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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Wednesday, August 22, 2007****Members Present**

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

ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good afternoon, colleagues. Welcome back to the House. Orders of the day. Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**Minister's Statement 36-15(6): Helping Northerners To Achieve Self-Reliance Through Income Security**

HON. CHARLES DENT: Good choice, Mr. Speaker. Thank you. Mr. Speaker, self-reliance is one of the core values of northerners and this government. It is an essential part of the vision of this Assembly. Northern people should have the tools and resources they need to function independently and to exercise self-determination.

In the summer of 2004, this government started planning for the redesign of income security programming in the Northwest Territories. Government staff undertook a review of all income security programs. They discovered that there are 17 programs in the government as a whole being delivered by seven different departments. Approximately \$120 million is spent each year on these programs, with roughly half that amount being administered by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment through seven programs. Some provide "hidden" support, like the NWT power subsidy, while others, like the Income Assistance Program, are delivered directly to clients.

This review resulted in a policy framework that was approved in September 2005. Following that, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment was directed to develop an implementation plan outlining how the redesign of the GNWT income security programs would be carried out and how other departments would be involved.

The development of a comprehensive Income Security Program model based on the approved policy framework was also required.

It was important to understand what northerners wanted in an income security system. We gained this understanding through a consultation process. This consultation, and in fact the entire review of income security, was greatly aided by the support and advice of many people from non-government agencies, in particular:

- Lyda Fuller, executive director, YWCA
- Jane Whyte, executive director, YAACL

- Barb Hood, executive director, NWT Seniors' Society
- Cecily Hewitt, executive director, NWT Council of Persons with Disabilities
- Arlene Hache, executive director, Centre for Northern Families

- several representatives from the Salvation Army; and
- Aggie Brockman, Alternatives North.

As well, regional meetings were held to hear advice from individuals and organizations including:

- the Hay River Seniors' Society
- Aurora College
- Fort Smith Uncle Gabe's Friendship Centre
- Fort Smith Seniors' Society
- the Inuvik Interagency Committee
- the Inuvik Homeless Shelter
- health and social services boards
- the Tlicho Community Services Agency
- the Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce
- representatives of aboriginal and municipal governments.

I would like to thank all of the people who were involved in this and who continue to work with us to improve our social programs.

Based on what we learned through research and discussions with northerners, we developed an income security model to serve as a framework for supporting people in need. This new model was released this month.

The new model abandons the notion that income security programs are programs of last resort. It creates a program specific to the needs of seniors, persons with disabilities, families and single people. It emphasizes the importance of government departments and other agencies working together to meet the unique needs of individuals and families. It provides an adequate level of support for those with zero income and reduces this support by a percentage of income. Finally, this model will ensure access to all programs in all communities.

This model is not an across-the-board linear increase in benefits for northerners. It is intended to ensure that northerners are treated more equally and those who are able are always rewarded for working towards self-reliance.

Benefit levels have been established using evidence linked to formulas that account for the cost of living through the Northwest Territories. The definition of income has been changed to ensure that people are treated equally across the territory.

Government service centres will be established in all northern communities over the next two years. These service centres will provide a point of access for all income security programs and services.

Changes based on the new income security model have already been developed for Education, Culture and Employer's income assistance programs, and will go into effect in September 2007. We have set the stage for further changes to income security programs in the future

with priority being given to the public housing rental subsidy.

In addition to the changes surrounding income assistance, I am pleased to announce that a new subsidy has been made available for low income parents through the Student Financial Assistance program. They will now be able to apply for a childcare user subsidy to help fund the cost of childcare while they attend class.

For the changes in our philosophy related to income security to be successful, they need to be viewed as an essential part of a larger package. It is important that we use a coordinated approach to provide consistent support to help people move towards self-reliance.

This new approach should, over time, help us reduce poverty in the NWT, and lead to more self-sufficient individuals and families throughout the NWT.

---Applause

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

Minister's Statement 37-15(6): Nursing In The NWT

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my appreciation to nurses across the NWT for their dedication and commitment in providing health care services to the people of the NWT.

---Applause

I am pleased to report the GNWT is showing significant progress towards the stabilization of the nursing workforce throughout the NWT, despite the continued nursing shortage across the country.

Summer is often one of the most difficult periods for ensuring stable health care services at the community level. For the first time in many years, we have been able to maintain services in every community and, to date, not one health centre has closed due to a nursing shortage.

---Applause

Our partnership with Aurora College in offering a four-year nursing degree program has formed the foundation for establishing a stable northern nursing workforce. Through the Graduate Nurse Placement Program, this government has made a commitment to offer indeterminate employment to all successful Aurora College nursing graduates who acquire a licence to practice nursing in the NWT. In addition to the four-year program offered through Aurora College, we have invested in specialized training to prepare nurses to work in areas such as dialysis, obstetrics, ICU and operating rooms.

More recently, stability for nursing services in the smaller community health centres has improved. Approval of job sharing arrangements, increased emphasis on recruiting nurses and investment in the Community Health Nurse Development Program are beginning to show positive results. It is important to note that these home-grown solutions are decreasing the dependency on agency nurses. We are currently utilizing four agency nurses, a significant decrease from the daily average of 13 agency nurses used a year ago.

Over the past summer, I had the opportunity to travel to some of the communities. In each of the health care centres I visited, I was pleased to hear the enthusiasm and positive comments from nurses for the work they do.

The GNWT will continue to invest in recruitment and retention of nurses and other allied health professionals. The people of the NWT deserve excellent health care, and we are committed to supporting health care workers to ensure they have the resources to serve northerners.

I would like to thank our partners for continuing to work with the government to build and sustain a northern workforce that meets the needs of NWT residents and maximizes the number of northern-trained nurses in our health care system. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. McLeod.

Minister's Statement 38-15(6): Energy Efficiency Incentive Program

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to announce the successful launch of three new programs that are helping consumers all over the territory to be more energy efficient, save money and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The Energy Efficiency Incentive Program was launched July 6th as part of a three-program initiative. It is a \$750,000 program that provides rebates to residents and businesses that purchase energy efficient models of the products and appliances we use every day. These include snowmobiles, outboard motors, woodstoves, pellet stoves, furnaces and other appliances, as well as vehicles and home renovations. The program is delivered through a partnership with the Arctic Energy Alliance.

In the first month of the program, we received almost 60 completed applications for rebates from 10 different communities. To date, more than \$13,000 in rebates have been approved. Applications are coming in at a rate of three or four a day and the number of applications continues to grow. The feedback from retailers has been excellent and they report sales of energy-efficient products have grown.

We expect a surge in applications with the reinstated EnerGuide program, doing home audits again and with the fall heating season upon us. This program is one way the Department of Environment and Natural Resources is encouraging residents and businesses to make home energy efficiency a part of their everyday lives.

The Alternative Energy Technologies Program and the Energy Conservation Program are two other ways my department encourages energy efficiency. The first is a \$300,000 program, designed to encourage communities, businesses and residents to monitor local wind regimes and install renewable energy technologies like solar panels, wind turbines and ground source heat pumps. This program has received considerable interest and we can expect to see more alternative energy installations around the territory.

The Energy Conservation Program provides \$200,000 in contributions to community governments and non-profit organizations annually for energy-efficiency projects such as retrofitting buildings and replacing boilers and streetlights.

In addition to these programs, Mr. Speaker, the Department will begin working with retailers in the fall of 2007 to promote the use of the new generation of compact fluorescent light bulbs.

We want to encourage NWT residents to use these programs. Members of the Legislative Assembly should promote these programs in their constituencies. With increased promotion, these programs will be able to reach their full potential in saving people money, energy and greenhouse gas emissions.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bell.

Minister's Statement 39-15(6): Supporting The Production Of Traditionally-Tanned Moosehide

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce the Traditionally-Tanned Moosehide Program, developed by the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, to ensure the continuation of traditional tanning skills and the supply of quality materials for our northern artists and craftspersons.

---Applause

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

HON. BRENDAN BELL: This pilot program will begin utilizing hide distributors in Norman Wells and Enterprise. These distributors, experts in assessing quality hides, will grade and purchase traditionally smoked and tanned moosehides from NWT producers and sell the hides to artists and craftspersons at the purchase cost.

Mr. Speaker, the traditional tanning process takes much time, skill and hard work, but we believe that establishing a guaranteed market for these hides will encourage more production.

This is a winning solution for both the tanner and the artist. The tanner knows that payment is forthcoming for their hard work and the artist is confident that cost-effective hides will be readily available to support their craft efforts.

This program continues to confirm the government's commitment to support our traditional economy and provide new economic opportunity for harvesters and artists in our smaller communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On United Nations Association "A Sense Of Belonging" Diversity Project

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in 2006, the United Nations Association in Canada established a national initiative designed to promote diversity and reduce racism in Canada. UNA-Canada launched a project entitled "A Sense of Belonging" and established partnerships with local agencies in nine communities across Canada, one of which was the Centre for Northern Families in Yellowknife.

The United Nations Association is a Canadian non-governmental organization mandated to promote UN programs and activities within Canada. UNA-Canada sees itself as the people's movement for the UN.

Mr. Speaker, in fulfilling the mandate of the Sense of Belonging project in the NWT, the Centre for Northern Families' Immigrant and Ethno-cultural Program, directed

by Carolina Perdomo with the support of UNA-Canada and funding from Heritage Canada, has partnered to offer several information sessions to the public and carried out a consultation process with young people from both the aboriginal and ethno-cultural community.

Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, a film presentation of the youth consultation was highlighted at a UNA-Canada roundtable session which was the follow-up of last year's regional panel meeting. The roundtable explored priority areas and identified action items related to building a cohesive community, increasing civic participation by all sectors of the population and promoting religious and cultural diversity.

The work of UNA-Canada and the Centre for Northern Families of this exciting project in the NWT will be highlighted at a national conference in the spring of 2008.

In addition to the Sense of Belonging project, I am pleased the United Nations Association in Canada continues to expand its commitment to the North on several other fronts. UNA-Canada appointed a national board of director to represent the North and included the communities of Behchoko and Yellowknife in a national consultation process related to community perceptions of children's health. Children nine to 12 years old in both communities were directly involved in providing input into the Healthy Children, Healthy Communities project which identified social determinations of health among Canada's children.

As well, Mr. Speaker, UNA-Canada hopes to create a northern model United Nations conference that will involve college-level youth from across the territory. This model UN will simulate the activities of various UN bodies and be a significant opportunity to help northern...

MR. SPEAKER: I am sorry, Ms. Lee. Your time has expired.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May I seek unanimous consent to finish my paragraph? Thank you.

MS. SPEAKER: The honourable 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. I just want to say this model UN will simulate the activities of various UN bodies and be a significant opportunity to help northern youth realize their own sense of global citizenship.

I commend the work of UNA-Canada and Centre for Northern Families and I ask this House to do the same and recognize them in the in the audience later. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Operation And Management Of The Department Of Human Resources

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to discuss some issues today surrounding the operation and the management of the Department of Human Resources. Recently, there have been two well-known incidents where the Department of Human Resources have had some very serious issues to address. The first, Mr. Speaker, was the breach of PeopleSoft last winter where employees' private information was available to others on

PeopleSoft. This was known to staff of Human Resources. However, they failed to inform the Minister that there was a security breach in the software. This took place for about a month. I would like to know if the Minister or the Premier have taken any action on disciplining those involved in not telling them the truth.

The Audit Bureau has conducted a review of the security of the PeopleSoft system and it is supposed to be available some time by the end of this month. I would like to know if Members will be able to get a copy of this report before we all leave for the election.

The second item I want to highlight is the recent upgrade to the human resource information system known as PeopleSoft. I thank the Minister for his correspondence on this issue that we received lately but, again, I just don't believe that the Minister is getting the full story from Human Resources on what happened on that go live date of July 3rd. The company Answerthink was contracted to carry out the project. The problem is, Mr. Speaker, the contract was terminated on the exact same day, July 3rd, that the system went live. Would it not make sense to have a contractor who is responsible for the upgrade ready, willing and able to provide support after that go live date? There was no opportunity to fix it without the contractor there. Why was Answerthink not around? Who made that decision, Mr. Speaker? How many people went without a paycheque because of the failure of that system? In speaking to Answerthink directly, Mr. Speaker, they are in the process of coming back to Yellowknife to do some more work. They don't know anything at all about the Government of the Northwest Territories withholding any money in unpaid invoices.

Mr. Speaker, these two incidents highlight some very deep concerns that I have that this department is being mismanaged and that the Minister and the Premier continue to avoid dealing with the concerns that they have heard from Members of this House. The department, Mr. Speaker, has turned into a sweatshop, with senior employees routinely working hundreds of hours of overtime every month with no extra remuneration and no recognition. 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. As you can understand, this is very hard on employees. While this is happening, others are being targeted for dismissal. With the suspension comes stress. Mr. Speaker, the whole environment that that department has just turned into is a very sour place to work. Some of the comments I have heard are, "You have to watch your every step." "I feel intimidated every day I go to work." "If things don't change at Human Resources, I will be leaving Yellowknife." These statements, Mr. Speaker, send off alarm bells for me. They should also wake somebody up across the floor that it is time we took the incidents, employees' concerns and the clients' concerns seriously and take steps to fix the problems at Human Resources. Mahsi.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Aurora College Completion Ceremony

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, education is one of the most important issues we deal with in the Northwest Territories. Education is the key to our future. It is the key to the future of a lot of people across the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, earlier in the summer, I had the opportunity, as we do most summers at the end of the school year, to attend the graduation ceremony of Grade 12s. We also get to attend the Aurora College convocation ceremonies. It always gives us a great deal of pride to attend these and see a lot of people going through the program.

One of the most important events that I like to attend, Mr. Speaker, is the Aurora College completion ceremony that is held in Inuvik. A lot of people there have dropped out of the school system. They haven't been in the school system for awhile. They decided to go back and probably get an education because, nowadays, you need to have your education. They understand that. That is the one I think that I am most proud of. I am very proud of these people because I know a lot of them. They have been out of school for awhile. They raised families. I have seen a few of them have gone on to college and are actually starting to do quite well now. They are going to get their diplomas and degrees. These are a group of people that I am quite proud of.

Mr. Speaker, we still have some issues that I have brought up before on the Student Financial Assistance program. I noticed in the Minister's statement, he was talking about the benefit levels going up, depending on the cost of living. I am hoping that this applies to the student financial assistance where a student is going to school up North where there is a higher cost of living as opposed to a student going down south. The cost of living is a lot lower. If I read into this, I am hoping that has changed because of this formula he is talking about. That is something I think is quite important, because education is the future of our territory. It is the future of a lot of our people. It gives me a lot of pride to see more and more of these people continuing on with their education and getting better lives and better jobs. Eventually more people will continue on this course and we will all become quite self-reliant. This is going to help the Income Support Program too, because you will move more people off this program and starting to look after themselves like they should. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On 'Water Is Life' Conference In Fort Smith

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I just spent the last couple of days attending the Water is Life Conference in Fort Smith. There were 400 delegates that registered for this conference. They came from across the Mackenzie River basin. We had representatives from the Sahtu, the Deh Cho, Akaitcho, South Slave, North Slave, all across northern Alberta and Saskatchewan. We had the grand chief from the Deh Cho, the grand chief from the Sahtu, the grand chief as well from the Tlicho. The issue is very clear that there is an abiding interest in what is happening with the water, and fear that things are not all and well when it comes to that particular resource, the resource that gives us life.

Mr. Speaker, the elders have met. The general registrants were meeting today, but the message has come from every corridor that there is concern, that there are things happening to the water, that there are resource development projects especially in Alberta that are having enormous impacts downstream in the Northwest Territories, and the need and the call to aboriginal governments and the concerned stakeholders as well as the territorial government to take the steps necessary to better protect the water and the land. We cannot sustain the kind of development, the untrampled development. We have no idea of cumulative impact either in Alberta or in the Northwest Territories in terms of all the resource development that is on the drawing board or are currently in place.

The fundamental concern is for the future generations, the ability to actually drink the water out of the lakes and rivers, that there is going to be wildlife available for the children and the future, that the communities will, in fact, be able to continue to live on the water.

There are going to be recommendations coming out of this conference. I hope they are very clear and strong. I carried the message that there is going to be a new government that is going to be in place here in six weeks and that the issue of the environment is going to become centre stage and have to be tied very closely to any economic strategy. We need that balance. People want to see that balance. That is going to be what the people tell us, I believe, from what I have heard so far at this conference. I look forward to those recommendations. I would like to thank the Akaitcho chiefs for organizing this and all the organizers that made this possible. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Renovations To The Ulukhaktok Arts And Craft Shop

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Ulukhaktok is a picturesque Inuvialuit community located on the western part of Victoria Island. To the east lies Cambridge Bay and Nunavut.

During the COPE land claim negotiation, as a member of COPE I recall landing on the main street of a community for intense land claim discussions. But, more importantly, I remember the community rushing out of their homes to meet the plane with smiles and open hands ready to shake and hug the delegates as they arrived.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Ulukhaktok have depended on their traditional skills for many years. Today they continue to enjoy their traditional pursuits of hunting for caribou, muskox, seals, polar bears, and fishing for the most coveted prize of all, the Arctic char. I say coveted Arctic char because the people of Tuktoyaktuk rely on our families and friends from Ulukhaktok, Paulatuk and Sachs Harbour for this fish delicacy.

Mr. Speaker, today the people of Ulukhaktok depend on the jobs created by the hamlet, territorial and federal governments and recently the importance of recreational sports hunting and carving. There is one activity that the people of Ulukhaktok would like to continue and pursue, it is the...(inaudible)...and printmaking.

A few years ago, the people of Ulukhaktok, especially the elders, were renowned for their printmaking all over the world. Mr. Speaker, in May, a report and update that

repairs were done for the building related to the water and sewer repairs and the heating system of the Ulukhaktok Co-operative arts and crafts shop. These repairs were paid for by BDIC. The people working in the arts and crafts shop were very happy about these minor repairs. Mr. Speaker, in order to make the people of Ulukhaktok try and become self-reliant, this government must invest more funding to complete the repairs of the building. The Minister of ITI visited and saw first hand the arts and crafts shop, and he knows very well what needs to be done to repair the building, most specifically the printmaking and carving shop. I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the economic development officer for the Inuvik region for his dedication to this project. He continues to work with the department and the people in Ulukhaktok, the chair and CEO of IRC and the MLA, for their support.

Mr. Speaker, as MLA for Ulukhaktok, I fully support the project for the repairs so that the people of Ulukhaktok can once again show their artistic talent...

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Pokiak, your time for Member's statement has expired.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to complete my statement. Thank you.

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

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, as the MLA for Ulukhaktok, I fully support the project for the repairs so the people of Ulukhaktok can once again show their artistic talent to the people of the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Canada and the international scene. In closing, Mr. Speaker, I am requesting, in confidence, that this government support the artistic talent of Ulukhaktok residents and will find the necessary funding to complete the Ulukhaktok arts and crafts shop so the residents can become self-reliant and eventually display the printmaking and artwork around the world. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Improvements To Hay River's Water Quality And Supply

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in his Member's statement, Mr. Miltenberger said that water is life. That is true. Hay River gets its drinking water or potable water for our residents from Great Slave Lake. This has been the case for many years. There is a water intake line that goes into Great Slave Lake and brings water into Hay River.

Mr. Speaker, this spring, from May 16th to June 9th, there was a boil water order issued by the environmental health officer in Hay River. This is a big problem. This was during the time that we had about 1,000 or 1,100 extra people in town for the track and field meet. If there is a time that you need a drink of water, it is going to be the same things those kids were doing: racing down the track. This is a big challenge for our municipality because the Hay River isn't called the Hay River for nothing. It picks up a lot of silt or something along the way before it gets to Hay River, so normally in the spring it comes down.

