bootlegging, increasing the deterrents to this illegal activity, particularly bootlegging to minors. As a further deterrent, a new inspection regime is being introduced to provide for improved monitoring of liquor stores using inspectors, similar to the regime currently in place for monitoring licensed premises;
- It improves the operation of licensed premises by better protecting youth, improving customer safety and making the rules for licence holders more internally consistent and clear. It recognizes that intoxication can occur from substances other than beverage alcohol and drugs, and provides a more streamlined approach to dealing with the issue of intoxication in licensed premises; and, finally,
- Finally, Bill 15 will result in increased administrative simplicity for both licensees and liquor administration. For example, the number of license classes is being reduced from the current 12 to four.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you very much, Minister Roland. I'd now like to ask Mr. Lafferty, the chairman of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight, which reviewed the bill, to make committee's comments on the bill. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight conducted public hearings on Bill 15, the Liquor Act between June 6 and June 15, 2007. The committee split into northern and southern groups to seek input from as many communities as possible within this time frame. Meetings took place in Inuvik, Tsiigehtchic, Tulita, Gameti, Behchoko, Yellowknife, Fort Simpson, Jean Marie River, Hay River and Fort Smith. In addition, the committee allowed for written submissions until July 13, 2007. The clause-by-clause review of the bill was held on August 14, 2007. The committee would like to thank all witnesses for their presentations during these meetings and the Minister of Finance and his staff for presenting the bill.

Bill 15, if passed, will replace the existing Liquor Act dealing with the sale, importation, manufacture and distribution of liquor in the Northwest Territories. The bill enhances community control over liquor, makes a number of administrative improvements and strengthens the penalties for offences, particularly for bootlegging.

While a majority of people were generally supportive of the proposed bill, in particular of the increased community options and harsher punishments for bootleggers, presenters also made it very clear that the Liquor Act does not address the problems related to alcohol abuse and addiction. Many residents, community leaders, elders and stakeholders expressed their concerns recalling accidental deaths, suicides and abuse. They also pointed out that addictions and substance abuse includes gambling, drugs and other intoxicating substances. Many residents of small communities linked the availability of jobs in the resource development sector and higher disposable incomes to an increase of alcohol and substance abuse as well as family violence and elder abuse. Others expressed their worries about the impacts of alcohol, especially on the future of their children and youth, the younger generation.

Many presenters in small communities expressed concerns regarding the difficulty of controlling liquor coming into the community. In communities like Jean Marie River, Gameti or Tulita, residents buy their liquor from liquor stores in nearby municipalities or by phone order. Presenters generally felt that they had little power to control types and quantities of liquor sold to residents of their communities. They also stated that the regional impact of liquor stores is not sufficiently considered.

In Tulita and Jean Marie River, community members said clearly that they would like to limit the amount of alcohol coming into the community. As Chief Stanley Sanguetz of the T'he'dz'eh K'edeli First Nation in Jean Marie River asked, "...how come we don't have a say in changing the Liquor Act for Fort Simpson, the rationing system? Our people are really suffering from it already. Why are you letting this happen in Fort Simpson, because we have the effects from it, what happens in Fort Simpson, and we keep saying just leave it that way."

Committee members also heard in the smaller communities that if restrictions or a prohibition are in place, liquor stores should have mechanisms for verification and tracking of shipments of phone and other orders.

Members share the concerns raised regarding the availability of high percentage liquor in combination with binge drinking. People saw an increasing trend of this drinking pattern in young people and felt that high alcoholic beverages are still too easily available.

In August 2005, a ministerial directive was issued listing products with an alcohol content of 50 percent or more and limiting the sale "to one bottle per person at any time." Members were cautiously optimistic that the abuse, overuse and availability of overproof and other high alcohol products would be reduced. After considering the communities' input, the committee would like to encourage the Minister to look into this matter and report back on whether further restrictions would be advisable.

Members were pleased to see that all communities welcomed the lower threshold for a plebiscite on restrictions or prohibition, making the process more democratic. Overall, the visited communities and municipalities expressed support for more community control on liquor and provisions that will allow for adaptations to their specific needs.