Traditionally, the water is kind of murky for a few days and then things settle down. We continue to enjoy the wonderful water from Great Slave Lake, but we have a problem now in that this system is not satisfying the current Canadian drinking water guidelines. In order to retain a water licence, this is something that needs to be dealt with. For the second largest community in the Northwest Territories to have a boil water order for almost a month is completely unsatisfactory. However, the solutions to this problem are not going to be cheap and they are not going to be easy to find.

Another complicating factor, of course, is the fact that a lot of residents of Hay River have trucked water so they have tanks. So the sludge actually builds up in the bottom of those tanks and needs to be cleaned. That is not an easy thing for people to do. That is not an easy thing for homeowners to undertake. So this is a very big challenge that is facing our town, complicated by the fact that, of course, as you all know, the water sewer subsidy from MACA for Hay River was reduced by \$200,000 this fiscal year. We not only have an ongoing problem, we also have a capital challenge now. I will be looking to this government to support my community to ensure we can provide good quality drinking water in the future going forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Social Housing Rental Assessments

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I listened, with interest, to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment talk about helping northerners achieve self-reliance. That is the point I want to talk about this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, there are families in my communities in the Sahtu that are starting out to be self-reliant. They have jobs. There is a lot of activity going on there. As soon as they either enter the social housing or have a job and enter into a social housing unit, their rates of rent increase from nothing to \$1,100 for one month. It leaves them very little in terms of helping their families and children. These are young people who we encourage to go to school, get a job, but it seems like nothing has changed for them.

Mr. Speaker, my people are asking, is there a process here where we could help them through self-reliance? This was once a very self-reliant nation of people. Throughout the years, we have become very dependent on government. So much now, we are trying to help them become self-reliant again. In this process, they want to pay for their own roof over their head. They want to pay for things for their children. They want to learn how to be self-reliant. But through the system, we engage and had them enforced by our housing associations and the local Income Support Program. It doesn't pay, they say. It actually discourages people to get into social housing. Is there a way that we can phase in this approach where they could have ownership? They want their own homes. Can we phase in a process like that where it would help the families build up the process where they would feel that they are making a contribution? Maybe one day they could own their own home. Right now, a lot of them are saying that the health program is a good program but it doesn't do enough for them. It doesn't secure them not to say, yes, we want a career, we want to advance our

education. They say, as soon as we get our cheque, it goes right back to the government and just stops them from building and owning their own home.

Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. The big question is, how can we help our people be more self-reliant? Have them get into a place where they feel confident that they are making a contribution to their own people and have a house that they can proudly say this home is my home. They can probably say welcome to our house. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Recognition Of Tlicho Soccer Players

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. (Translation) Mr. Speaker, I will make a statement regarding the youth. In our Tlicho land, we have youth that play soccer. They have been in this sport for many years. They are recognized across our country not only here, but also in the United States. They also went to Europe for a tournament.

As a government, I have mentioned this many times in the past. So we are very happy that they win their tournaments. They went to the United States for a tournament and they came back in second place. As their families, parents, brothers and sisters, we are very happy. We want to thank them for their accomplishments. They are representing our country, so we are really happy about that.

I will mention their names: Marvin Migwi, Rusty Mantla, Kyler Apples, Tyler Sage, Gregory Black, Aaron Bekale, Marty Bouvier and also their coach, Michael Botermans. (Translation ends)

...future talented Tlicho soccer players. They have proven over and over that they can represent NWT and Canada at the provincial, national and international levels. Throughout their travels and tournaments, they have always prevailed, never let us down, Mr. Speaker. This is a testament not only to the commitment and talent of these young men and women, but even more important of the sport and recreation in our youth's lives.

Mr. Speaker, we are proud to highlight our talented and gifted young Tlicho athletes who participated at the 2007 Indigenous Soccer Cup in Albuquerque, New Mexico, earlier this month. Mr. Speaker, these are the same teams that received the NWT Team of the Year Award 2007, three that were awarded soccer scholarships. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to congratulate our 19 and under soccer team who won silver at the 2007 Indigenous Soccer Cup in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The tournament was hosted at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. After beating Arizona in the semi-finals 10-0, we lost to the host team from New Mexico in a championship final, 1-0. So close, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

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. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi, colleagues. They were very close.

---Laughter

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to have congratulations go out to Marvin Migwi, Rusty Mantla, both who are mentor coaches, and Kyler Apples, Tyler Sage, Gregory Black, Aaron Bekale, Marty Bouvier and Cordelia Bouvier and also their hard, dedicated coach, also like a father-figure for them, Michael Botermans. Mr. Speaker, it's always, always an honour to recognize these fine, talented Tlicho athletes and we will continue to do so. Mahsi.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Recognition Of Deninu High School Graduates

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to use my Member's statement today to recognize and congratulate seven students from Deninu Kue who have successfully completed high school and will be celebrating their graduation next month in Deninu Kue. The reason why they hold the graduation ceremonies in September, Mr. Speaker, is that the community and the school wants to ensure that all those who are marching down the aisle in the graduation ceremony have received notice that they have successfully passed all necessary courses required to graduate without any doubt. Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I did not mention the fact that this is the largest graduating class that has come out of the Deninu School ever since it has been built.

---Applause

I look to the future with optimism and excitement seeing more high numbers of grads coming out of our school system at the local levels thus having even more students from smaller communities with an opportunity to continue on with their higher education. That being said, Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to congratulate Jessica Sanderson, Stacy Lafferty, Destiny Lafferty, April Lizotte, Alma Mandeville, David Cardinal and Calvin Lizotte, Jr. on their graduation from Deninu School.

---Applause

I wish them all the best in their future endeavours and encourage all to become the best that they can be. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Deh Cho Bridge Project

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Two days from now, a major event, an historic event, will take place on the banks of the Deh Cho River and the community of Fort Providence. The event will mark the start of construction of the long anticipated, much beleaguered Deh Cho Bridge.

---Applause

Mr. Speaker, I am old enough...

---Laughter

...seasoned enough to remember the pro-bridge campaign of the 1970s when enterprising business

owners here championed the building of a bridge, then estimated to cost in the single million dollar digits.

It has been a pledge of mine, and I think every other MLA for Yellowknife since then, to finally see a permanent, affordable link between Yellowknife and the Tlicho region with the rest of Canada. So I wish I could stand and endorse the Premier and the Deh Cho Corporation this Friday, but I cannot, Mr. Speaker. This is because the people and the businesses who will be paying for this project for the next 35 years have been kept in the dark about the costs and the impacts and the other options we have. There are substantive benefits, too, to this project but, likewise, we don't know what they will be.

Mr. Speaker, this is in stark contrast with the excellent job of public disclosure and debate that the government provided us in 2003. But now as the costs have mushroomed to more than double the estimate that we started with then and we face sustained crunches in future costs of materials and labour, the Premier continues to insist that everything is the same. It's not. The government has decided to kick in \$2 million every year of new money; money that this government will need to finance other more vital projects. The Premier insists the toll will be the same as in 2002: \$6. Technically that's correct, but let's remember that cost is indexed and at the rate of about 4 percent a year that means that by 2012, when this facility will be transporting traffic, the toll in real dollars is actually going to be \$8.21 per tonne. Do the math, the real new math, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask for unanimous consent, Mr. Speaker, to conclude my statement.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, colleagues and Mr. Speaker. One thing is the same and that is the federal government's silence on whether to come in with a serious contribution and do its part...

AN HON. MEMBER: Shame!

MR. BRADEN: ...to help build this important piece of infrastructure. Mr. Speaker, if Canada were to come in with \$50 million, that's roughly the equivalent of only 66 days, barely three months, of the taxes and royalties they are now collecting from our resources.

AN HON. MEMBER: Shame on them!

MR. BRADEN: What a difference that would make. Disclosure is what we really need to know and Canada's commitment. Those are what remain the barriers to public confidence and the affordability of this project and I sincerely hope that both will be delivered soon, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Need For A Northern Hydro Energy Strategy

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to talk today about the need for a power generation and utilization strategy so we tap into our enormous hydro potential. There are a lot of people interested in hydro energy potential that exists in our NWT. The mines need a cheap, clean and abundant supply of energy to power

their operations. The people of the NWT need a cheap, clean and reliable source of energy, too. There are a number of potential projects before us. There is a green corridor, the proposed east to west national power grid, and I'm very interested in the potential the NWT can play in their role in helping produce clean energy for Canada. Officials from TransCanada Power and ATCO are proposing a hydro development on the Slave River. Finally, in addition to the Taltson River project, there is also the hydro potential of Bear River and a number of small river projects with the potential to power a number of communities with cleaner and cheaper energy for our people, Mr. Speaker.

I would encourage this government, our government, Mr. Speaker, to complete a power generation and utilization strategy to take full advantage of our northern hydro potential. This hydro strategy, Mr. Speaker, should consider the development of a green corridor. Potential revenues from this project and others mentioned should be reflected in a macroeconomic study that could help everyone, Mr. Speaker. We know our hydro potential in the North is vast. We need a strategic plan to work towards this goal. Yet again, cheap energy so people can afford their power bills, clean energy so we're working with our greenhouse gas credits, and a strong, strong, clear supply of energy to our communities, with less power outages, Mr. Speaker. And best of all, most of this work has already been done; it just needs to be pulled together. It's about the bottom line sometimes, Mr. Speaker, because why can we deliver cheaper energy in some areas of the NWT and more expensive in other areas but yet we don't seem to be working together? It's time we take a bigger picture approach; it's time that this government stop peacemaking what really is an ineffective approach on how we're doing business. Mr. Speaker, a power generation utilization strategy is the balanced approach we need to start looking towards the future. Let's get our power working for us. Thank you Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to recognize some of the people associated with the United Nations Association of Canada: project officers, Saad Omar Khan and Mara Brotman, both from Toronto.

---Applause

I think, actually, Saad might be from Ottawa. Sorry. Jeff MacKie, who is a national board of director for the NWT of the United Nations Association of Canada. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure today to recognize Ruby Trudel in the gallery who's a constituent of Yellowknife South and somebody's who's done some wonderful advocacy work for women across the Territories as it relates to breast

cancer. She's raised a lot of money, created a lot of awareness, and what struck me in her work was how she felt that this money needed to be targeted specifically for women in the NWT and her work in that respect. I want to thank her, on behalf of the people of the NWT, for that good work. Thank you.

---Applause

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize Mr. Glen Abernethy, a lifelong resident of the NWT and Nunavut and a constituent of Great Slave. Thank you.

---Applause

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to recognize Marvin Zaozirny, a resident of Weledeh, an active community member and a recently retired DOT employee from our airports section. Welcome.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to welcome Mr. Jonathan Zaozirny, who's going to be taking part in one of our programs that we've offered to residents of the Northwest Territories. Jon was born and raised here in Yellowknife, took his education here at Mildred Hall and Sir John Franklin schools and he's recently received a medical bursary through the Department of Health and Social Services Northern Medical School Entry Program. Next week he will be taking a trip down to Alberta to take part in his first year of medical school at the University of Alberta. We will be watching and ensuring, hopefully, that he returns when he's successfully completed to practice medicine along with the other students that return here. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. If we've missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to the House. I hope you're enjoying the proceedings. It's always nice to have an audience. Acknowledgements. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

ITEM 6: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is with great pride that, further to my Member's statement last week, I acknowledge two additional marriages in my riding and my community of Fort Simpson. They are gentlemen and ladies all. Mr. John Balsillie to Ms. Laurie Fradsham, young professionals of Fort Simpson which our North desperately needs. Also, Mr. T.G. Wilson to Ms. Kathy Blondin, young students who will become our young professionals that our North desperately needs. Mahsi cho.

---Applause

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

MR. BRADEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. In two world wars, more than 7,000 Canadian aboriginal people enlisted to fight for Canada and an estimated 500 gave their lives in the service of their country. However, upon returning to Canada, the surviving aboriginal veterans did not get the equal treatment from the Canadian government in terms of grants and other assistance.

Mr. Speaker, a tireless champion to right this injustice has been Mr. Tom Eagle, a 25-year veteran of the Canadian Armed Forces, a constituent of Great Slave, and a respected elder and leader in the NWT for many years. I would like to acknowledge the presentation this July by the National Minister of Veterans Affairs of a commendation to Mr. Eagle in recognition of his advocacy. He continues to work for aboriginal and, indeed, all veterans. He's also chairman of the NWT/Nunavut Aboriginal Veterans Association and president of the Army Cadet League of Canada for our two territories. Mr. Speaker, congratulations to Mr. Eagle and, on behalf of all Canadians, our appreciation for his leadership. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

---Applause

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

ITEM 7: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 172-15(6): Traditionally-Tanned Moosehide Program

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have some questions for the Minister of ITI in follow-up to his Member's statement about traditionally-tanned moosehides and pilot projects, which I think is a good idea. Mr. Speaker, I estimate that annually around the community where I live, there are about 100 moosehides left in the bush over the course of moose hunting season. It's always struck me as a terrible waste because there is no place to have these hides taken to; there was no incentive to take them out of the bush; they're heavy, they take up space in your boat. I notice Enterprise is one of the communities that will be involved in this. I would just like to ask the Minister, if he can just indicate maybe a bit more detail in terms of what incentive is there going to be, is there going to be a connection into the communities where moose hunting is such a viable pastime? Can the Minister indicate will there be any connection with, say, the Metis nations and the bands to make sure that there is some agreement or some process where these hides can, in fact, be brought out and put to use? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 172-15(6): Traditionally-Tanned Moosehide Program

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've had a lot of discussion around this program and I think there's a lot of interest in seeing this get off the ground. I understand, from some of the people who have some history in this government, that there have been attempts in the past to create and promote such a program. As the Member has indicated, we know that there are hides that are left to rot, and it seems a shame when we have so

many people asking and inquiring about our crafts. I was just at the tourism operation at the border, spoke to the people there who are running the bureau there, and they were making the same case, that we just have this what seems an insatiable demand for traditional crafts and nowhere, really, to send people to find that. So we anecdotally know there's a demand. We want to work with the hunters and trappers, with the Metis, with the bands to ensure that we are marrying up those who can tan these hides with those who would produce crafts and ensure that there is a supply of crafts in communities. So, yes, we will work with all stakeholders. It's a pilot program but we're going to work across the regions of the NWT that have an interest in this and try to see if we can't revitalize crafts in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 172-15(6): Traditionally-Tanned Moosehide Program

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we're fast approaching the time when the boats are going to be hitting the water and they're going to be going up and down, in fact, hunting for moose. I know, in the past, one of the suggestions was that if, like with fur, that if ENR told the hunters going out that if you bring back the moosehides we'll give you \$100 or whatever it is to cover the costs of the extra effort and time, and then ENR could, in turn, make sure that the hides are sent to the most appropriate location for the best use. Will something of that nature be in place in the next number of weeks or months to take advantage of the hunting season that's fast upon us?

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

Further Return To Question 172-15(6): Traditionally-Tanned Moosehide Program

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, we will ensure it is. There's a lot of interest, as the Member can imagine, I think, inside the department, which is where this program was generated; a lot of interest from those who work both in ENR and ITI in making this successful. They are eager to get this rolled out for this hunting season which is why we are unveiling this program at this point. So we will be working with our regional staff to roll out the details, make sure hunters know that the program is up and running and available, and hopefully we can generate a lot of interest. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 172-15(6): Traditionally-Tanned Moosehide Program

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's still not clear to me what type of incentive is envisioned to hunters to make them spend the extra time and effort to skin the moose, make sure they do it properly so they don't damage the hide, and then pack the hide up along with the moose meat to drag it back out of the bush onto their boats. It's heavy and it takes up a lot of space. So does the Minister have any idea, at this point, of some of the detail of what kind of incentive is going to be there in the next number of weeks to hunters to encourage them to bring those hides back? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 172-15(6): Traditionally-Tanned Moosehide Program

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, our people are going to work with the hunters and with the HTAs to ensure that everybody is aware of the types of hides and the care that is required. We're also going to sit down and negotiate a guaranteed price. I don't have, at this point, what that guaranteed price will be, but the hunters will know, going out, the range of the price for the hide, know that it's dependent on condition and understand that there is an incentive to make sure that it's properly handled. So they will have this information before they go out, I'm sure. I don't know what the guaranteed price will be. We've discussed, this morning in discussion at Cabinet, the typical range for a moose hide in terms of pricing, but I don't have that information with me and I think it will be dependent on condition. I can assure the Member that our staff will work with those hunters before they go out and they will know the range of the guarantee in terms of price. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 172-15(6): Traditionally-Tanned Moosehide Program

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The final question is in regards to the chain of this production. So could the Minister indicate if there's going to be arrangements made with the hunter, there's going to be a middleman or if the hide is going to go to the producer who is going to tan it, and then from there it's going to be sold at cost to the people doing the arts and crafts that require this? Is that how this is envisioned? So there's going to be a number of steps along the way with the resource, some dollars changing hands, there's going to be some value added to the point where it finally hits as a tanned product onto the cutting tables of the artists and artisans that use this? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 172-15(6): Traditionally-Tanned Moosehide Program

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, that's exactly how we envision the program working so that there is some incentive for the hunter who can make sure that these hides are properly tanned and that we have access to raw materials. I know Members in the House have been talking for some time about the raw materials required for craft production, the fact that we don't have a consistent supply. That is the piece and the link in this chain that has been missing that we are trying to deal with here and I hope very much that this can be successful. I know there have been past attempts at doing this and for a number of reasons it's been difficult. It is difficult work; it's very heavy; many of the hides were left to rot. I think the problem has been the financial incentive and the training and those are the two issues that we are hoping to address here, make sure it's worth people's while to provide these hides for craft production. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Oral questions. The honourable Member from the Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Question 173-15(6): Social Housing Rent Assessments

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. I want to commend the Minister in terms of some of the hard work that his department, plus Members

from this side, worked on the review of the Income Support Program review. The question I have for the Minister is in terms of supporting the goal of this government to provide meaningful tools to have our people be self-reliant. Is there sufficient flexibility within his department to have eventual assessments to look at the rent assessments to phase-in approach to people who are using these social housing units for their well-being? Is there a phase-in approach and is there flexibility? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 173-15(6): Social Housing Rent Assessments

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As rents are changed by local housing authorities, that should have no significant impact on the amount of money that it costs a family to live in that house if they are in financial need, because the amount of subsidy that is provided through the Income Support Program or through the public housing rental subsidy will change according to the family's assessment. So as rents change, the subsidies might change as well so that there's an offset. We would hope that that would allow the sort of phase-in that the Member is talking about.

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

Supplementary To Question 173-15(6): Social Housing Rent Assessments

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It should change, but it's not. So I want to ask the Minister, if a constituent of mine working a secure job wants to contribute to society and to family, the rent is \$1,100 from nothing from last month. The rent is maximum right now \$1,100. How can this program here help this constituent of mine in terms of being self-reliant, because nothing has changed? So again, is there some flexibility in looking at a phase-in approach to assessing the rent to allow them to come to a point where they feel that they could, with confidence, paying with confidence their rent at \$1,100? Right now this person can't. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 173-15(6): Social Housing Rent Assessments

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's hard to talk about a specific case without having all of the details. I will certainly commit to sit down with the Member this afternoon if possible to get the details and ensure that we have both the income support worker and, if necessary, the local housing authority work together to assess the situation this person might be in and see whether or not they're getting all of the benefits that they were entitled to from this government. Thank you.

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

Question 174-15(6): Renovations To Ulukhaktok Arts And Crafts Shop

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in my Member's statement with regard to the Ulukhaktok arts and crafts shop earlier today and I recall back in May when I requested information with regard to the renovations to the project, Mr. Speaker, I'm just

wondering, if I recall, at that time the Minister of ITI indicated that he will get his department to do a complete study and do the report with regard to renovations in Ulukhaktok...(inaudible)...if that project has to be done. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 174-15(6): Renovations To Ulukhaktok Arts And Crafts Shop

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, thank you. We have been working with the community, with the co-op in Holman as a stopgap measure because the co-op has been shut down for some time. We found some money to go in and do some repairs to the building envelope and to the heating system I believe to ensure that the building wouldn't fall into further disrepair. Since that time, and with the goal, of course, of getting the co-op back up and running and producing the art that it is so famous for, since that time we've been working very hard with the BDIC to try to generate a business plan for the co-op. As a subsidiary, the government would make an investment here and it would be co-owned, joint-owned, and that's something that we've been working on. I think we're getting very close to being able to roll that concept out again and I think people across the North, and I know tourists, have been looking forward to seeing those arts and crafts, especially the prints, available as they go to Holman again. So I hope that we have a good announcement soon, but I can tell the Member that we are working very diligently to try to revitalize the co-op. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 174-15(6): Renovations To Ulukhaktok Arts And Crafts Shop

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the response from the Minister in regard to that. I think one of the things that's important is that, as I mentioned in my Member's statement, to be self-reliant, this is one of the opportunities that Ulukhaktok will have. The Minister indicated that BDIC is preparing a business plan with the government investment. I'm just wondering how close is that plan in coming into place? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 174-15(6): Renovations To Ulukhaktok Arts And Crafts Shop

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, we think we're working out the final details. For instance, we think it can generate somewhere in the neighbourhood of 40 to 60 part-time jobs and a couple of permanent jobs in that community. It really can be an economic shot in the arm and I think it's going to reinstate a lot of the pride that that community had, and probably still has, in its craft production. But we know that we need to work with that community to make this happen. So I say we're close. I guess nothing is final until all the details are finalized, but I am optimistic that we will see this craft shop up and running. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 174-15(6): Renovations To Ulukhaktok Arts And Crafts Shop

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks for that, Mr. Minister. I'd just like to ask the Minister on whether they are coming close in terms of funding for the completion of that renovation. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 174-15(6): Renovations To Ulukhaktok Arts And Crafts Shop

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, I think I got the question. It was about the funding for the renovations. I believe those renovations have been completed. I can't remember if in the business plan it also contemplates further monies for renovations. My tour, the last time I was in Ulukhaktok, of the facility, from a lay view it seemed to be a very good building. I know that there were some issues that we were seeking to address, but it's not like it needed a massive overhaul. So I can't tell you if there are further renovations contemplated, but I know that we did do some building envelope stuff to ensure that the buildings would make it through last winter. Thank you.

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

Question 175-15(6): Behchoko Sportsplex Renovations

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker...(Translation)...earlier, my statement that I made, there's a sports complex in Behchoko. They have a lot of activities happening in the sportsplex, but it has been closed for awhile for renovations and there were monies allotted to renovate it. (Translation ends)

...our government of Behchoko community and allocated funds from their capacity building fund towards the Behchoko sportsplex, the soon-to-be multi-purpose building, for a comprehensive retrofit and expansion. The redesign will turn the building into a multi-purpose hall including a library, youth centre, ice rink and gymnasium. The design work is currently underway and completion of what will amount to a new facility expected by 2009. The newly completed facility will add considerably to the quality of life in Behchoko.

Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister responsible for MACA, Municipal and Community Affairs. Since the one-time funding of the capacity building will only cover the redesign of the building, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister and his department of how they could assess and help with the project financially to see this important project complete so we can see more talented Tlicho athletes from the region? Mahsi.

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

Return To Question 175-15(6): Behchoko Sportsplex Renovations

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we'd be glad to sit down with the community of Behchoko to review the options to do more work on this piece of infrastructure. However, I'd like to remind the Member that the community capacity fund was indicated to be one-time funding only and with no ongoing support. There is some other programs that we may be able to target or maybe allow for some of the shifting of their infrastructure funding or lever some federal funding. I

would have to sit down with the community and see what's available and what the plans are. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 175-15(6): Behchoko Sportsplex Renovations

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Minister is willing to sit down with our current Tlicho leadership. At the same time, I'd like to get some sort of a commitment from the Minister and his department to move forward with this initiative. I realize capacity building is a one-time fund, which really helped out a lot of our communities.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask my follow-up question to the Minister. Is the Minister of MACA open for partnership where the Tlicho Government, Behchoko Community Government, come out with some funds towards this important project. Could the Minister also commit towards this initiative via matching funds? Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 175-15(6): Behchoko Sportsplex Renovations

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as part of the New Deal, we transferred our capital dollars over to the community to decide and prioritize their projects. I've not seen the proposal for the Tlicho. However, as I indicated, I'd need to see what the business case is for this project and where the dollars were planned to be allocated from and what we can do for them. I'd gladly have our staff sit down and review that. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 175-15(6): Behchoko Sportsplex Renovations

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are getting somewhere with this so it's good, it's a good sign. I guess we're at the end of our term here. We're here until next week, but the Minister is still in his capacity until the next couple months. So I would like to find out if the Minister could meet with the community chief, the Tlicho Government and myself to move forward with this possibly I'm hoping next week? If he could commit to that, to sit down about that initiative. Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 175-15(6): Behchoko Sportsplex Renovations

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd gladly meet with the chief. In fact, I had a discussion with him this morning. I guess it would be providing that we can match our schedules over the next while and I'd be glad to work with the Member to try to set that up, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 176-15(6): GNWT Human Resources Information System

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't think a session goes by where I don't have some questions for the Minister who happens to be responsible

for Human Resources. We've heard again, during this sitting of the House, some more concerns regarding human resources and the rollout of this new upgrade. The first question I think that really needs to be asked is, I want to know specifically why the contractor, Answerthink, who was responsible for the upgrade, had their contract terminated on the exact date that the upgrade went live and that was July 3rd. I think I need an explanation on why that happened and who made that decision. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 176-15(6): GNWT Human Resources Information System

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure that it would be appropriate or correct to say that the contract was terminated. We have a contract with Answerthink for them to deliver a product and, as I've said previously in this House, we're not satisfied yet that the product has been delivered in the state which we were told it would be delivered. So at this point, we're not convinced that the contract has been completed, Mr. Speaker. We are expecting a team from Answerthink to be here next week, six people apparently, to work at resolving issues. Mr. Speaker, we think it would have been more appropriate had they come back on July 4th. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 176-15(6): GNWT Human Resources Information System

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again, I want to ask the Minister why the contract was terminated on July 3rd? Everybody that was involved in the rollout of this new upgrade said that the contractor had to be in place following the rollout of that program on July 3rd. They weren't. Their contract was terminated; they left. They couldn't have been there on July 4th and I want to know who made the decision to send them home on July 3rd, resulting in hundreds of people not getting their paycheques across this territory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 176-15(6): GNWT Human Resources Information System

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In our opinion, the contract is not terminated until the product has been delivered. So I'm not sure where the Member is getting his information that the contract was terminated, because we have a contract for a product to be delivered. Until it's delivered in a working fashion, the contract is not complete. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 176-15(6): GNWT Human Resources Information System

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the Minister which invoices, if the contract hasn't been completed, which invoices specifically is the government sending to Answerthink or Answerthink has sent to the government that they're not going to pay? Which ones of those invoices is the government not going to pay and for what work that wasn't supplied? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 176-15(6): GNWT Human Resources Information System

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I had said in a response earlier in this House to Mrs. Groenewegen, that there are some outstanding invoices with Answerthink and I have provided direction to the department that they not be paid until we are satisfied that we have a working system. So I can't tell you what specific invoices they are, but I do know that there is a substantial amount and we will wait and see what happens over the next few weeks in terms of getting the system up and running. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 176-15(6): GNWT Human Resources Information System

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Minister, who specifically went against the advice of staff in that department to send Answerthink home on July 2nd before the system went live on July 3rd? Who was responsible for sending the contractor home and not having the ability to deal with the problems that resulted after the rollout on July 3rd when the system went live, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 176-15(6): GNWT Human Resources Information System

HON. CHARLES DENT: Again, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure where the Member is getting his misinformation, but Answerthink was asked on two specific occasions just before the go live date, "Are you confident that this system will run? Has it run in tests? Will it actually perform as it's expected to run or should we wait until September?" On two separate occasions the Answerthink officials said, "No problem, this is going to work, we've run it in tests, we know that it works perfectly, we will see that it will run without any problems." So, Mr. Speaker, the question was put to the company. The contractor said that they had a product that was going to work without any problems, that they had seen it work in tests and that it would work; but when it went live, clearly, it didn't. So, Mr. Speaker, again, it comes back to Answerthink as having given the department the wrong information. Thank you.

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

Question 177-15(6): Status Of Longstanding WCB Claims

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are to the Minister of WCB and it's in following up to the commitment he made last week in answer to my question that he would provide us with stats on the long outstanding cases from WCB, how much progress the WCB has made since the introduction of the policy in April. With a day remaining, I have not heard anything from the Minister and I'd like to check up on him, with him, before the time runs out. Thank you so much.

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

Return To Question 177-15(6): Status Of Longstanding WCB Claims

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I did make that commitment in this House and I did state to the Member that I would get that information to her before the adjournment of this House. Thank you.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Ooh.

AN HON. MEMBER: You'll get it at supper tomorrow.

Supplementary To Question 177-15(6): Status Of Longstanding WCB Claims

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to think still that the words we put on the Hansard here are good and solid. Does that mean that I should expect that before the end of prorogation tomorrow? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 177-15(6): Status Of Longstanding WCB Claims

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 178-15(6): Hay River Water Quality And Supply

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, one last time my questions are for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. I have outlined a new problem that has appeared in Hay River. It probably isn't any problem in the sense that we do have muddy water in the spring almost every year as long as I can remember. However, the new problem is that we can no longer rely on the system we have in place to be adequate to meet the Canadian drinking water standards. This is going to require a solution. It is probably not going to be a cheap solution. We need to, first of all, explore what some of the options for a solution might be and then implement a solution. I would like to ask the Minister what funding may be available through his department to assist Hay River with this challenge. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 178-15(6): Hay River Water Quality And Supply

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are a number of different funding sources that we provide to the communities for assistance that they could use in the area of water facilities and infrastructure. That is the gas tax, the municipal rural infrastructure fund and the new capital dollars that we have provided. Mr. Speaker, we also have our staff work with communities to leverage any federal funding that might be available. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 178-15(6): Hay River Water Quality And Supply

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister if a need as pressing as this one could qualify under the extraordinary

funding that is available through his department. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 178-15(6): Hay River Water Quality And Supply

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If it was demonstrated that the need was an emergency, we would certainly consider it. In this instance, there may be other options. There may be treatment options. The municipality has also indicated that they may have to look at settling ponds. So we would really have to be convinced that this is an emergency. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 178-15(6): Hay River Water Quality And Supply

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is not spring right now, but in the spring when there is a boil water in place for almost a whole month, would that constitute an emergency for a population such as served by our water intake line? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 178-15(6): Hay River Water Quality And Supply

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the case of Hay River, there was no bacteria reported in the sampling. There was no reported illness from the situation. So I guess it is an inconvenience, but I wouldn't consider it an emergency.

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

Supplementary To Question 178-15(6): Hay River Water Quality And Supply

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to confirm with the Minister then, if the Town of Hay River administration put together an application under the extraordinary funding program outlining the problem, the challenge and the imminent costs, would MACA at least sit down and consider that possibility or that avenue? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 178-15(6): Hay River Water Quality And Supply

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we would sit down and evaluate the ask. Mr. Speaker, we have had some discussion on this. There are still a number of options out there. However, if there is infrastructure investment required and it is something that the community can't handle, we would certainly want to work with them. Thank you.

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

Question 179-15(6): Cost Of Living Component To Student Financial Assistance Program

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement, I spoke to the SFA benefits and some of the changes that I had hoped to see. I would like

to ask the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment if there have been any changes made to the SFA assistance based on the cost of living where the students are going to school. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 179-15(6): Cost Of Living Component To Student Financial Assistance Program

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is an issue that has been brought up a few times over the last year. It is something that I have promised that the department will have a look at and try to move forward on. At this point though, we have not been able to propose any changes to our system.

We have reviewed what other jurisdictions are doing. Notably, British Columbia does have a system that recognizes the higher costs of the northern part of the province. So our intent is to, after finishing that review, looking for other examples across Canada and looking at the cost of living differentials, come back over the course of the next year and propose some changes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 179-15(6): Cost Of Living Component To Student Financial Assistance Program

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister for that answer. It is encouraging to hear that we are hoping to make some changes within the next year, but we have been hearing from the people across the Territories that are going to school here for a few years now, so we should base our decision on what they are saying and not what we are hearing from somewhere else. I would like to ask the Minister if this is a decision that has to be made through legislation or is it a policy decision that he can just sign off before his term is up? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 179-15(6): Cost Of Living Component To Student Financial Assistance Program

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess I can sign off on it as long as I ignored the wrath of the Minister of Finance, clearly because there would be some financial costs for us to make changes to the program. It is an issue that will have to be proposed as an initiative that would be considered as part of the budget process. The Member talked about not necessarily looking at other examples. What we are doing is trying to look for examples of how this has been done in other jurisdictions rather than trying to reinvent the wheel. So we agree that it is a good idea. We want to find ways to ensure that northern students are encouraged to attend the northern colleges that we have such an investment in. So we are very seriously looking at how we can accommodate this idea.

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

Supplementary To Question 179-15(6): Cost Of Living Component To Student Financial Assistance Program

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the Minister's reply to the opening address yesterday, he said there are two outstanding issues that weren't

resolved. I think he meant just his. It is a good thing he didn't count ours in there. It would have been a lot more than two. As far as the Minister of Finance goes, I share a community with him so I can possibly work on him for the Minister of Education. It just astounds me that something that has been asked to the Minister so many times and brought to their attention so many times, that they are not bringing this forward. It is something that people want. They are having to wait a long time. I would like to ask the Minister why is it taking so long to listen to the voice of the people, hear what they want? Why is it taking so long to act on it? It is just confusing. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 179-15(6): Cost Of Living Component To Student Financial Assistance Program

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, if the Department of Education, Culture and Employment had an independent source of revenue, it wouldn't take very long at all. But since we have to look at all of our initiatives across government and work together to try and find which ones are the ones that are going to be funded, it is one that has to be done through the budget process. So the earliest that that is going to happen is going to be the budget that is considered in the spring of 2008. I have no doubt that the next government will look at this as a very important initiative and that the Members who are here in 2008 will be able to approve it for the next year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 180-15(6): Rockhill Apartment Lease Renewal

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask a couple of questions of the Minister responsible for FMBS, Mr. Roland. This regards the lease that our government supplies for the Rockhill Apartment building with the YWCA organization here in Yellowknife. The Y puts this building through very good use. It is part of a front-line social services infrastructure for families in need, emergency housing and transitional housing.

Mr. Speaker, the lease for this -- I believe it is a 10-year lease -- expires in May of 2008. The Y has been engaged for some time now in discussions with as many as five different departments of this government on the terms for renewing this lease. I brought it up in this House since June of 2005 with Ministers Dent and Roland and have, at various times, been assured that there is a process underway.

Mr. Speaker, with less than a year to go now before this lease does expire, could the Minister advise just what is happening in terms of the process to renegotiate this lease and give the Y the certainty that they and this community needs for the Rockhill Apartment? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board, Mr. Roland.

Return To Question 180-15(6): Rockhill Apartment Lease Renewal

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the issue of the Rockhill Apartment lease has been discussed through a number of departments, through Public Works, Housing Corporation, Education, Culture and Employment and Health and Social Services,

on what needs to be done there. The lease, right now, is held with Public Works and Services. Once the renewal is done, it will be moved to the Department of Health and Social Services. That is ongoing. The process will go. All departments agree that it is something that should be continued. Once we enter into that, there is still a year left in that lease, so work is ongoing. As to actual negotiations, I think that some discussions have happened. In the meantime, departments have been doing their piece to ensure that facility is kept up. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 180-15(6): Rockhill Apartment Lease Renewal

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the answer and the information. I must admit, I am not hearing anything that really substantively moves this along. I do appreciate that when a lot of departments get involved, things get a little less straightforward. Is the lead department the Department of Health and Social Services? Is that who is taking the reigns on this one on behalf of the rest of our government, Mr. Speaker?

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

Further Return To Question 180-15(6): Rockhill Apartment Lease Renewal

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, right now, the lease sits with Public Works and Services. Once the new lease has been signed, it would then transfer to Health and Social Services. So we are working with all departments that are directly involved, Public Works and Services, Health and Social Services and the Housing Corporation, directly. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 180-15(6): Rockhill Apartment Lease Renewal

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, I know that one of the conditions that is outstanding is that of ongoing maintenance. On the YWCA for instance, this year alone is covering almost \$70,000 in unfunded maintenance. This is everything from broken windows to fixing toilets and the kind of things that happen in a high traffic, high use building. Mr. Speaker, will any department or which department be looking at covering the Y for this very substantive and unfunded cost of operating that building? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 180-15(6): Rockhill Apartment Lease Renewal

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, that is an area that needs to continue to be worked on. Right now, again, a number of departments are involved with the organization and some of the expenses, and that would be Education as well as the Housing Corporation and Public Works, for some of its maintenance. It has done maintenance that it hasn't actually billed for. As well, when you look at it, the fact that there has to be a grant-in-kind registered on the books for the department that does enter into this lease. So there are significant dollars being put to that facility as well as capital or renovation work that is ongoing. Thank you.

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

Question 181-15(6): Traditionally-Tanned Moosehide Program

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I have a question to the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment with the introduction of the Traditionally-Tanned Moosehide Program. I think it is a great initiative that the department has introduced here. It is great that the government shows support to our traditional economy. I would like to ask the Minister if the traditionally-tanned caribou hides have been considered under this initiative also, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 181-15(6): Traditionally-Tanned Moosehide Program

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, I guess, as it is a pilot project, we are going to try it with moosehides first. We think that is where the demand is for some of our artisans. That is what we are hearing, at any rate. If we had success there, then we could look at other ways to ensure we have a constant supply of raw materials. But the pilot will start with moosehides. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 181-15(6): Traditionally-Tanned Moosehide Program

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have a pilot project on the go here. I would like to see caribou introduced under this program just for the fact that caribou are going to be traditionally harvested anyway. I think this would put more information in the hands of the Department of ITI on who is harvesting and how many are being harvested. I think that information will be critical when the wildlife boards come back with caribou harvesting quotas and changes to regulations that we have in the caribou issue. I know there are no dollars set on how much they are going to be buying the hides for, tanned or untanned. All of these things have to be put in place. What has the Minister's department basically budgeted for this program that is going to include moose only? What is the budget on that? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 181-15(6): Traditionally-Tanned Moosehide Program

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, I don't have that information here available. I will get the information for the Member. As I have indicated, we haven't considered, at this point, caribou hides. A lot of it is going to depend on uptake. We are not sure ultimately what the demand will look like, but we do have funds in the budget that we are going to use for moose at this point. We will watch the program. We will evaluate the program. If there is cause and room to expand it, we will certainly look at that. But we will get back to Members with the results of this before we propose to do that. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 181-15(6): Traditionally-Tanned Moosehide Program

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like I said, it is a great program. I think the government could really do a lot of expanding on this whole traditional economy support with caribou antlers and hides. But I just want to point out to the Minister that we have a lot of different types of caribou here in the NWT like the barren-ground and the woodland and the mountain caribou which are pretty much...There are a lot of mountain caribou and they are very big pieces of game. They are almost as big as moose in some areas here in the NWT. I just want to ask the Minister if his department would really seriously consider that a lot of people like in the Deh Cho area and the Sahtu area that do rely heavily on mountain caribou and woodland caribou would be considered as being compensated for their hard work and their traditional tanning of caribou hides, which is just as high quality as moose to artists and artisans here in the NWT? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 181-15(6): Traditionally-Tanned Moosehide Program

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, as I have said, we are going to consider it, but it will be moose first. We do understand that there is a fair bit of tanning of barren-land caribou hides already. It is much more prevalent, I believe, than moose. We have concerns about seeing moosehides left in the bush. We know that artisans are very interested in seeing traditionally-tanned moosehides. That is why we are starting there first. Thank you.