However, particularly in smaller communities, leaders were concerned that despite more powers and tougher laws, not enough is being done to enforce existing restrictions and rules. In several places, people also

expressed their discomfort in bringing complaints or evidence regarding bootlegging to the police's attention, as this would impact internal community relationships. However, as was discussed in our meeting in Tulita, without the cooperation of community members in bringing forward information to the police, enforcement will not be possible.

For communities without permanent RCMP presence, concerns about enforcement were stronger and more prevalent. For example in Jean Marie River, Ms. Tammy Neal, the band manager of the Tthedzeh K'edeli First Nation, put her doubts in the following statement, "We can put a ration on the community, we can make rules and committees and everything, but how do we enforce it? We can't enforce it. There's no way to enforce it."

Community leaders also expressed concerns that the restrictions on transportation of liquor are not sufficiently enforced, particularly in those communities without permanent RCMP presence. People generally welcomed the new provisions for regulations that would limit the amount of liquor that can be transported without a permit. They are, however, worried that they will have no influence on prescribing these limits or on enforcing their implementation.

Because smaller communities have no influence on the sale of liquor in municipalities with liquor stores and the shipping and transportation after the purchase, many felt helpless with regards to community restrictions. This sense of powerlessness is growing with the perceived lack of enforcement.

Despite these concerns, a majority of people welcomed the direction of the bill of increasing fines and introducing potential jail sentences for bootlegging offences.

Mr. Chair, at this time, I would like to pass it on to Mr. Villeneuve to continue with the report. Mahsi, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, while some presenters felt penalties should be increased further and minimum fines be introduced, others in Fort Smith and Fort Simpson suggested that by extending off-sale, premise and liquor store hours, bootlegging would become less attractive and lucrative. For example a Tsiigehtchic resident suggested mandatory jail time as a solution while a Fort Smith town councillor commented, "I think when it comes to bootlegging, what you want to do there is try to defer that activity from happening. ... But by restricting hours and restricting the amount of alcohol that's coming out of your licensed premises, what you're really doing is giving a bootlegger that much ammunition now."

The band manager of the Tthedzeh K'edeli First Nation in Jean Marie River also pointed to what she considered inconsistencies in the proposed fine structures, "With regards to the penalty being \$10,000 for supplying a minor, or up to \$10,000, where we're trying to preach to our children and stop the cycles of alcohol abuse, drugs and all this. I think the penalty for supplying a minor should be higher than it is for supplying an adult..."

The committee agreed with the suggestion that selling liquor to minors is a more serious offence and should carry higher penalties. During the clause-by-clause review, the committee and Minister agreed to amendments to double the maximum fines for selling to minors by vendors and licensed premise owners.

The committee also passed a motion to amend the bill to double maximum fines for bootlegging that involves selling to a minor, to add minimum fines for bootlegging including higher minimum fines for bootlegging to minors and to provide that where a judge makes a probation order, the probation order must prohibit the possession and consumption of alcohol. The Minister did not concur with this motion.

Preventing minors from accessing liquor and protecting children and youth to provide them with a healthy start into their future were issues brought forward in all communities. For example, Mr. Eddie Chocolate, a Gameti councillor, expressed his fears and hopes, "As it is, this abuse takes away life from our youth. ... We should devote a lot of time and discussion on this. ... There is the sale of alcohol and drugs in the community and that's something that we all need to resolve together."

While some presenters pleaded for an increase of the legal drinking age to 21, others believed that the legal drinking age should be lowered to 18 or remain as is, arguing it would teach young people more responsible behaviour at an earlier age. The committee also discussed the question with the Minister and agrees with the government's decision to keep the legal age at 19 as the most appropriate at this time.

In Yellowknife, Ms. Sylvia Siemens suggested that the mandate of the enforcement officers would need to include compliance monitoring of liquor stores. The Department of Finance currently relies on its contracts with vendors to ensure compliance. This has proved insufficient to avoid liquor sales to minors. As Ms. Siemens pointed out during her presentation, "We cannot expect a business that profits from the sale of alcohol to be self-regulating. The Tobacco Act recognizes that. ... to allow for inspectors to send in a young looking 17-year-old to purchase cigarettes. If they were not asked for identification, they had the teeth in the legislation to issue a fine. ... We cannot purport to say this legislation protects youth until we address the issue that there is no legislation in place for independent monitoring and inspections of liquor store practices."