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

Question 182-15(6): Development Of New Hydro Strategy

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today in my Member's statement, I talked about my concern about how we are delivering power to our people in the North. I think that we need a clear strategy of where we are going to make sure we are delivering the best product to everyone. On top of that, I think we need to look forward and catch on to opportunities before us throughout Canada so we can harness our great potential here in the North. My questions, Mr. Speaker, are to the Minister of the NWT Power Corporation. So, Mr. Speaker, does the government have plans to develop a power generation and utilization strategy, in other words, a new hydro strategy, that will work to help develop and implement cheaper power for people of the North? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 182-15(6): Development Of New Hydro Strategy

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as we all know, through our business plans, I did commit. We are developing a hydro strategy in light of the change to develop our own hydro corporation. We are working with looking at mini hydro in communities. We are looking at the hydro potential to the pipeline. We are looking at hydro potential in regards to the expansion of Taltson, the diamond mines. In order to conclude that, we have directed the corporation to develop a hydro strategy

which we are hoping to have completed and brought forward as a transitional document to the incoming government of the 16th Assembly. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 182-15(6): Development Of New Hydro Strategy

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with the Minister of the Power Corporation being the head of the Power Corporation obviously, is it part of their mandate or policy to ensure that we are delivering the most effective, affordable and cheapest power available? I am concerned that the NWT Power Corporation power rates are higher than they are when they are delivered by independent sources such as Northland Utilities. Is it the policy of the NWT Power Corporation to ensure that they are delivering the most affordable power to each home? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 182-15(6): Development Of New Hydro Strategy

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, the perfect solution will be to have hydro power in all of our communities. We all have similar rates and everybody pays the same price. Because of the system we have today, we have three different rate systems. We go through a PUB process. I think the system itself has to be looked at. Again, that is something that we are hoping to bring forward to the incoming government, 16th Assembly, so they can have a debate and also come forward through the strategy, through the homes that we are working on, further transitional document for the incoming government. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 182-15(6): Development Of New Hydro Strategy

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I understand it, a lot of this work is sort of already done. So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to find out what we are actually doing with this information. Mr. Speaker, we are moving forward on the Taltson project. I would like to find out how we are lowering our power rates for northerners. Are we going to eventually hook up the Taltson power through Yellowknife and possibly go through east to west and hook up some of our South Slave communities? Are we working towards this? Cheaper power is before us. The opportunity is before us. So with the information before us, what are we doing with that great information? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 182-15(6): Development Of New Hydro Strategy

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the challenge that we face is because we have such a small customer base by 40,000 people and trying to have the infrastructure and the cost to operate that infrastructure burdened by that 40,000, you have to find new customers. Again, you look at other provinces across the country and Quebec, Manitoba, B.C., who have developed their hydro industry around the export of power. As the North moves forward, we will have to consider that as a means of generating new revenues.

We are looking at other revenue sources, such as I mentioned, the diamond mines, the pipeline, in regards to getting those customers to pay the majority of the cost to generate that power but, more important, for us to bring in more revenues so we are able to bring down the cost of power to residents of the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 182-15(6): Development Of New Hydro Strategy

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, as many of us know here, the PUB keeps shooting down the one-rate zone because you can't operate in isolation. In other words, as the Minister has pointed out, you can't have one style of power generation here and another there and another there and they come at three different costs. In fact, you can't harmonize the costs because of the different delivery systems that we have. So, Mr. Speaker, how to deal with this is right before us. We can start harmonizing our power generation by working together. As the Minister said, we can start putting power to our diamond mines. In the sort of bigger picture moving forward view and strategy, will the Minister of the NWT Power Corporation work to ensure that, when we develop the Taltson project further, he will ensure that the Yellowknife system will be hooked into this as it goes by to the diamond mines and that will help with the territorial power rates by bringing everyone's power rate down, including Yellowknife? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 182-15(6): Development Of New Hydro Strategy

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in regards to the comment the Member made regarding the PUB saying we are not interested in one rate, I don't think that is the case. The PUB has made it clear that it has to be a policy decision by this Legislature and the government of this Legislature to establish that policy is clear and concise on exactly what we want to subsidize and what we don't want to subsidize. Again, it is a policy decision that has to be made by this Legislature to look at the rate systems that we have and direct the PUB to consider that. Thank you.

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

Question 183-15(6): Social Housing Rent Assessment

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to continue my questions with the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment on this issue of the housing rental assessments. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Minister wanting to sit down with me within this short time frame of our term as a Member. I would like to ask the Minister, this is one example in my questioning the housing assessments. There is a high core need in my community and other communities in the North. There are a lot of people that are crammed into these little houses. The assessments are done on household income, not on the person who is signing the lease for that house. Mr. Speaker, I just want to state that there are a lot of people who are crammed into these units here. A lot of them want to work, but they are getting dinged by the Housing Corporation. Is the Minister willing to look at some flexibility and a phase-in approach to these people to start

taking ownership of their own homes through a phase-in approach to paying for their rent? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 183-15(6): Social Housing Rent Assessment

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Member is aware, it is the Housing Corporation that sets the rents for units in the North. Education, Culture and Employment calculates what subsidy a family might qualify for. That rent is then taken into account. We can certainly sit down with our partners at the Housing Corporation, as I said earlier, to make sure that we are available to work with members of the community to ensure that they are aware of all the programs. The Housing Corporation has a number of programs that are geared to income to help people get into better housing situations. We are now tasked with both ECE, Housing Corporation and Health and Social Services staff trying to work more together. I can make that commitment to the Member that we will look to see what we can do. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 183-15(6): Social Housing Rent Assessment

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Minister's willingness to go to bat for the Sahtu people and other people around this issue here to talk to the Minister of the Housing Corporation. Mr. Speaker, it is a good program that the department has put out; however, it needs some tweaking. It needs to continue to be improved. This is one issue here. Would the Minister, through his discussions with the Housing Minister, look at this situation where the phase-in approach could be done immediately in terms of supporting people who are now in this situation? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 183-15(6): Social Housing Rent Assessment

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, I will ensure there are staff that get together to follow up with the concern in the community immediately. We will work to ensure that the supports that are available right now are being provided to family members. The other thing that is important, Mr. Speaker, as I said in my statement today, the next program that we are hoping to see some work on redesign is the public housing rental subsidy. So we are expecting that that program will also now, over the course of the next year, be modified to reflect the new policy that we have in this government. That policy clearly is set up to ensure that it is flexible and it brings people the supports they need to become more independent.

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

Question 184-15(6): GNWT Human Resources Information System

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions again are for the Minister responsible for Human Resources. We look back over the past 10 years of this government and the government before it and the

government before that have spent over \$8 million in the area of PeopleSoft and the software there for human resources. Just last year, we spent another \$450,000 on a Hackett report to go over business processes at HR. Just recently in the supp, there is another \$523,000 to deal with PeopleSoft. It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that it is a black hole of public funds that is going into a product that basically does not deliver the value for the money that the government is putting into it. I would like to ask the Minister what the plan is going forward to deal with the inadequacies of that software, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 184-15(6): GNWT Human Resources Information System

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The issue of the cost of the PeopleSoft program shouldn't be a surprise to the Member. If you look at the Grant Thornton report which was done in the year 2000, it predicted that the annual cost for PeopleSoft would be about \$1.8 million including licensing, software support, hardware acquisition and so on. So there is an ongoing cost to having any program that the government runs, because it has to continually update that and pay for its support and licensing.

Mr. Speaker, it is also important for me to state that the programs, all of the modules that are used right now, are working as expected. So there is one module which would have been a new module over and above what the government had in place before that is not working, but everything else is working as expected. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 184-15(6): GNWT Human Resources Information System

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I'd like to get at is we are spending all this money in the area of PeopleSoft and it's because the program itself was cut up over the years or bastardized, if I could. I want to find out who is responsible for making these decisions where that program that we've spent millions of dollars gets cut up to suit our needs of the day and it doesn't look long term on what the future needs of the Government of the Northwest Territories are and we end up having to pay more money. I'd like to ask the Minister who is responsible for making decisions in regard to PeopleSoft when it comes to cutting that program up and causing us to spend more money in the future, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 184-15(6): GNWT Human Resources Information System

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that was a decision that was made by previous governments, so it's not one I can specifically say that was a previous Premier or Minister responsible for HR because that department is new. However, it was done prior to this government coming into place in 2003. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 184-15(6): GNWT Human Resources Information System

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to know if anybody that was responsible for making decisions that are affecting us today is still working for the government and, if they are, I really do believe, Mr. Speaker, that somebody somewhere has to be held accountable and has to be responsible for the decisions that were made with PeopleSoft. If it's not the Minister, it's not the Premier, it's not this government -- they want to wash their hands of it -- who is it? Who can we say is responsible for the situation we find ourselves in today, Mr. Speaker?

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

Further Return To Question 184-15(6): GNWT Human Resources Information System

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, because that relates to a previous government, I can't answer that question. As the Member is quite aware, in our system of government it is the Minister that is responsible for decisions that are made by their departments. Therefore, the Minister, if the question had come up in this House at the time, then that Minister could have been held responsible. But we have a situation where...It's like in Ottawa when we have the Liberals in power, they blame the party that was there first; when the Conservatives come in, they blame the Liberals. Well, it's the same situation in here in that we're not able to go back and say that such and such should have happened. At the time that some of these decisions were made, I certainly wasn't on Cabinet. It's a situation where it's a ministerial responsibility and the person who is responsible may not ever be found. Sorry.

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

Supplementary To Question 184-15(6): GNWT Human Resources Information System

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, given the incidents that I've pointed to today such as the security breach that happened last winter, the recent module failing, all of the concerns of the employees, the client concerns, those hundreds of people who didn't receive a paycheque after July 3rd when the system crashed, I'd like to ask the Minister is there going to be any disciplinary action taken on staff at Human Resources for causing us these problems, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 184-15(6): GNWT Human Resources Information System

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact, everybody did get a paycheque so there isn't a situation where people haven't been paid. In fact, everybody got a paycheque by the next banking day. That happened because of the work that people put in at the Department of Human Resources. I'm quite proud of the fact that people worked 23, 24 hours straight in order to ensure that the paycheques went out. Mr. Speaker, as I have said before, in our opinion, the reason that there was a problem stems back to the contractor. This government does not have the expertise to buy a program off the shelf and install it; that's why that was done through a contractor. We had a contract for a program to be delivered. In our opinion, it wasn't delivered in a working fashion. Thank you.

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

Question 185-15(6): Tuktoyaktuk Telehealth Equipment

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if I recall, Tuktoyaktuk was supposed to receive telehealth equipment for the Tuk Health Centre this past year. I would like to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services if he can give an update in terms of when the installation of that equipment will be located in the Tuk Health Centre. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 185-15(6): Tuktoyaktuk Telehealth Equipment

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe the equipment, along with a lot of other health centres as we've engaged in implementing our Telehealth Program throughout the Territories, is in the community, but it's a matter of getting some work done on the facility to have the proper hook-ups in place. That should be happening fairly soon, but I don't have the specific date. I can get that to the Member. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 185-15(6): Tuktoyaktuk Telehealth Equipment

MR. POKIAK: Thank you for that information, Mr. Minister. I'm just wondering...I would appreciate it if you can provide that information and maybe within the next month or so that it can be in place. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 185-15(6): Tuktoyaktuk Telehealth Equipment

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do believe we are aiming for near the end of September, but I'll have to verify that information. Yes, I will get that to the Member. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The time for question period has expired; however, I will allow the Member a supplementary question. Mr. Pokiak.

Supplementary To Question 185-15(6): Tuktoyaktuk Telehealth Equipment

MR. POKIAK: Thank you. Does the Minister guarantee that by maybe October 1st it will be up and running? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 185-15(6): Tuktoyaktuk Telehealth Equipment

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my role as the Finance Minister I've had to sign different guarantees, but on this one specifically, because we will have to go out for a contract and get some renovations done, I can't guarantee it. However, our goal is to have it in place for the fall time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The time for question period has expired. Written questions. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

ITEM 8: WRITTEN QUESTIONS**Written Question 13-15(6): Benefits Provided To Income Support Clients And Persons With Disabilities**

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

1. Income support clients are covered for some benefits such as ambulance, dental and vision services, but some people with disabilities who cannot work and who collect CPP/disability pensions are not covered. Why does this discrepancy exist? Has or will this issue be addressed in the income support review?
2. Our government provides supported living for persons with mental health and intellectual challenges, but not for those with physical disabilities. Enhanced home care services and other suggested living programs are needed. Has or will this discrepancy be resolved in the income support review?

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Written questions. Returns to written questions. Before we go to the next order on the Order Paper, colleagues, the Chair is going to call a short break.

---SHORT RECESS

MR. SPEAKER: Back to the orders of the day. Item 10, replies opening address. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

ITEM 10: REPLIES TO OPENING ADDRESS**Mr. Bell's Reply**

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity today to announce to my constituents that I won't be seeking re-election in the upcoming territorial election. I want to thank them for their support over the last eight years. It's been an absolutely wonderful experience for me; the most rewarding eight years of my life. Of course, a number of things, and Members know, Mr. Speaker, have happened to me in my personal life over the last eight years, very important things: I have been married, I have two wonderful children now and so it's an amazing time of change for me. Professionally, it's been absolutely stimulating, very rewarding and it's given me the opportunity to meet and work with some very exciting people. So it's been a great experience.

I have a number of people I would like to thank. Everybody in this building, who works in the building, I want to tell them how much I appreciate the staff, the efforts that they've made, the Members I have had a chance to work with and the friends I have made in this building both in the last four years and previous. I very much appreciate the chance to work with them. So it was a difficult decision for me to make, one I made with my family with a bit of a heavy heart because I like the job as much today as the day I was first elected. I am as excited about the job today as I was then, but there are a number of other things I would like to pursue, so I will be doing that.

Let me thank my family; my wife, Jill, my daughters, Emily and Madison. My little daughter Emily is now just getting to the age where she is starting to understand that I go off to work. I am sure my wife put her up to it, but she's been asking me daily for the entire week if I have retired yet.

---Laughter

So tonight when I go home, I can tell her that yes, in fact, I have retired and it seems a very strange thing to say; retired from territorial politics at this time. A lot of credit to my wife. As Members of this House know, much of your personal life, this job ends up being the focus of it. You end up being the centre of attention in the family, obviously not deliberately, but it just goes with the territory, and my wife has made a lot of sacrifices for me in this job. I very much love her for that and appreciate that. I am excited about the chance to spend more time with her, with my little girls, more pancakes on the weekends. They have been through a lot with us. There are many ups and downs, as Members know, in this job. More ups than downs, I must say, but they have been very strong through it all. It's difficult for spouses, Mr. Speaker. They never appreciate when they see things in the media or newspaper that they feel is unnecessarily critical of you. It's one thing for us to develop the thick skins that we all must and we all have, but it's entirely another to see our families go through that. It's been a great experience, as I say. I can't think of another job where I would have the ability to travel to all 33 communities in the Northwest Territories. That's been great. As a youngster, of course, I did sports and got a chance to travel a fair bit, but nothing like this and not meeting the kinds of people that I have met. I know my wife understands how important that was to me and has been very supportive of me the whole way through.

There are some staff people I would also like to mention. MaryAnne Woytuik has been with me eight years, first as constituency assistant and now upstairs in my office. I love her like family. She's wonderful and she's been very supportive and I will very much miss working with MaryAnne on a day-to-day basis.

Pietro DeBastiani, he's been great as well. Early on, he and I sat down and talked about what I thought the job that he was about to embark on entailed and what was most important to me. I said to him the most important thing to me was he work very closely with Members, ordinary Members, to deal with and solve problems on behalf of their constituents. I found it somewhat frustrating as an ordinary Member in my first term trying to deal with Ministers who were very busy, their office was very busy and I wanted to commit, between the two of us, that we would put Members' concerns as top priority and so that has been his first priority. I hope that Members have found that that has been a good experience for them. I know Pietro takes the concerns very seriously and works very hard for you.

The other thing I would like to say about Pietro is he's been very good to remind me that this job will go on, this government and the people will go on after each and every one of us is gone, but our families are critical. Striking that balance is critical. That's the most valuable piece of advice Pietro has given me and I thank him very much for that.

I would also like to mention Betty Anne Winsor who was my constituency assistant. She's been gone for about a year now and she was so good that I figured that I could never replace her adequately, so I just never bothered.

---Laughter

I miss her. She was wonderful for the constituency and did a great job. I appreciate all of her efforts.

To the departmental staff, I have had a few departments. I have gone through the change to ITI from ENR. Some of that was difficult, but I want to point to two people; my

deputy minister who says, as I think all Members know and certainly Ministers know, you are only as strong as the team that you have, and that deputy minister is certainly a critical part of the team; Don Cooper with the Department of Justice. I think people across the Northwest Territories like Don, liked to work for him and that's why I think he's been able to assemble one of the strongest legal teams in the North and kept all of those people together for a long, long time. There is very little turnover in that department and people find it very rewarding to work for him and I have been the beneficiary of that and I think all of us in the Assembly have been the beneficiary of that. A lot of credit goes to Don for that.

Peter Vician, let me say that in this job meeting with industry, I have met a lot of CEOs of energy companies, a lot of CEOs of mining companies who are all very, very well paid, much better paid than we pay our deputy ministers. So I can tell you that I have not many of them who I think are more competent than Peter or who do a better job at doing their job than he does. He is an absolute professional and this government is lucky to have him.

Assembly staff, there have been a number of people through this building and let me say I appreciate all of your efforts over the years. I hope that, again, although Members are the focus of so much of what we do, I hope that I have been able to deal with you fairly. Member Miltenberger has commented often before on Members and how we tend to become "clicky fingered" I think is how he refers to it. That potentially may be inevitable. I hope that we haven't been with the staff and I want to tell them how much I value the work that they've done. Board of Management staff, first David Hamilton in my first term was instrumental in providing advice to the Board of Management. I was on that and had quite a role in dealing with a number of events on Board of Management. Katherine Petersen as well provided very good advice to that board. Now filling those shoes, and filling them ably, is Tim Mercer and Glen Boyd. I appreciate all the work they have done for that board that has taken a lot of my time over the last eight years. Myles Moreside, let me say, if I could point to one guy, the wheels could really fall off this place if Myles eventually retires and I suppose it's inevitable that he will, but I appreciate all of his work on behalf of Members.

My future, Mr. Speaker, there are still a lot of unknowns for me. There are a number of things I am interested in politically as I have alluded to. I won't deny that I will have an interest in that in the future, but more immediately I am looking forward to getting back into business. This is something that I have missed immensely. That has never been off my mind. I look forward to being able to pursue some of those interests in the near future. Who knows what the future will bring, but I want to just tell my constituents that I appreciate your support. It's been a great experience for me, an eight years I will never forget. I want to thank you for that. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Replies to opening address. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Mrs. Groenewegen's Reply

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will try to make this brief, but I didn't want to let the opportunity pass to share some of my reflections on work in this Assembly.

First of all, I want to say what an honour it is to serve the people of the North and particularly constituents of Hay River South. For as long as I can remember, I have had an irrepressible need to know what's going on and being involved in what's going on and contributing to the things I believe are worthwhile and valuable.

There are some things about this job that are challenging at times, but at the end of the day we can look back with some satisfaction at the results of what we've accomplished and how each and every Member has made a difference. I think sometimes we underestimate the influence that our varied background and life experiences bring when we come together to advance the aspirations and well-being of our constituents.

I am a 12-year Member now of this astute institution and this will be the pride of my résumé's achievements, but, more importantly, I hope a season of leadership on behalf of a community and a group of people who, with me, call Hay River home. It's that interaction with those constituents that brings the most fulfillment for me. It makes all of those long drives, including the drive on Highway No. 3...

---Laughter

...and early morning departures to catch that flight to Yellowknife, leaving home and family, worth the effort. I never cease to consider it an honour when approached by a constituent to help them in some way. You need the patience to listen, the wisdom to provide counsel when asked for it, the knowledge to identify some potential solutions, and the skill to articulate the need or the idea to a Minister or your colleagues from whom you need support for results.

I believe that in spite of many challenges we continue to face in our territory, that the future of the North is very bright and I look forward to facing that future in this Assembly again should the people of Hay River choose to elect me again on October 1st. It's a unique opportunity to take a chapter in time and bring your efforts and experience to bear on the issues during such an exciting time here in the North.

I'll save all the winds for Hay River during this last term for the candidates' forum. I won't share that.

---Laughter

It's a long list though. I'd like to wish my fellow colleagues all the best in their future endeavours, whether that be in this arena or wherever their lives may take them and we have a close working relationship and that camaraderie in this setting creates a bond that will last long after we've walked out of these doors.

To the Members who have decided to move on, Premier Handley, Mr. Dent, Mr. Braden, Mr. Bell, it has been a pleasure. Mr. Dent told me after his reply to the opening address this week that he was going to mention that no matter which department he was asked to head, that I always picked on him.

---Laughter

---Applause

Let me assure him today, Mr. Speaker, that it was never personal and that I have the greatest respect for him and his lovely family. It was indeed a pleasure to have Tyler here in the Assembly as a Page last week and he should be very, very proud of his son.

Mr. Braden, I call him the walking thesaurus because, unlike my crisp and direct communications most of the time, Mr. Braden searches for the most appropriate word and sometimes in doing so uses three words in place of one.

---Laughter

To Mr. Bell, of course somebody who I have been close to during my 12 years, his eight years here in this Assembly, and certainly a bright and articulate young man with many good prospects for the future and I'm sure will go far. So keep an eye on Mr. Bell because in a term they use in the legal profession, let me say, he is absolutely top drawer.

To Premier Handley, who will have now more time to pursue things that he loves, and when you talk to him you have to believe that he loves his grandchildren and I'm sure he'll have more time to spend with them now than ever. I understand his wife's picked out a new motor home. So she will get some of that time that she will want to spend with him and won't have to share him with everybody else. At least for a little while, until he takes up something new.

To my seat mate, Mr. Ramsay, it's very lonely here on the far right.

---Laughter

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Ooh.

---Applause

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: I only have one seat mate and he's only slightly to the left, but I don't know who arranged the seating. I guess Mr. Bell is on the far right over there too. Anyway, it has been a delight to sit beside Mr. Ramsay. Again, an inspiration and I've enjoyed that very much.

I would like to also take this time to thank my colleague from Hay River North, the Honourable -- and we don't use that word lightly -- Paul Delorey, for the collaborative approach that we have enjoyed in representing Hay River together.

I would like to thank my wonderful constituency assistant, Wendy Morgan, for the past eight years. I can't even imagine what my job would be like without her support and assistance. We approach our work as a team and I know the constituents of Hay River South appreciate her as much as I do.

As has been mentioned in more detail so eloquently by previous replies, the staff who support us here at the Legislature are incredible and, trust me, they do not have an easy job. Politicians are not without their idiosyncrasies and somehow they manage to accommodate all that. So thank you to them.

Lastly, I would like to thank my family for their support. My son Jordan and his wife, Kathleen, and my beautiful new granddaughter, Julianne; my son Jeffrey and his wife, Kandace, and my delightful grandson, Grayson, here in Yellowknife; and my daughter Jillian and her boyfriend, Jonny, who also live here in Yellowknife.

This past Monday, Rick and I marked our 30th wedding anniversary.

---Applause

I wasn't home, but we defer all these celebrations until later. Yes, it has been said that Rick Groenewegen deserves a medal. It's true. When I was just 18 years old I made three decisions that were major impacts on my life.

One was to leave south-western Ontario and move to Hay River, Northwest Territories. Two was to bypass leaving the North to go home to pursue a post-secondary education. I did not do that. Three was to marry the first guy that I met in Hay River.

---Laughter

He was the first guy I met in Hay River. I didn't come here saying I would marry the first guy I met, but he was the first guy I met.

---Laughter

All decisions with which I am extremely happy. I have to say, as a Christian too, suffice to say that God is good and has been very good to me.

In closing, to my constituents, thank you for your confidence. To my colleagues, thank you for all and all the best to you in your future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Replies to opening address. The honourable Member from the Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Mr. Yakeleya's Reply

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was sitting yesterday wondering what I'm going to say to the opening replies this afternoon. I was sitting there and I got a phone call from my wife and she said that things were going around, how long are you going to be there, when are you getting back home. Then she was talking and she said oh, little guy, Scott, he's going to school today, Grade 1, he's going to school and he's crying. I said, put him on the phone. Got him on the phone and he says, Daddy, how long are you going to be? Mr. Speaker, he was in his very sad-toned voice and I said I'm going to be a couple days and we talked and at the end of the phone call I said listen to your mom, say your prayers and you've got to go to school tomorrow. It will be okay, Dad. He made those comments and he said he loved me.

As a politician, as an MLA, I really appreciate the Members who are leaving, not because they are leaving, I appreciate them because of what they have put on line for themselves to serve their own people, the sacrifices they have made, you know. So the instances like that that we don't really talk about amongst ourselves or to the public because we're there to serve the people, but foremost we've made that choice not knowing some of the circumstances we're going to run into. The missed birthdays, the missed anniversaries, decisions that we have to make even to attend the funeral of a loved one or to stay in the Assembly or to attend committee meetings. As MLAs, though, I really appreciate the sacrifice and the work they have done on behalf of the people of the Northwest Territories, but also, more importantly, the sacrifice they had to live with for their family and their children. As leaders, that's what we strive to do.

It is said as leaders, Mr. Speaker, that in order to continue moving on up, you've got to stay up in terms of you've got to go up, you have to make some sacrifices. Those MLAs and to their families I have to really say that first and foremost to our own families and to our wives and, as Mrs. Groenewegen put it, to her husband and to our children the things that we really, really owe them at the end of the day when we put our head on the pillow, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the work that we do. At the end of the day, how is our family?

The people that work here in the Legislative Assembly daily, they put out, this is what they get as politicians, as MLAs, what they have put on the line for themselves also. We really need to think about this. This is a wonderful job, Mr. Speaker. You know, it says champions don't become champions in the ring, they're merely recognized just being there. MLAs just don't become MLAs in the Assembly, they're recognized in the Assembly and our work is very, very loud and clear, like Mr. Miltenberger told me when I came in, 24/7, 24/7, I still can hear. What did he mean 24/7? You know, it's so loud and clear.

Mr. Speaker, throughout the 3.85 years in the North as MLA at a new election here, Mr. Speaker, I heard some very good discussions in the committees in this House, good discussions with our former leaders of this Assembly, discussions with our leaders amongst ourselves about working together in the Assembly and the consensus is alive and well in the Northwest Territories. I'm so proud to be in this government that has consensus as a government. That's what we can continue to work on in terms of our vision for the people.

Mr. Speaker, I have to say that we have created a vision, it's now putting the picture together. We know what we want for our people, we've heard it, you know. We also heard that we need to have a rightful place in the Confederation of Canada. We need to look at that and see where our rightful place will be one day to sit with other provinces as equal...

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

MR. YAKELEYA: ...and to look and say that we could pay our own way, we could do it. You know, it's very disheartening, Mr. Speaker, when our needs are so high and our cash is so low. Earlier today I heard Mr. Braden talk about 66 days, you know, in terms of the funding that we could get for \$50 million for some projects. That's possible. That's a strong mission that I'd like to continue working, you know, in my short term in the next couple days before we leave and we become Joe Citizen.

Mr. Speaker, the North has many treasures right down from the border right up to the Arctic Ocean. We've seen them in our communities. You and I, it's gracious that, under your leadership, you took some of the Members to my community, my region. Members here who have gone, and Mr. Ramsay named out all the communities I think, and all the Members here have gone to different communities. Even over here you're invited to different communities. You know the treasure is in there, the old brandies, the old-timers that hunt and tell you stories how life was, the hardship they've gone through. Yet they still survived, Mr. Speaker. People who are not here no longer who told us to keep going. You know, they all talked about having a thick skin and it's true, but someone else told me to keep a soft heart. Grow a thick skin and keep a soft heart. A lot of things that they say intrigue us to be in this.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have wonderful treasures. Treasures that we have that are so deep with me and my people is the land. We talked about our land so importantly, but right now we're talking about resources on our land. We could do it. I believe so with the resources that we have and we have the strength and the power here, Mr. Speaker.

I want to say that one of my most memorable roles as an MLA is to be on the land. Last summer and this summer we walked the Canol hike. You know, we talked about it, we talked about it, we talked about it, we finally did it and

we did 144 miles in two years. In 12 days it's possible. We ate and I can't say anything more because of the Assembly and the language, otherwise you might escort me out of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

---Laughter

We ate and we complained politely and we talked. For me, Mr. Speaker, a leader is one who climbs the tallest tree, surveys the entire situation and yells, "Wrong jungle!" That, Mr. Speaker, is somehow interred to Mr. Handley as a leader that came as a Premier and our leader. Good or bad, right or wrong, he's our leader. Throughout the Canol trail, Mr. Handley did go into certain situations and said oh, oh, boys, I think we're on the wrong trail, I think we're on a bear trail, and we'd get back onto the Canol trail because it washed out. But to walk with the people, I think that's really important to walk on their land with them and down the Smith, Hay River or down the Deh Cho or Nahendeh or up in the Beaufort-Delta, to walk the land of the people, to know their history, to know what they're talking about, to be there, know the language, know what the people are striving for. So I wanted to say that to Mr. Handley, that I wish him very well. I sure appreciate him being on that trail. There's certain things I certainly can't divulge to this Assembly because of confidentiality, as they say.

---Laughter

Mr. Speaker, but I wanted to say I wish him the very best and I absolutely would like to see him, God willing that he be here, do the trail next year to finish off the 80 miles that we still need to do. He is a very good role model for our young people. So I want to say that, Mr. Speaker, because he is leaving and going to spend some time with his family.

Mr. Dent, in the same light, I'd like to wish him well. Mr. Dent, I have gotten to know him on a different level at one time and I really, really want to say to Mr. Dent that when my mother passed away last year, one time you and I were talking and for a brief moment you struck me with what you told me. I sat back and I said to my wife, I said, gee, I feel so funny and ashamed because I didn't know Charles was that type of a man. So I had a little different level with him of connection I guess or respect for Mr. Dent. He is consistent and he does seem to walk by the book, but this time he went out of the book, he went out of the box sort of thing. So I wanted to say that to Mr. Dent this time for that remark. It made a lot of difference for me.

Of course, to Mr. Bell, he's been one that I wanted to echo Mrs. Groenewegen here. I don't know if I'd use "top drawer," I might have a different interpretation, but he is someone that I certainly look up to as a role model and look up to as a man that would be a great contributor to the Northwest Territories and to his people and he should do other things in his life but, more important, to his family. You know, Mr. Bell and I talk a lot about our children and the sacrifices that we put them under and expect them to carry. Those little children, they carry a lot of load for us. So I wanted to say that to him. I wish him all the best and Sahtu people really saw some good things come out from Mr. Bell's leadership. I wanted to say that on behalf of the Sahtu people of all the Ministers that I spoke of.

Of course, I wanted to say to the elder, as I call him, sitting on my left, the elderly man, Mr. Speaker.

---Laughter

I know Mr. Braden, at times...He's not an elder. He's been here awhile and for me he's an elder. To call someone an elder is taken very, very serious. Sometimes I have to use another word and I think it's appropriate to call him geezer sometimes...

---Laughter

...because some of the things we work with. Jokingly we say that. So I wanted to say that to Mr. Braden that I sure appreciate him and his vision and his discussions with us in the Assembly here.

Also, Mr. Speaker, in closing I want to say to the staff and to the people that work for us in this Assembly, saying mostly all to our people about this strong nation we have in the Northwest Territories and that for the good work that a lot of you have done on our behalf and to our CAs and to continue on. I wish to all the other Members a happy and safe summer and wish good school for our children here who are going to school this year.

I guess what I wanted to say in closing here is a quote here on legacy, Mr. Speaker, in closing. It says, "A legacy is created only when a person puts his or her organization into a position for great things without him or her." That's a legacy for me. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Replies to opening address. The honourable Member from Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkin's Reply

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, four years have passed and I'm very proud of all of our time here. There have been certainly some good days and certainly some bad days, as we all know, but I've gained a lot of experience from every one of those challenges that have been put before us and I'd say it's been an incredible time, an incredible ride, Mr. Speaker.

This exciting time could not have been done without the marriage of this new family we've created when we walked through the doors, all 19 Members of us. Some knew each other, some didn't, but we found a way to make it work. Just like all the families out there, they have good days and they have bad days and, you know, we can't pick your family as the constituency picked us, but we found a way to make it work most of the time.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be here as a politician. My interest in politics has gone back a little more than 25 years. The reason I say that is many of you know, or don't know, I am only 36, but I remember tin can TV in Fort Simpson. I certainly remember when we used to have the one channel. I used to watch Parliament on TV. I remember Trudeau, Clark and Broadbent. I used to be great fans of them and so excited to see what they were doing with issues they were discussing.

Mr. Speaker, my interest in territorial politics really came from growing up in and around the Sibbeston house. I still consider myself a great friend of Nick and Karen Sibbeston. I spent many years...I am the same age as...Actually I am in the middle years of two of their children. I spent a lot of time there. I know the family well. We had a lot of good years and certainly the inspiration and the stories I used to hear from Nick growing up certainly inspired me.

Mr. Speaker, my path to politics started seven years ago when I was elected to city council. But just before it began, my wife and I eloped and went to Las Vegas. We

got married by Elvis and it was a really exciting time. She had a few more holidays left than me, so I left her in Calgary to finish her holidays and I only had a week holidays. So I had to get right back to Yellowknife. I phoned her. I said, I am going to run for city council. When she was done laughing on the phone, she said, are you really serious? I said, yes. So then she said she would do what she needed to do. So she has been a very supportive wife. I will come back to that in a minute.

Mr. Speaker, I did take that leap. My experience on city council, even with Member Ramsay, we had, again, a lot of good days, a lot of bad days. At the end of the day, it was a wonderful experience. I am glad he left council the same time as I did and we came forward over to this House.

There were a lot of highlights. I don't know if it is worth getting into today, but there are a lot of highlights I would like to talk about. Certainly, I have decided to pare it down to just a couple. The highlights that I would like to think at this time, when I refer to achievements, are the barrier-free apartment building for the disabled. Mr. Speaker, I spent many hours down with Minister Krutko, at the time when he was Housing Minister, nagging him and complaining and whining. He kept saying, go away, go away. I would come down to the House and I would nag him and ask him more questions. He would read these scripted answers that would say go away. But eventually, I have to admit in all seriousness, we had a good working relationship on that project and he heard the need. He heard the need to the point he said we are going to send people out to interview folks and see what really needs to be done. Furthermore, if we can do something, we are going to do something. And he did do that. I am very proud that Minister Krutko is...To me, he heard the concern. He sent people down to understand the problem. Furthermore, he did something. He heard what I was trying to raise. I had constituents there. When they washed their dishes, they had to drape their arms above the water and the conditions in their washroom was absolutely pathetic. He is fixing that problem by moving forward that initiative.

I had another constituent who couldn't reach the countertops. He couldn't cook and an endless amount of problems, but the bottom line is he heard those problems too. This government at that time of little more than three years ago said we are going to fix it. That is one of my personal favourite projects I helped to work on here. I am very thankful. Now, Minister Krutko is no longer Minister of Housing. Minister Handley luckily got to cut the ribbon on that project and it is opening next month. It is a good project. I have always said all along, from the start of it, I think this is a demonstration of good quality work the Housing Corporation can do to meet the needs of people in the NWT, to meet people with disabilities to help improve their quality of life. I really tried hard on that. I am glad to say it is one of my personal hallmarks of success that I will always be able to look back and say that one project alone I think really meant a lot because you can see how happy they were.

Mr. Speaker, there are some things that didn't work out. I am not going to mention a lot of them, but I am going to say when this House passed the motion to put an addictions treatment centre here in Yellowknife and in Inuvik, that was quite a disappointment. Even in motion, I often called them creative suggestions because we're united on this side of the House. We came to identify a need. We came to identify a solution, and I don't want to

say Cabinet ignored it, but I don't know how else to put it other than it was ignored.

Mr. Speaker, I hope some day that can be corrected. Another area that I wish we could have made a clear statement on was, again, a personal plea in the sense of I thought it was very important to the fabric of who we are as an Assembly, was I had always hoped that we could have passed the troops motion to support our troops overseas. It was not to be. There were many people who supported it. There were many who didn't and many who found that the wording couldn't be right, so in the end it never came forward. But every Friday, I always wore my red shirt to let our troops know here in Yellowknife, and the message was spread far and wide, that people here do care about the work that they do. Mr. Speaker, one can say, though, with those sorts of things, we can't win them all, but we can certainly win as many as we can.

Mr. Speaker, I am a big fan of consensus government. The longer I am here, the more I think that party politics certainly isn't meant for this place.

---Applause

Although I am a firm believer, though, consensus government needs to evolve. It needs to respond to people's needs. It needs to be reflective of what is going on. Mr. Speaker, I am not saying that changes I suggested last Friday had to take place, but I think what I was really saying when I had my consensus government Member's statement read out, the fact is I just think it needs to be evaluated from time to time. Nothing should go without any type of evaluation because, if we can't stand that test, then maybe we have bigger problems.

Mr. Speaker, I would say to those who want to join party politics in this Assembly, who want to slide it in under the door whether openly or informally, I would say be careful of the wolf in sheep's clothing, Mr. Speaker. I think it will be the demise of this Assembly, the free-flowing communication I think clearly highlighted by Minister Dent, I think yesterday, talks about one of the most amazing elements of our Assembly. If we were in a party style system, as everybody knows in this Assembly -- I think sometimes people forget -- you couldn't bring forward an idea.

I remember when I talked about the idea of developing and coming up with a brand new product for a driver's licence. If we were in a party system assembly, the government would just laugh and say, great idea; when you are in power, go for it. But the government here has suggested from this side of the House. They listen to them. They take them into consideration. That doesn't happen anywhere else in Canada outside of us and Nunavut. I am very thankful and grateful that we have a consensus government.

Pre-project consultations I think have set forward a great statement from this Assembly. All the Regular Members felt that this is an important thing to start talking about what the priorities are of the people of the Northwest Territories, asking them for their input on the budget to make sure it was more reflective of the people. Someday I look forward to the TV broadcasting of our committee meetings. I think that is a fantastic step forward in accountability.