Mr. Chair, I will pass this report on to the Member for Sahtu, Mr. Norman Yakeleya.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Villeneuve. Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Members supported the idea that in order to protect youth, the proposed Bill 15 should be compatible with the NWT Tobacco Control Act and its regulations where monitoring and enforcement are concerned. During the clause-by-clause review of the bill, committee and Minister agreed to amend Bill 15 to make compliance monitoring and enforcement of liquor stores part of the mandate of enforcement officers. This includes allowing for minors to purchase or attempt to purchase liquor for the purpose of "sting operations."

People commenting on the proposed act mostly welcomed the introduction of fines for minors who alter ID or use false ID to buy liquor at a store. However, many commented that the fines should be higher. Mrs. Lucy Villebrun from Fort Smith told us "that the fine of \$200 is extremely lenient, ... I'd like to see the maximum fines at \$500 for the first offence and \$1,000 thereafter."

During the clause-by-clause review of the bill, an amendment was made to change the maximum fine for minors attempting to purchase liquor using false ID from

\$250 for a first offence and \$500 for a second offence to \$500 for all offences. This amendment also makes the bill consistent with the Tobacco Control Act.

Committee heard a presentation from one Yellowknife liquor storeowner, Mr. Perry Smith, who raised concerns about the cap of \$6.5 million dollars within the liquor revolving fund and its potential impact on the ability of the Liquor Commission to maintain adequate stock. After making inquiries, the committee understands that previous issues with inventory levels were due to operational difficulties and did not occur as a result of the cap on the revolving fund. Furthermore, the committee notes that Bill 15 will provide the Liquor Commission with added flexibility in terms of transferring funds to the consolidated revenue fund and as such securing the sufficiency of the liquor revolving fund in the future.

Mr. Smith also expressed concerns with section 36, which could be interpreted to prevent the sale of liquor to customers in other jurisdictions such as Nunavut. During the clause-by-clause review, the committee and Minister agreed to an amendment to make it clear that the sale of liquor to other jurisdictions is permitted.

In Yellowknife, committee also heard a presentation from Mr. Telmo dos Santos suggesting that 25 percent of the revenues generated through liquor sales be allocated to a special fund dedicated to community prevention and treatment programs. While Members understand Mr. dos Santos' concerns, committee also acknowledges that the GNWT already allocates more money for programs and services in these areas than is generated through liquor revenues. Committee notes that a more comprehensive approach is needed to break the circle of alcohol abuse and to address addictions in the NWT.

Section 101 of the bill, as introduced, states that no person should be in a bar or other licensed premise if they know that a child under the age of eight they are responsible for is not in the care of a competent person. Members suggested increasing the minimum age from eight to 11 for leaving children unattended while entering or staying at a licensed premise. The committee and the Minister agreed to make this amendment to Bill 15.

In several communities, participants were concerned about the implications of the new "bring your own wine" provision. They felt, for example, that this would encourage drunk driving, exposure to alcohol and transportation of opened liquor. The committee understands that the intent of these provisions is to take the pressure off small establishments to stock wine, which can be very expensive for them. Only establishments that are licensed will be able to operate as "bring your owns," and they will have to apply for that as a condition of their licence. There will be limits of the amount of wine that people can bring. As this provision is not well understood, the committee encourages the government to ensure it is explained in its public communications on the implementation of this act.

In addition to the amendments already identified, the committee and Minister agreed to three amendments of minor, non-substantive nature during the clause-by-clause review.

Mr. Chair, at this time, I would like to turn the report over to Ms. Lee.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Yakeleya. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Overall the committee supports Bill 15. We believe it achieves an appropriate balance between personal, community and territorial responsibility.

The committee did, however, note that many critical provisions that will determine the success of the new Liquor Act will be placed in regulations. These provisions include maximum quantities that may be transported by individuals who are not licence or permit holders, the types and brands of liquor to be kept for sale in liquor stores, the operation of liquor stores, rules and procedures regarding plebiscites, and the powers and duties of inspectors.