Mr. Speaker, in my perspective, I believe I have taken the time to try to understand my constituents' concerns and my constituents' feelings on a number of issues. I assure you I have read probably almost every single e-mail that has come in, even the long ones and some were very

painful to read and some were very enjoyable. But despite the fact that I didn't always necessarily agree with the issues, I certainly always respected the time that people took to put them together. I can't say I have been absolutely perfect in that regard by responding to them, but I have certainly made every effort I thought was reasonable and tried my very best.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes phone calls came in on family time, sometimes at 11:00 and sometimes even 12:00 at night. Sometimes some people always had something to get off their chest and they just want to say can you believe what the government is doing? I would say, okay. Then they would go on and on. Then I would say, can we talk on Monday? They say, well, actually I have already told you. Thanks very much; I appreciate your time. Sometimes that was all it really needed.

Mr. Speaker, for that, I am getting back to what I said earlier, which was I am extremely grateful for my wife. Sue has been fantastic. She is understanding of the cause. She is committed to the process. She knows that people can be demanding on her time. She knows that sometimes we have to be at meetings instead of there at supertime and so she is committed to the bigger picture of what we do. So I am so grateful for having a strong wife. I am blessed with that support. As I said earlier about good days and bad days, she certainly was there for the good ones and I am so thankful she was there for the bad ones. But with her demanding schedule, I can't forget about my two little monsters. Sometimes I have to bring my two boys here at the office to read some e-mails and read some of my mail. They would be playing in my office. Now, I assure this House and everyone listening that the Thomas the Train toys were for their entertainment and not mine. Mr. Speaker, it was always exciting to look at them play there while I was able to read. They didn't mind at all coming to the House while I worked.

Mr. Speaker, since I have come to the Assembly, I have always had pictures of my two sons and, of course, when I only had one son it was just him, but I always had them in front of me as a reminder of why we are here. I try to look at them and I use that as my sort of test of integrity. So when we bring forward an issue, I am always having them look at me. I use that as a reminder of why we are here. So, Mr. Speaker, when issues are raised, I think of them and I always step forward in that regard, always with the integrity and sense first.

Mr. Speaker, although we raise our issues in our own way, a comment that has always come back to me, which some days they sound less good than others, but people always make the point of saying make sure your issue is true. Make sure you speak from the heart. That is all that really matters. As long as you do that, you are okay.

Mr. Speaker, I am just going to close by saying a few small things in regards to Coady Summerfield. He has been my constituency assistant now for two and a half years. He is extremely meticulous. He is extremely smart and hard working. I don't think I could have done half the work without his assistance. I would certainly say he would rival any other constituency assistant that we could ever imagine of. For him, I am truly grateful.

Mr. Speaker, personal memories in closing here will be some of the times working here late on the weekends or at night and then taking a moment or two to play with my kids and remind myself what really is important and why we do our things. Occasionally, my sons will beg me to

run and chase them down the halls. I certainly hope that someday security doesn't sort of hold me hostage with those video tapes of me making screaming noises, but to my kids, that seemed to be one of the exciting things. They had always asked, "Are we going to Daddy's office this weekend?" That was very important to them.

Mr. Speaker, on the last note, I am going to point out that I had my second son born while I was here in office. Even though my wife was still two or more weeks away from being due, she thought it was important for me to go to Ottawa on NWT Day. As soon as I landed in Ottawa, I got the phone call and she said the water broke. Me being a guy, I said, can you hold it until I get home in two days? Well, like Mr. Yakeleya about being concerned about censorship and wording, I won't say what she actually said on the phone, but I will say that she did say no. She called me back a little while later and said that nothing is happening. Everything is good. Then at 6:00 a.m. in the morning, I got a phone call and there was a baby crying in the background on NWT Day. She said it was here. For her, it was important that I was in Ottawa with the rest of this Assembly raising the issues, raising the profile of the NWT for the greater good. So, Mr. Speaker, as I have highlighted twice and I want to do it for a third time, my wife has been absolutely key to my success. I thank her many times over. I thank her quite often because she sometimes gets neglected because we have meetings and we have to travel. She has to find a way around to deal with the kids, but, Mr. Speaker, none of us could be here without our partners. I think, of everything I have said, that is the most important thing I want to finish with. I couldn't be here without the strength of my wife. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Replies to the opening address. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Ms. Lee's Reply

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to just take a few minutes to give my thanks to many people who make it possible for me to be here today. First of all, I would like to thank my constituents for giving me their trust to serve them as their MLA for the last eight years. It is an honour like no other. I don't think there is any other...I don't even think you can call this a job. It is something that is possibly a democratic system that we have where on election day, the people across the NWT go out and put an X next to the names of people that are here. It is a complete honour. It is a trust. When you are elected into this office, it is a daunting task. Even to this day, every day, I am in awe of what the people of Range Lake have given to me for the last eight years.

I remember walking in here as the class of 1999 with Mr. Bell, yourself, Mr. Speaker, Premier Handley -- there were six of us -- Mr. Braden and myself. I remember looking at my job and going, what am I supposed to do in this job? I know I got elected and there is no manual. There is no script to follow. I remember having to think really hard about how I do my job to the best of my ability. The way I thought about it was like the people gave me this little baby, something so precious, something so honourable that I had to grow into the job. I had to become wiser, intelligent, articulate and more than anything that I ever thought possible. We all have to grow to the job and do the best we can because the people who elect us should not be burdened because of our limitations, our

boundaries or lack of anything. I tried my best to do that. People of Range Lake continue to give me support. I am always in awe of that honour. I will be seeking a new mandate. I will save all of the stuff about what I have been able to do and what I would like to do for the future. I am very optimistic about the future of the North. I look forward to that debate.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to acknowledge the Members of this House. I know there is a public persona of the Members here, but the people I know here, I believe to the bottom of my heart that we are all here with honourable intentions. We all come here every day trying to do the best we can. We learn all about our weaknesses and strengths. I know lots of Members here remind me all of the time, in the second Assembly anyway, from the first one, I came in here shooting with both cylinders or speaking before thinking and just totally enthusiastic and seeing everything in black and white. I have grown so much into the job. It has just been an amazing work experience. I would not have been able to do that without having such generous people and the Members that I have had to work with. I thank you all, the Members, for giving me so much guidance for the last eight years.

I do want to wish well Mr. Bell, Mr. Handley and Mr. Braden, who are leaving and seeking other opportunities. That is my class of 1999 I wanted to acknowledge. And Mr. Dent. I don't want to go over all of the strengths of the Members. You have been great. I know you have given all your best. I know that you all are going to continue to serve. The North is going to benefit from that. I wish you and your family nothing but the best.

I want to acknowledge my committee members. I had the honour of being the chair of the Social Programs committee this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. When I first came here as a female Member trying to prove myself, I really wanted to stay away from the pink committee, so the last Assembly I made sure I got into Governance and Economic Development committee. But in this Assembly, I knew it was important work, I wanted to do it and I was honoured to be a chair of this committee. The six members in my committee, Mr. Yakeleya, Mr. McLeod, Mr. Lafferty who came on board later, Mr. Pokiak and Mr. Braden. I keep forgetting Mr. Braden.

---Laughter

It has been a real pleasure to work with all of you who I think we did a lot of good work together. We always had a very good working relationship. We put through a lot of really heavy-duty legislation like the Public Health Act. I don't want to go into all that, but it has been a total pleasure. I learned a lot from all of you. I thank you very much.

I want to, in particular, thank the staff of the Legislative Assembly, not only the committee but the entire staff. I think Mr. Mercer has an amazing group of staff he has built now. I would like to thank Mr. Mercer and everybody: Tanis and Haylee in his shop who are working in the back there; Mr. Moreside, Ms. Freisen, Ms. Menard and all of the staff in the finance section. I couldn't even begin to think how much work is involved in there. I don't think I give them as much work as some of the other Members, but I think they do a lot of work. I really want to thank them. In particular, Mr. Speaker, I really want to thank my committee staff, Ms. Bennett, sitting here. She came to us from the court services. I think losing her was the bigger blow to the judges than losing the courthouse.

---Laughter

Ms. Bennett came into our committee about a year into this Assembly. She fit in without any fuss. She has been a total professional and a woman of competence; she gets the job done. It's just been amazing and I would not have been able to do the work that we do in committee without the level of skills and just everyday just doing the job. I cannot thank her enough.

Mr. Robert Collinson, our researcher for the committee, I still maintain that he's completely underpaid. I think he should get paid \$10 for every word that he puts into our report that makes our committee's work very intelligent. He expresses the views that we hear from the people, what we want to say. Mr. Robert Collinson is only one of the entire research staff under the leadership of Colette Langlois, our director, and they really, really, single-handedly make our work possible. I have to tell you that some of the Members here who remember when I came here, you might have described me as a leader looking for a team, or maybe a lone ranger looking for a team, and working through the Social Programs committee, working with the staff that I have, with Ms. Bennett and Mr. Collinson, Mr. Glen Boyd, our legal advisor, I really think I found a team where I was able to be a leader of a team and I think together with the committee Members and our staff, we have been able to do some really, really good work. I'm very proud of the work we have done as a Standing Committee on Social Programs.

Mr. Speaker, the last person that I must thank is my constituency assistant, Cathy Olson. I first met Cathy Olson in the year 2000 when her family came into town. She and another lady named Janet Pacey started a magazine called "Yellowknife Living," and I was just so excited about there being a magazine called "Yellowknife Living." I thought any two women who would put their heads together to write a magazine have to be really driven. I met her then and I agreed to put an ad in the Yellowknife Living magazine from day one and I asked her if she could come and work for me at the same time. At the time she had lots of obligations with her family and she wanted to put that off. About three years ago she was able to free herself to come and work for me and it has been three amazing years of experience. She is a woman who like...Very few people I know who I can talk with about what's happening on CNN, what's happening with the U.S. national politics, we can talk about what's happening there, how to do the quilting, what's happening at Range Lake North School, what's happening to the teenage life, we can talk about dogs, we can talk about weather. She just knows...She's one who's as interested about life and things as I am and it's just been a complete and total pleasure to work with her. She's given me motherly advice, sisterly advice, political advice, personal advice. She works really well under pressure. We work really well together in crisis mode and I could not have done my job without her. I really want to give her thanks, and her family. All of her family has been involved in my work and I know there's lots going on in her life and her family life, and I just want to thank her very much for all that she has given me and I do hope that we can continue to have a working relationship.

Mr. Speaker, in parting, I want to just talk about two things that I think are really exciting and important. The first thing is that the Legislative Assembly is going to have its own dedicated television channel. It's something that I've always asked for and I'm so excited that it's coming to fruition in the very near future, possibly this upcoming session after October. I believe that young people, all the people in the North but especially the young people have

to see their lives and their community reflected on television. I think you have to be a minority in a mainstream society to see how important that is. For the mainstream society, they take it for granted that when they turn on the movie, they turn on the news, they see people that look like them. But for the aboriginal population or the visible minority population, we take it for granted that it's okay not to see themselves on television, whether it's on the political channel, in movies, on the news, a soap opera, whatever. For that reason, that main reason, I just think that it will do a great deal of good to have a community channel where our northern people, especially the northern news, to see themselves on a television channel. For the young, community channel 20 is no different than any other fancy U.S. network channel: you're on television and you're a star. I think every child should feel like they're a star and they should see themselves debating in the House, not debating in the House but in the sporting events, in the cultural events. We could not only have these sessions of the Legislative Assembly showing on television, but also a Beluga Jamboree in Tuktoyaktuk, Mackenzie Days in Fort Providence or the Dene Assemblies. I think we as a community, as a whole in the Territories, need to have a television channel that connects together, that enables us to express ourselves as a distinct and unique cultural group of people, but also very diverse, where all the communities could come together. Yellowknifers could see people and cultural activities in other communities and other communities could also see the people in Yellowknife. So I am so excited about that channel and I will encourage the next Assembly -- and I hope to be part of it -- if my people in Range Lake send me back I want to make sure that even the committee meetings are reflected on this channel so that we get to be more transparent in the work that we do.

The second thing I want to say, Mr. Speaker, is we all know that there is an election coming up on October 1st and there are lots of people who are interested in running. I think it's great that there are a lot of people running because it speaks to the citizenship participation, it allows for vigorous debates of important issues of the day and, most importantly, it gives the people a chance to vote for a number of choices that are available. As one of the longer serving Members in this House, I've been getting a lot of calls from people who are interested in running for office, and in responding to those inquiries I realized that there is something lacking in the consensus government that is present in the party politics. I know in lots of replies to opening addresses in the last few days, many Members have spoken about the benefit of consensus government versus party politics. If this is an issue, and it is usually an issue during every election, I look forward to that debate, but the small element of that was my realization that we, under the consensus government, there is no means to involve the people, to educate them or to provide support for anyone who wants to run for public office. People come into this place and connect with this place at a personal level, whether people were here as young Pages or they have parents who are MLAs or government people, but I think in the interests of the wellness of this Assembly, and in the interests of attracting as many good calibre candidates as possible, I think it is very important for this Assembly in going forward to provide a packaged training program for youth, for anyone, to teach them about how the consensus government works; what should one do if they're interested in the political process. I've been working closely with women who are wanting to run for office but I have found there's a need for that for the

young people, for anybody who's interested in the process. I would really like to encourage the Legislative Assembly to look into that. I know that the NWT office is working on that but I think it's something where we need to broaden our base to see if we can do a better job.

Mr. Speaker, on that note, I would just like to close by thanking my constituents again, and thank everybody here for making me a much better person than when I started here. I think we've done some really good work together and I would like to wish everyone all the best in the coming days. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Replies to opening address. The Member for Nunakput, Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to seek unanimous consent to go back to item 5 on the orders of the day. Thank you.

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

REVERT TO ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to turn your attention up to the gallery. I see up in the gallery my nephew Mr. Robbie Pascal who works with the WCB. Along with him are his two boys, Matthew and Allen.

---Applause

...this time that Mr. Pascal has been accepted at the University of Alberta to further his career, so good luck. Thank you.

---Applause

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

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to recognize the two Pages who are from Nahendeh who are with us here this week: Ms. Hilary Norwegian and as well as Ms. Tanis Browning. I'd like to thank them for their efforts and sure glad to see our consensus government hard at work. Mahsi cho.

---Applause

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize a former colleague of mine on Yellowknife city council, Mr. Ben McDonald. As well, we've got two other city councillors who are with us today in the gallery: Mr. Kevin Kennedy and Ms. Lydia Bardak.

---Applause

I would also like to welcome everyone else who is with us here in the gallery today. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. If we missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to the House. I hope you're enjoying the proceedings. Petitions. Reports of standing and special committees. The honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

ITEM 12: REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Committee Report 6-15(6): Report On The Review Of The Information And Privacy Commissioner's 2005-2006 Annual Report

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

Introduction

Mr. Speaker, the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight met on May 16, 2007, to review the 2005-2006 Annual Report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. The committee would like to thank the Commissioner, Ms. Elaine Keenan-Bengts, for her report and for her appearance before the committee.

The NWT Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, or ATIPP, came into force on December 31, 1996. The purpose of the act is to make public bodies more accountable and protect personal privacy by giving the public a right to access, with limited exceptions, to records being held by the GNWT and related public bodies, and by preventing the unauthorized collection, use or disclosure of personal information by the GNWT and related public bodies. The act also gives individuals the right to see and make corrections to information about themselves.

The Information and Privacy Commissioner is an independent officer of the Legislative Assembly. Her primary role is to review and make recommendations on public bodies' decisions under the act. Reviews can be requested by people who have been refused access to information, third parties who have an interest in information someone else is requesting, and people who have concerns about how their personal information has been handled. The Commissioner's mandate also includes research into matters affecting the carrying out of the purposes of the act, receiving representation about the operation of the act, and offering comments on the implications for privacy protection of proposed legislative schemes or government programs.

Motion To Deem Committee Report 6-15(6) Read And Printed In Hansard In Its Entirety, Carried

Mr. Speaker, that concludes the introductory comments on this report. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Great Slave, that the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight Report on the Review of the 2005-2006 Annual Report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner be deemed read and printed in Hansard in its entirety. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

---Carried

Committee Report 6-15(6): Report On The Review Of The Information And Privacy Commissioner's 2005-2006 Annual Report

2005-2006 Annual Report

As Ms. Keenan-Bengts stated to committee, "the principals underlining the legislation form the basis of modern democracy."

However, she advised us that she is faced with what she referred to as an "underlying reluctance to openness ... a

tendency to interpret the act narrowly so as to limit the access allowed”.

The underlying theme throughout the Commissioner's report and presentation to the committee was the need to foster a corporate culture that is committed to open and transparent government, and strives to follow the spirit as well as the letter of the act. She stressed again the need for leadership to initiate a change of culture from top to bottom. Ministers and deputy ministers, in particular, would need to demonstrate commitment to the act and support, through their leadership, a shift to greater openness.

The committee had an engaging discussion with the Commissioner about the powers given to ATIPP Commissioners in different Canadian jurisdictions. The Commissioner strongly believes in the ombudsman system that is in place in the NWT. She feels that the flexibility of this system allows her to work with departments and agencies in order to find creative and innovative resolutions. The Commissioner sees this as a strength, particularly in our small jurisdiction, where this legislative framework is still fairly new.

Ms. Keenan-Bengts emphasized that these strengths, however, can only unfold and develop fully if there is commitment to the process throughout the organization starting from the top. As she stated, “the purposes of the act will only be met if there is a buy-in and commitment on the part of the government as a whole and support from the highest levels of management to the concept of openness.”

The committee shares the Commissioner's concerns and strongly supports her plea to strengthen the corporate culture.

Recommendation

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight recommends that the Premier, Ministers and deputy ministers take a leadership role in changing the corporate culture as far as the interpretation and application of the ATIPP Act is concerned to create a culture of openness from top to bottom.

Furthermore, the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight recommends that a new section reporting on ATIPP activities be included in the yearly business plans for each department. This new reporting framework should include information on requests, complaints and how they were resolved, related training and any other initiatives or activities that take place to promote the ATIPP legislation.

Such a reporting requirement will send clear messages to the public service about the importance of open and transparent government, and the need to grant access to information unless there is a clear and compelling reason not to do so.

The 2005-2006 annual report includes several other specific recommendations to enhance access to information and protection of personal privacy in the NWT, and to improve the administration of the act.

Boards And Agencies

A longstanding concern for the Commissioner has been the need for members and staff of boards and agencies to be aware of their obligations under the act and to implement appropriate records retention policies,

particularly for documents in the hands of individual board members.

In previous reports, our committee has recommended that mandatory records management training for board members of boards and agencies be implemented.

The last government response was tabled in the House on October 17, 2006. The GNWT committed to a more proactive approach to ATIPP and to report back on the discussions between officials from the departments of Justice, Public Works and Services and Human Resources who are reviewing the matter. This report is still outstanding.

The Commissioner acknowledged that some training is now being offered to members of boards and agencies, but the courses offered are still a long way from being complete. Ms. Keenan-Bengts repeated her concerns that board members do not necessarily have any knowledge about their obligations under the ATIPP legislation. She contends that they are not advised at the beginning of their tenure about what their responsibilities are under the legislation and that no standards or policies exist that would govern these agencies as far as ATIPP legislation is concerned.

The committee was troubled to hear that the Commissioner was not aware of the standards, policies and guidelines developed by the departments of Public Works and Services and Justice.

Recommendation

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight recommends that ATIPP activities related to boards and agencies be included in the proposed business plan reporting framework and that the GNWT deliver on its outstanding commitment to report back to the Accountability and Oversight committee on its commitment to a more proactive approach to ATIPP matters.

Private Sector Privacy Legislation

Another of the Commissioner's ongoing recommendations from past reports is that the NWT enact its own “made-in-the-north” privacy legislation to regulate how the private sector collects, uses and discloses personal information.

Although the NWT's private sector is regulated by the federal Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA), the Commissioner points out that a small and distant office in Ottawa is unlikely to have the time and capacity to address complaints and issues of a local nature. Alberta and B.C., for example, have enacted provincial legislation to address the gaps left by PIPEDA and found that they received large numbers of complaints. The resolution of these complaints has made corporate citizens more aware of their responsibilities and the public aware of their rights.

The GNWT had previously indicated its intent to review the effectiveness of PIPEDA in 2006 in order to determine whether territorial legislation is necessary. The committee looks forward to seeing the results of this review now that the federal government has concluded its statutory review of the act.

Contractors

As in past reports, the Commissioner commented on the importance of ensuring contractors who handle government information are aware of, and comply with, the requirements of ATIPP legislation. Her concerns appear to be partially addressed by the terms and

conditions incorporated into GNWT contracts, and by the October 2005 amendments to the act. These changes made contractors directly responsible for protecting personal information.

Nevertheless, the Commissioner wishes to create awareness and alertness to this issue, particularly if the government should choose in the future to contract out services that involve extensive personal information.

First Nations Governance

As in previous reports, the Commissioner recommends the GNWT take the initiative to raise information and privacy issues in devolution discussions, and with aboriginal governments in order to encourage them to include some form of regulation within their governance structures. She states that although there are likely to be cultural differences on many information and privacy issues, all peoples have the right to an open government, which requires access to records and the right to expect a certain level of privacy.

The GNWT indicated in its response to the Commissioner's 2004-2005 recommendations that the ATIPP Act and regulations will not apply to self-governments, but that the GNWT is willing to be consulted on the drafting of such legislation by self-governments.

During the public meeting, the Commissioner indicated that she hoped that the GNWT would have shown some more specific ideas and a more positive approach encouraging First Nations to consider this issue.

Municipal Governments

In her previous seven reports, the Commissioner has brought forward the lack of and need for information and privacy legislation for municipal governments.

The Commissioner encourages the government again to either include municipalities under ATIPP or create specific information and privacy legislation for municipalities.

The committee supports the Commissioner's recommendation and further encourages the GNWT to conclude the work started between Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA) and Justice in consultation with the Northwest Territories Association of Communities to allow for consideration of a bill by the 16th Assembly.

Conclusion

The Commissioner quoted the following statement by Justice LaForrest of the Supreme Court of Canada to the Committee:

"The overarching purpose of access to information legislation is to facilitate democracy. It does so in two related ways. It helps to ensure first, that citizens have the information required to participate meaningfully in the democratic process and secondly, that politicians and bureaucrats remain accountable to the citizenry.

Rights to state held information are designed to improve the workings of government; to make it more effective, responsive and accountable."

Despite her occasional frustration, the Commissioner advised us that she continues to strongly believe in the ombudsman approach to the oversight of ATIPP implementation and compliance. She is convinced that working with people to come up with solutions generates better results and buy-in than would order powers.

However, the need for a corporate culture supporting that approach is crucial.

Ms. Keenan-Bengts also reported some encouraging evidence. Since her recommendation regarding the introduction of an electronic health record system, she has been consulted by the Department of Health and Social Services, leading to her increased confidence that the privacy issues related to this new technology will be addressed. The Commissioner was also pleased about the enthusiastic and positive reaction from the Department of Transportation to her recommendation regarding a legislative gap in the Motor Vehicles Act.

These are positive developments and the committee wishes to encourage the government to show leadership and to strive for full compliance with both the spirit and letter of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

Recommendation

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight recommends the GNWT table a comprehensive response to this report no later than during the second session of the 16th Legislative Assembly.

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

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

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Great Slave, that Committee Report 6-15(6) be received by the Assembly and moved into Committee of the Whole. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

---Carried

Committee Report 6-15(6) will be moved into Committee of the Whole. The Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 93(4) and have Committee Report 6-15(6) moved into Committee of the Whole for consideration today. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The Member is seeking unanimous consent to waive Rule 93(4) and have Committee Report 6-15(6) moved into Committee of the Whole for consideration today. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Committee Report 6-15(6) will be moved into Committee of the Whole for consideration today. Reports of standing and special committees. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Tabling of documents. The honourable Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board, Mr. Krutko.

ITEM 14: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 59-15(6): Workers' Compensation Board Of The Northwest Territories And Nunavut 2006 Annual Report

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled Workers' Compensation Board of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut 2006 Annual Report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Tabled Document 60-15(6): List Of Interactivity Transfers Exceeding \$250,000 For The Period April 1, 2007 To June 30, 2007

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Pursuant to section 32.1(2) of the Financial Administration Act, I wish to table the following document entitled List of Interactivity Transfers Exceeding \$250,000 for the Period April 1, 2007 to June 30, 2007. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Tabling of documents. The honourable Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bell.

Tabled Documents 61-15(6): Business Development Fund Annual Report And Recipients Report, April 1, 2006 - March 31, 2007

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled Business Development Fund Annual Report and Recipients Report, April 1, 2006 to March 31, 2007.

Tabled Document 62-15(6): Government Of The Northwest Territories Contracts Over \$5,000 Report: Year-To Date Of The Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 2007

Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled Government of the Northwest Territories Contracts Over \$5,000 Report: Year-to-Date of the Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 2007. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Tabled Document 63-15(6): Community Development Programs Annual Report 2006-2007

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

Tabled Document 64-15(6): Legislative Assembly Capital Accommodation Allowance October 1, 2003 To June 30, 2007 Audit Report

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Tabling of documents. I wish to table the Audit Report prepared by the GNWT's Audit Bureau on the Legislative Assembly Capital Accommodation Allowance October 1, 2003 to June 30, 2007. Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Motions. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

ITEM 17: MOTIONS

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

MR. RAMSAY: WHEREAS a Deh Cho Bridge would be a desirable, permanent road link in the NWT's transportation infrastructure;

AND WHEREAS considerable public expense and effort has been invested in creating a public private partnership with the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation to complete the project;

AND WHEREAS the projected cost of the bridge has escalated from \$60 million to \$150 million within four years;

AND WHEREAS substantial public funds, as well as toll fees, will be required for 35 years to pay for the project;

AND WHEREAS the government has not disclosed business and economic impact models for the current project, in contrast with broad disclosure made in 2003;

AND WHEREAS other transportation and energy projects, namely the Bathurst Inlet port/road project, the Taltson River hydro expansion, may have significant impacts on the economic viability of the project;

AND WHEREAS the government has said a toll of \$6 per tonne in 2002 dollars is constant, but has not disclosed rates of inflation that will be assessed to the toll fee;

AND WHEREAS significant investment in other infrastructure is anticipated and desirable, yet no current macroeconomic feasibility for the bridge project has been demonstrated;

AND WHEREAS there may be liabilities associated with the project as a result of contracting procedures used;

AND WHEREAS the Government of Canada has not committed to contribute to the Deh Cho Bridge project;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Sahtu, that this Legislative Assembly strongly recommends the GNWT undertake and disclose updated economic modelling 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.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This topic of the Deh Cho Bridge has been a topic that was discussed back in May when we were here. I even brought the subject up three years ago, Mr. Speaker, with the concerns I had over the project at that time.

I want to state, first and foremost, that my opposition to this bridge being built is nothing personal, it's nothing against the community of Fort Providence. I think the community of Fort Providence deserves to have economic development and opportunity. My big issue with this bridge project is the fact that the government has gone ahead based on five-year-old legislation and made some decisions without consulting Regular Members of the House on how that money is going to be spent and what it is going to be used for. The \$1.8 million a year that goes into the ice road crossing and the ferry operation at Fort Providence is going to be used on paying for the bridge for the next 35 years. In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, another \$2 million indexed for the next 35 years is going to be required to pay for this bridge. Mr. Speaker, that's where my issue is with the government.

At no time, Mr. Speaker, over the last four years has the government had a discussion with Regular Members of this House on that decision to spend the additional \$2 million. We did not have a vote on it; we did not have a debate on it. We did not have an opportunity to discuss it whatsoever. We got briefed by the government from time to time on the project. It was we are doing this and we had no opportunity for input in that.

Every time the loan guarantee was increased over the last four years, and it happened on a number of occasions, Mr. Speaker, the government's excuse was we are waiting for federal money to come and help us pay for the Deh Cho Bridge project, to be a partner with the Deh Cho Bridge project. So it was very surprising back in May when the Premier alluded to the fact that the bridge was going to go ahead. He came to committee and said the bridge is going to go ahead. We don't have any federal money, but the bridge is going to go ahead. How are we going to pay for it? We are going to roll that money in, the \$1.8 million, plus we are going to spend another \$2 million a year on the Deh Cho Bridge.

We talk about consensus government, we talk about trying to get people the information we need to make decisions. In this instance, Mr. Speaker, and again it's nothing personal, but the government failed in its obligation, in my mind, to come back and consult with Regular Members. Not only did it fail to consult with Regular Members, Mr. Speaker, it failed to consult with the same people it consulted with in 2002 and 2003 when the project was anticipated to cost 60 to 70 million dollars and tolls were anywhere between \$4.50 and \$5 a tonne.

Things have changed tremendously over the past five years, Mr. Speaker. As my colleagues know, the project is now \$150 million. Tolls are now going to be \$6.75 a tonne. By the time the project is completed in 2010, the tolls will be over \$7. The government has been unable to come back to Regular Members and say there won't be an adverse effect to the cost of living to over half of its citizens here in the territory, in Yellowknife, Behchoko and the rest of the North Slave region. I think the government has to deliver on the information. That has been all I have been asking for for the past four months: a similar cost-benefit analysis, as we've done in 2002, on the new numbers.

The government made quite a stir when it launched the macroeconomic policy shop, one that I felt at the time we probably didn't need to hire five more people to study that in an office in the Department of Finance. Mr. Speaker, if I could, I am thinking that this bridge project would have been a perfect opportunity to test the waters on that macroeconomic policy shop. Let them run the numbers. Let them see us spending \$150 million on a bridge as something the government should be doing. I know some of that would be offset by tolls, Mr. Speaker, but certainly the government, in the process, should have done much, much better. We just haven't had a chance. To me, that's the bottom line here.

We haven't had a chance to discuss competing infrastructure projects here in the Territories. We know in all our constituencies we have competing demands out there. How does the bridge jump to the front of the queue? How does that \$150 million become more important than other projects in the Northwest Territories? We haven't had that type of discussion, Mr. Speaker. We haven't had that level of discussion. That is why the motion is here again today.

This is very similar to the motion I moved in May asking for more information. I know 48 hours from now, a deal will be signed in Fort Providence. The horse is out of the barn, folks. It's gone. The government has made that decision. Like I said the other day, I have a tremendous amount of respect for the Premier, for Cabinet and I really want to be able to stand next to them on Friday in Fort Providence. It's a great day for Fort Providence. It's going to be a huge economic opportunity in Fort Providence. For

that, that's one good thing that's coming out of this; but the process has been flawed, Mr. Speaker. I don't understand how the government can rely on five-year-old legislation to make decisions that are going to affect governments for the next 35 years without consulting Members of this House.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to comments other Members may have, but this may be too little too late. Again, I want to send the message. I have been consistent all along. All I want is proof and evidence. That's all I want. It's nothing personal. I will leave it at that, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to say to my colleague in Kam Lake, thank you for this motion and having an opportunity to discuss the motion. Mr. Speaker, we say sacrifice is an ongoing process and not a one-time thing. Mr. Speaker, with the Deh Cho Bridge, it's sacrificing a lot of people in the Northwest Territories to get the bridge in here. It's not a one-time payment of \$150 million over 35 years. I think it may be a long, long time. There is some uncertainty about some of the number and creating about the federal government's contribution. They are the biggest stakeholders in this process here in the Northwest Territories and they aren't even at the table in terms of making a strong commitment for infrastructure up the Mackenzie Valley highway, let alone the Deh Cho Bridge. So the biggest stakeholder hasn't even come to the table.

I wonder if they are going to be down there on Friday along with the Premier's invited guests to be there. We should all be celebrating this process here. We should really be celebrating. Good for the people in Deh Cho and Fort Providence. Good for people in the Northwest Territories. Why is it going to be such a sombre party? Because of some information that has not come over to our side to really have a good, strong economic political debate on this infrastructure here. We are committing our children's future to 35 years of payments and we are making sacrifices. This is not a one-time payment. This is an ongoing process as it says here. All I am asking in this motion of Mr. Ramsay's is that information be disclosed regarding the economic model of this project and the impacts and benefits of this project here. Ground zero is Fort Providence. I don't really hear anything about it positively or strongly on the radio or in newspapers.

I know the Member for Deh Cho is really happy for this project here. I said it's good news and we should be really celebrating. Who is going to be really benefiting out of this project, number one? For me, I have very strong views on it. I think the proposed Mackenzie Valley highway and putting the bridge in the Mackenzie Valley is being left out for whatever reasons. We do not want to get into those areas right now. I would like to see that any other types of signed agreements be deferred to ensure we know what we are getting into with this project here. At least go down to Ottawa and make some calls to get the federal government to come to the table.

Mr. Speaker, when we were briefed on the Deh Cho Bridge, it seemed like it was going along okay. There were certain things that need to happen before we can get solid on some decisions here, Mr. Speaker. Somewhere, somehow, we just need to get up there without some things that weren't quite, I wasn't too comfortable with and some of the other Members, when we talked about some

of the infrastructure in our communities. Yet it seems to somewhat have been pitted against the bridge in Bear River. The Bear River Bridge seems to be falling off and all we hear is this red flag. The Deh Cho Bridge seems to have the green light to go ahead.

My colleague here has commented on three months of funding and the federal government in terms of the royalties. I think it's 66 days, \$55 million in three months. That's what they are taking out of this beautiful land, this country. Sixty-six days he said. Mr. Speaker, maybe they should be calling that bridge "Route 66 Bridge" in terms of this issue.

I want to say to Members here that I will strongly support this motion here that Mr. Ramsay has put on the floor here. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today I spoke in some detail in my Member's statement about some of the factors that have caused considerable concern about the affordability of the project. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, not based on information I know but information I do not have access to even if it exists, because in this round of business arrangements to actually get this project underway, unlike the process that we all had benefit of four years ago, the government has not repeated to update the same kind of information that was available in extensive reports of this four years ago and this is a great disappointment, Mr. Speaker. As I said, I would really like to endorse this project but I need to be confident in what we are getting into for the next 35 years, which amounts to potentially eight more Legislative Assemblies, if you want to look at it that way, that will still be carrying the can for a project that this government wants to start.

I think it's the kind of thing people in the Northwest Territories, when they are talking about big new ideas or big projects, we have a thirst, hunger, appetite, maybe an addiction for consultation and information. Witness the process we are going through right now with the Mackenzie Valley pipeline almost to the point of exhaustion, but this one, in contrast, we are starved for information that is willingly provided and yet is not before us now.

Mr. Speaker, going through some of the information that was provided back in 2002, I am looking at a press release that was issued on November 15 entitled the MOU, signed for construction for the Deh Cho Bridge. At that time, of course, Premier Handley was the Minister of Transportation and did a really good job of getting the project to this point. I would like to quote from that press release, Mr. Speaker. The release goes on to say that: "The president of the Fort Providence Metis Council and a member of the alliance's bridge committee, Alfred Lafferty, says public consultation is now the most important task facing the alliance." This is November 15th of that year. He said there will be a commercial vehicle toll on the bridge. We need to ensure the people understand the proposal and know that it's a good deal for them. Why don't we have the information now?

The other aspect of this that has been a major...

MR. SPEAKER: The Member is rising on a point of order. What is your point of order, Mr. Handley?

Point Of Order

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, the Member is referring to a document that has not been tabled in the House. I believe that's outside the rules.

Speaker's Ruling

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. I am not aware that that document has been tabled in the House and the rules do state that you are not to refer to documents that have not been tabled in the House. Therefore, I will rule that the Member has a point of order and I will advise the Member not to be quoting from a document that is not before the House. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I respect the point of order. A further part of this whole discussion, Mr. Speaker, was that there has been a longstanding expectation and many tantalizing offers or suggestions or hints that Canada would be coming into this, recognizing what a significant piece of infrastructure this is for this region and for Canada. Yet we still do not have a tangible certainty from Canada that it's going to say we do have a responsibility to come into something like this. We do have evidence that this is a good thing for Canada because it is a significant part of the transportation link for the diamond mines now, Mr. Speaker, that are pouring a big chunk of the \$750,000 a day that Canada is getting in taxes and royalties from the Northwest Territories. Why is it so difficult for Canada to appreciate that there is ample evidence that this a good deal? This is a win/win for everybody. If you do the math, you will find out that in just over two months, that revenue and royalty stream would actually pay the \$50 million that is generally expected and anticipated that Canada just might come in for.

So in the absence of that kind of guarantee or that kind of certainty from Canada, why are we pushing ahead with this now? The Premier and the Minister of Transportation have told us in meetings with the Prime Minister, the Minister of Transportation, oh, yes, there are national programs that you might qualify for, that you are on top of the radar screen for, but we still don't have it. We won't know until at least later on this year, this fall, after the next Assembly is in place, Mr. Speaker. What is the rush to put this on?

The previous Assembly and this Assembly have pushed this along. We have taken prudent steps to negotiate and find out what the deals are. Hopefully we haven't made too much of a mistake, because one company is already challenging some of the negotiations. Mr. Speaker, I really think the prudent thing for this Assembly to do is to sign off on the work that we have done for now, recognize that not enough is in place yet in terms of the knowledge and the information, confidence that the public and the companies who are going to be paying for this for the next 35 years are not there and also the potential. I would like to be optimistic and positive. The potential for Canada to come into this project and in the relatively near future is still there.

We are undertaking a major risk on the part of the economy, the people and the economy of the NWT for quite awhile by coming into this project at this time with the uncertainties that are still out there. I still do want to see this infrastructure done, but I want to see it done in a way that we all know about and we all have confidence about. That's why we have asked, in our motion, for a deferral of this over to the next Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, just to summarize what I've said in the Tlicho language, this bridge that we are talking about here is also in our backyard, the neighbouring Deh Cho area in Fort Providence. We call it...(English not provided)...in our language.

The bridge has already been announced that it's going to go ahead. We are here debating the accountability, the transparency. It's true that we should have gotten more information, whether it be business and economic impact models that have been requested by colleagues of mine around the table here. We met with the Premier on the briefings. Those types of requests have been laid on the table, but here we are still asking for that information. When we look at the true consensus government, we have government in Cabinet and we also have government here. We are supposed to work side by side and not to surprise us to say the bridge is going ahead.

Loan guarantees; words are said as Members here and we really didn't have a say in the process. That's why this motion was brought forward, to say be transparent. Where is the information you are supposed to be sharing with us? Also be accountable. We are accountable to over 40,000 in the North. We are individuals sitting here around the table. We are also responsible for our own region. If this bridge, the way it sounds it's going ahead anyway, how can we explain to our people, how can I explain to the Tlicho region, 3,000 people, that it's going ahead? They may be happy because it's in our backyard but, at the same time, there are others in the region that we have to take care of too.

Mr. Speaker, then again, reflecting back on the information that's been requested, that's all we are asking for. The information was requested awhile back and just recently, as well. Personally, I am not against the bridge because it's going to happen anyways.

---Laughter

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, I want to make it clear -- and this is just a recommendation but we have to put it on the record -- this is the Government of the Northwest Territories that are pushing things through. They need to have our input. This is a major project. The ceremony is happening on Friday. I am glad to see my chiefs will be coming back from Smith to attend that. Unfortunately, I won't be able to attend, but just to make a note that being transparent is all we are asking for from this government. The next government needs to consider that as well; whoever that may be in the next government. It's a consensus government, so let's work together government to government to government. Mahsi.