Much of the strength of the act will depend on clear and implementable regulations that address the concerns that were raised during public consultations. To ensure successful implementation, committee urges the government to continue its consultations during the development phase of the regulations.

Committee would like to recognize the efforts and good work of the Minister, the department staff and their consultants, in developing the public discussion paper, the bill and in working with the committee to follow up on issues brought forward during the community consultations. Throughout its review of Bill 15, the committee on Accountability and Oversight has appreciated the Minister's forthrightness with information and his willingness to consider proposed amendments. We look forward to continuing this collaborative approach during the implementation of the new Liquor Act.

While Bill 15 is a large step forward in modernizing our liquor legislation, it will need to be complemented by further initiatives addressing addictions, treatment and prevention, making liquor less attractive to young people, and leading to a future where each person who chooses to drink will use alcohol responsibly.

As Mr. Sean Whelley, a Fort Simpson resident, said, "...if you want to address the issue of drinking in the North, why don't you get to the root causes of alcoholism instead of trying to tackle through legislation what comes at the end here? Let's fund alcohol programs; let's reach out to the kids and make sure that they know that there's other things besides alcohol."

Last May this House passed a motion calling for the denormalization of alcohol abuse. As we discussed at that time, only certain aspects of liquor can be controlled through legislation. Liquor laws must be complemented by a multi-faceted approach combining prevention, treatment and enforcement to deal with the individual and societal consequences of alcohol and substance abuse.

The committee recognizes that the Liquor Act itself cannot address all social issues around alcohol and alcohol abuse in the Northwest Territories. However, the committee believes that early in its life, the 16th Legislative Assembly must make prevention a priority, and task the social envelope Ministers to come up with a coordinated approach to create a campaign for public education and denormalization, including incremental budget targets for the use of prevention strategies and programs.

Committee reminds the government that there is no lead department with the mandate to manage a government-wide campaign against alcohol abuse. There are at least four different departments with some function in the administration of liquor and handling its multi-million dollar consequences: Finance, Health, Justice and Education.

Committee has seen no evidence of any long-range, long-term collaborative alcohol programming among them.

Collectively, the governments and the Legislatures past and present have failed to look beyond their own spheres of responsibility and address in a unified way this single, most devastating impact on our society and our future generations.

The GNWT will not be able, on its own, to turn around patterns of abuse that are now generations old. The NWT's government and Legislature should be the catalysts to marshal the support, and mobilize the resources, of all community and aboriginal governments and community leaders against alcohol abuse.

This concludes the committee's opening comments on Bill 15. Individual Members may have questions and comments as we proceed.

Following the clause-by-clause review, a motion was carried to report Bill 15, Liquor Act, as amended, as ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Ms. Lee. What is the wish of committee? Mr. Lafferty.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Motion is in order. It's not debatable. All those in favour? Opposed? Motion is carried.

---Carried

I'll now rise and report progress.

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

ITEM 21: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2007-2008, and Bill 15, Liquor Act, and would like to report that Bill 18 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. The motion is on the floor. Do we have a seconder? The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Third reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

ITEM 22: THIRD READING OF BILLS

Bill 9: Write-off Of Debts Act, 2007-2008

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, that Bill 9, Write-off of Debts Act, 2007-2008, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Bill 9 has had third reading. Third reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

Bill 10: Forgiveness Of Debts Act, 2007-2008

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that Bill 10, Write-off of Debts Act, 2007-2008, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Bill 10 has had third reading. Third reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

Bill 17: Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2006-2007

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Weledeh, that Bill 17, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2006-2007, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Bill 17 has had third reading. Third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

ITEM 23: ORDERS OF THE DAY

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Schauerte): Mr. Speaker, there will be a meeting of the Accountability and Oversight committee at 9:00 a.m. tomorrow.

Orders of the day for Tuesday, August 21, 2007, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Opening Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills

20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 6, Workers' Compensation Act
 - Bill 7, Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act
 - Bill 15, Liquor Act
 - Committee Report 4-15(6), Report on Community Consultations on Proposed Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Legislation
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
 - Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2007-2008
23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Tuesday, August 21, 2007, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 18:59 p.m.