---Applause

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Most of what I want to say has already been covered by other Members, so I am going to be very brief. To the motion, Mr. Speaker, how we feel as Regular Members on this side of the House is happy about the bridge but demoralized by the process. That's how I feel. I mean who couldn't be happy for Fort Providence and be happy for the bridge? I don't know whether we need the bridge,

but you know what? Representing Hay River, I don't really care because Yellowknife is paying for it anyway, ultimately.

---Laughter

Well, that \$2 million a year, that is only going to offset inflation and the costs going up. That is not really a bad investment of this government. That can be rationalized. But what I can't rationalize is the attitude on the other side of the House, sitting there, basically thumbing their noses at us over here saying we are doing it, come to the celebration. So, sure, I am going to Fort Providence on Friday. I am going to stand there, I am going to applaud Fort Providence and the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation and we are going to celebrate the bridge, but I'll tell you, we are not feeling all that good about it just by virtue of this process which was not transparent, which did not show respect to the Members of this House and that government, for that, should be ashamed of themselves. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wanted to speak briefly to the motion. Let's take a little look back at history. You know, we go back, we're either the eighth or the ninth Legislative Assembly to debate whether there should be a bridge or not. It goes back in to the '70s. In the 1970s, \$6 million was too much to build the bridge. When it was \$50 million, \$75 million, it was always too much and today it's too much in people's minds, but we can't keep debating these things forever. We have to move ahead.

Mr. Speaker, I want to provide a little bit of background just on this project and point out that this was proposed in 2002 as a P3 project, a new, novel idea of how we could build a bridge. The model was based on a toll of \$6 a tonne in 2002. That has remained the same and that is indexed for inflation. That's always been the agreement based on the consumer price index. Nichols Applied Management did an economic analysis in 2002 and updated it in 2003. A copy of that was provided to Members in the 14th Assembly and again in the 15th Assembly it was provided to everyone. The economic analysis focused on the impact of the bridge on the cost of living and compared the cost of the toll against the estimated savings of the bridge versus the current operation of a ferry and an ice crossing. The overall cost of the bridge was never looked at as a factor in determining the impact on the cost of living. It's always been based on the toll and we have remained consistent with that.

Let me say that the government, I did, I was there, and the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation did a briefing to Members on July the 12th. We went through the economic models. Andrew Gamble led us through that. We looked at the numbers from every which way, we reviewed the financial impact, the costs estimate, you talked about the changes in interest rates, the potential of other projects like the hydro development and the possible Bathurst Inlet port. We talked about all that on July 12th.

Mr. Speaker, the one thing that has remained constant throughout this whole debate, right up to the last briefing with Members on July the 12th, was the fact that this is based on a toll per tonne at \$6 and adjusted for inflation. Mr. Speaker, the economic analysis, if you think back, go look back at your copy of the report that was done and

given to you, you will find that that report shows that all vehicles, private and commercial, would be dollars ahead with the bridge rather than with a ferry or an ice crossing. In fact, it shows that the savings would be greatest for those who use the ferry and somewhat less for those that did the ice crossing. That was all shown.

Mr. Speaker, the communities that benefit most are the communities north of the Mackenzie River. Not just Yellowknife, but also Behchoko, Fort Providence and I would say, and I don't recall, but the report, I believe also looked at the communities that have their supplies, their goods, their people flown in from the Yellowknife Airport to somewhere on this side. The facts are, for the consumers, the savings from this project outweigh the costs. That was true in 2002; it's true again. Look at the reports that you have, think back on the July 12th briefing that you had with the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation and ourselves.

Companies have approached us because we're running into a crisis, and I mentioned it once before, that last year we had to shut the ferry down because of low water, temperatures are changing. Companies are coming to us now saying, can we run the ferry for 24 hours a day to deal with some of the backlog of traffic that they have today and they anticipate peaking in October? Those are all reasons why we need to move ahead with this. Even if we set aside the tolls, the savings to anybody who lives on this side of the river is great.

Mr. Speaker, some Members have asked about the urgency; I've heard Members here, I've listened carefully, they're talking about the urgency of moving on with this. It's true that the price of the bridge has increased substantially. If we had been able to move ahead quickly with it in 2002-2003, we were looking at about a \$75 million bridge where today we're looking at a total cost of somewhere around \$150 million; the contract being a good piece of that, but not all of it. Steel prices are going up; other goods and services in Western Canada are going up. In fact, globally we're seeing the same thing happen. There's no easy or quick turnaround. That's predicted with China, with India, with other places that are big on demand.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the investment by the GNWT of another \$2 million a year to make this project move ahead now is a good investment. We've got additional revenues from the federal government and this is going to be an investment that in two, three, five, 10 years after the bridge was built we can say that this is the best decision we've ever made. We would have said that in the 1970s if the people had built the bridge at that time. We would have said it in 1980s, 1990s, we could have said it in 2002 if we had built the bridge then at the price of it those days. We'll say the same thing five years from now.

It should also be noted that we are receiving significant financial federal funding increase over the next while. We'll soon be signing a framework agreement with the federal government on Building Canada, the infrastructure money. There is additional revenue that we are receiving. It may not be tied directly to the bridge, but it's there.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to point out that we have come to an arrangement, come to a deal. We haven't signed a contract yet, there's still some paperwork to be done with Atcon Group out of New Brunswick who have stepped forward and offered to build the bridge for a guaranteed maximum price. This is not a management or a cost plus

project at all, but it is for a guaranteed price, something which is a big step and I think a big win for us.

Mr. Speaker, in my mind, there's no reason to defer the bridge. Members may feel they need more information. I'd refer you back to the information given to you, I'd refer you back to the notes, I'll give you another copy if you want of the information that's been provided to you. There will always be questions, I'm sure, in people's minds about it, but I don't think you'd ever build a project like this without having some uneasiness about whether or not it is going to come in at the prices that we're voting, and with that guaranteed maximum price I think we've got as much assurance as we can.

A further delay is only going to add uncertainty and add more cost. It could easily kill this project and I think destroy the NWT's credibility. I think we have to stop acting like we're a little branch of the Department of Indian Affairs and the federal government and act like a government, make these decisions. We have to build infrastructure, we know we have to do it and we can't be always going hand out to the federal government. Let's make our own decisions here in this Legislative Assembly and be responsible.

The bridge across the Mackenzie would not only change the physical landscape, but I think symbolizes a lot of change in the political and the economic landscape in the Northwest Territories. This project, along with our work to promote other large transportation infrastructure projects like the Mackenzie Valley highway and the road to Tuk are critical in building a strong and prosperous territory. I'd take the same approach to those projects as I did with the Deh Cho Bridge and I hope the next government does the same thing, just keeps promoting that we need to build infrastructure and we have to get on with it.

So, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Members' comments. I've listened carefully. I understand what you're saying. The Cabinet will not be voting on this motion. It's a recommendation to us and I appreciate the comments and the positions taken by all of the Members. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. I'll allow the mover of the motion to pose a debate on the motion. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Premier for his comments. I also thank the Members who spoke in favour of the motion that we have before us today. I just wanted to close with saying a few more things.

I know the Premier spoke of making decisions as a territory and being accountable. That's all fine and good, Mr. Speaker, but at no moment in time were Members of this House, Regular Members, part of the decision-making process to spend the additional \$2 million, and that, to me, is the fundamental problem that I have with the bridge project. That was a unilateral decision by Cabinet to go ahead and rely on that five-year-old piece of legislation to negotiate a deal. Like I said the other day, nowhere in the Deh Cho Bridge Act does it say build a bridge, Government, at any price. I think if the price has doubled, there should be an obligation on the government to come back and ask Members if they feel it's necessary to spend that additional money that's going to impact the governments for the next 35 years on the bridge project. We've never had that discussion. We've never had a vote on that. The government never brought that issue back

here. We've never had a debate on whether or not we should spend \$2 million more.

Mr. Speaker, that speaks again to the accountability and the transparency. How am I going to explain to my constituents, many of whom want to see a bridge built, I want to see a bridge built across the Mackenzie River, but not at any price and I want to know how it is that the government can make a decision without including us in the decision. How am I going to explain to my constituents how it is the government got into a deal with the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation to build a bridge for \$150 million, charge tolls of \$6.75 a tonne, which will be more in 2010, without, and I repeat, without going back to the stakeholders in the North Slave region as they did in 2002? The parameters have changed. Make no mistake about that. Things are much different five years later. The consultation wasn't done. I know Mr. Braden spoke of a press conference and I believe it was Mr. Albert Lafferty from Fort Providence spoke of the more people that understand this project, the more they will support it. I think a quote like that goes a long way, Mr. Speaker. The more people understand what is going on, the more they will support it. I firmly do believe that.

We haven't heard whether in fact the elders in Fort Providence are happy what the environmental impact on the river might be with a bridge across it, but we haven't seen that level of detail. We haven't been able to ask those questions. Again, Mr. Speaker, if I could, where is the economic modelling, where is the economic modelling on the Deh Cho Bridge project? The Premier says it's the same as 2002, you just plug in new numbers. The tolls are going up, it's \$150 million and he expects us to believe it. He expects us to believe it. Show us the proof. That's all we want, that's all I want. I want to be able to tell my constituents the Premier is quick to say the cost of living will not go up in the North Slave region. I beg to differ with the Premier on that assertion that the cost of living will not increase here in the North Slave region with this bridge being built. They have yet to prove that, Mr. Speaker.

So I think the government should come clean on an economic benefit analysis on this bridge before it's too late, and too late is 48 hours from now, Mr. Speaker. Somebody should be paying attention. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Laughter

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Motion is on the floor. Motion is in order. All those in favour of the motion? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Motions. By the authority given me as Speaker by Motion 9-15(6), I hereby authorize the House to sit beyond the daily hour of adjournment to consider the business before the House. Motions. The honourable Member from Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS the past several years have been a difficult, but ultimately transformative time for the Workers' Compensation Board, with the recent appointment of a new president, the conclusion of an in-depth performance

review by the Auditor General of Canada, the development of a bill to replace the 30-year-old Workers' Compensation Act, and the rendering of court decisions which have declared some of the board's practices flawed;

AND WHEREAS the Workers' Compensation Board has, on balance, maintained a sound financial base and stable premiums;

AND WHEREAS the Workers' Compensation Board faces increasing challenges with the acceleration of resource development in both the mining and hydrocarbon sectors;

AND WHEREAS the Governance Council, under Mr. Denny Rodgers' chairmanship, has demonstrated stability and consistency in their mandate as stewards of the Workers' Compensation Board;

AND WHEREAS consistency and continuity are needed to ensure that the work begun and changes made by the Governance Council are advanced in a positive manner, particularly through the implementation of the action plan to address the recommendations of the Auditor General and the new Workers' Compensation Act;

AND WHEREAS Mr. Rodgers' term as chair of the Governance Council is set to expire October 12, 2007;

AND WHEREAS the 15th Assembly will be dissolved on August 31, 2007;

AND WHEREAS, as a general principle, appointments to positions as significant as chair of the Governance Council of the Workers' Compensation Board should not be revisited during an election period when there are no Regular Members for Ministers to account to;

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.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Motion is on the floor. Motion is in order. To the motion. The honourable Member from Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is unusual, Mr. Speaker, that discussions about the appointment or proposed consideration of any individual be considered on the floor of the Assembly. This is something that is normally handled through another selection and screening and appointment processes. But while it is unusual to bring it in, Mr. Speaker, I would like to suggest that it is an unusual circumstance that this Assembly, and I believe the Workers' Compensation Board, finds itself in.

As the motion referenced, there have been a number of major shifts and transformations and transitions undertaken and underway within the Governance Council and within the board itself.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that Members here have noticed and have been very impressed with and pleased with under the chairmanship of Mr. Rodgers is that the Governance Council has really weathered some fairly stormy seas in the last couple of years and it has done so, I think, with a degree of confidence and certainty that gives us a lot of optimism, Mr. Speaker, for the future of the WCB as it continues to go through these transitions. We believe that it's really important at this time that we did not want to leave the continuance of this kind of

leadership uncertain. While it is, as I say, unusual for this kind of thing to come before the Assembly in this fashion, that it was warranted, it was merited that we send a signal of confidence to our Cabinet colleagues, the Minister responsible as well as to our sister Assembly in Nunavut with who we share the mandate for the WCB. We believe that the organization has shown itself to be in good hands under Mr. Rodgers' chairmanship and that we would really like to see this continue. Therefore, the recommendation was to extend his appointment, which expires in October, until next April, for a six-month period I believe it is, at which time the next Assembly of the Northwest Territories can get its feet on the ground and consider the formal and extended reappointment of Mr. Rodgers to this organization. So it is a signal of confidence in the leadership that we know is there. I've spoke to Mr. Rodgers myself, I know that he is ready to undertake this for another term. Considering the complexity and the significance of this work, I don't think there are too many people in the NWT who are ready to undertake it. When you have somebody as competent as Mr. Rodgers and is willing to carry on, I say let's give him that endorsement and make sure he continues to be the leader of the Governance Council for the next appropriate term, Mr. Speaker.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, let me say this in one sentence: new legislation, new Minister, new government, new CEO. We need stability, continuity, I support the motion. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am going to be very brief as well, although I can't promise to be as brief as Mrs. Groenewegen from Hay River South. Mr. Speaker, I just want to acknowledge two things. One is it's not usual for us to have a debate like this where we are mentioning a specific individual to maintain in the position. I think this is an extraordinary effort in that way.

I am also mindful that the Workers' Compensation Board is independent from the government and I respect that independence. Having said that, I am in support of this motion for the very reason that Mrs. Groenewegen so succinctly and so articulately stated: new legislation, new government.

This legislation we just passed, we just passed a brand new Workers' Compensation Act. It has been in the works for months and months, if not years. For the last eight years, the board has gone through tremendous workload, effort, issues, and we have worked through all of that. We finally concluded that yesterday and we are in our last 48 hours in terms of the session, even though the Ministers are in place. There is a new government coming in. I know Mr. Rodgers personally and he wouldn't be doing it if he wasn't a competent chair. I am going to say I support this motion regardless of who the person is in place. We are looking for stability and continuity. We have a new CEO now that we would like somebody who has been in the place throughout this legislation-making process to be there for just a few months after the next government comes in. Chances are there will be new Ministers getting assignments after the new government and the work can continue and the board and the staff have less changes

than they are going to be facing if everybody changes. In that spirit, I will be voting in favour of this motion. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the issues I have with this motion which has been included, is my concern that we do not have a policy that states that no appointments, especially serious appointments, where there is no emergency pending or falling before us, that we should not be appointing a position just before an election. Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't want anybody to compromise anybody's appointment by saying it's a political appointment to gain favour just before or after an election. So, Mr. Speaker, my concerns and points have been raised in this motion. I will be voting in favour with my other colleagues. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. To the motion. Honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have considered this motion. There is a process in place for selecting a new chairperson. Mr. Rodgers' position doesn't expire until after the life of this government, I think it's October 12th or 9th. We have checked with the Workers' Compensation Board to see if there are any reasons with regard to quorums, workloads or activities that had to go on before the new government would be officially in place. There was none. So, Mr. Speaker, we find it very difficult to reach into the next government's responsibilities. Mr. Speaker, in spite of that, because it's a recommendation, Cabinet will not be voting on this motion. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. I will allow closing remarks by the mover, Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Succinct. Thank you. I am just digging around for my thesaurus but I couldn't find it. My colleagues have raised all the relevant issues. Mr. Handley has spoken to it from the government side. We recognize the process for soliciting ideas and nominations is already underway. We hope that the next government and our sister territory, Nunavut, accepts the discussion and recommendation in that spirit, as one of confidence and a positive outlook for the WCB in the future. With that, I welcome the vote, Mr. Speaker.

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

---Carried

Motions. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 7, Committee Report 4-15(6). By the authority given me as Speaker 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 would like to call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of committee? We have three items before us today. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the committee wishes to consider Bill 7, Safer

Communities and Neighbourhoods Act; Committee Report 4-15(6), Report on Community Consultation on Proposed Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Legislation; and Committee Report 15-(6), Report on the Review of the Information and Privacy Commissioner's 2005-2006 Annual Report. Mahsi, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Mahsi, Mr. Lafferty. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): The first thing on our agenda is Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act. I would like to ask Minister Bell if he would like to provide the bill's opening comments. Minister Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: I am pleased to come before Committee of the Whole to discuss Bill 7, Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act. This legislation has received an extensive public review. Literally hundreds of NWT residents participated in the standing committee's public review and prior to that in the department's consultations. I think that this level of interest reflects a concern shared by residents throughout the territory about the kind and level of illegal activities harming our communities. By listening to residents' concerns, we can develop solutions that truly address their needs.

The Standing Committee on Social Programs has made a number of important observations regarding this bill, and I thank the committee for its thoughtful consideration of the issues. Members have recommended additional safeguards, and I am prepared to introduce five motions to amend this bill to do just that.

The first motion would automatically freeze a community safety order on an application by a tenant of a residential property to vary the order. This would allow occupants to stay in the property until the application was heard.

The second motion would ensure that when the director applies to court for a community safety order, the tenants or occupants would also receive a copy of the application. This notice would be in addition to any warnings they would receive as part of the informal process. This change reinforces the protections that are already available under the Rules of Court and ensure they have the ability to make their case in open court.

The third motion would allow a community safety order to be appealed on grounds other than a point of law. This provides additional protection for the occupants of the property.

The fourth motion would allow the director to seek a court order if information critical to the investigation is not provided.

The first and last motion would remove the penalties for members of the public who refuse to provide information to the director as part of a SCAN investigation.

These motions help to balance the rights of residents who may be afraid to give information with the needs of the investigator to collect information essential to the investigation.

These motions address concerns the standing committee has raised about the legislation. They strengthen the bill

and provide additional protection for people who are affected by these destructive activities.

I think every Member of this Legislative Assembly is aware of drug houses, illegal gambling and bootlegging operations in his or her constituency. These operations disrupt community life and create unsafe situations for everyone who lives there. This government has often been asked to shut these operations down. SCAN is a way to do that, but it would only apply to properties where the illegal activity was ongoing and disruptive to the neighbourhood or community.

Madam Chair, safer communities legislation is in effect in Yukon, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Nova Scotia. Newfoundland has just passed a similar bill into law, and in Alberta a similar bill is at second reading. The response has been overwhelmingly positive. After a safer communities office is opened, investigators are able to move quickly to shut down problem properties. People often write to the SCAN investigators, their elected officials and even their local newspapers to say that they are relieved that something has finally been done to stop the activities affecting their neighbourhood. If we want a northern example, we have only to look to our Yukon neighbours. In the first seven months of operation, about 100 residents placed complaints with the office and actions were taken to stop disruptive activities at 20 properties. No applications for community safety orders were made.

As indicated in standing committee's report, questions still remain on how this legislation can and should work in NWT communities. These include:

- What will happen to families if the primary breadwinner is evicted?
- How will this program work with other social services and supports? With the RCMP?
- How will SCAN work in our smaller communities?
- How will the staffing model be developed? Can we consider a regionally-based, decentralized model?
- Will there be a toll-free number for people to use?
- What involvement will justice committees have?
- Will the Supreme Court travel to communities to hear applications for community safety orders? Will it hear applications by teleconference?

These are important questions that need to be answered as we develop the program. The bill provides the legislative framework for implementation, but it does not include these details of implementation. Extensive discussions need to take place with government departments, social agencies and local leadership. These details will take about a year to work through and would include developing policies and protocols with other agencies, producing communications materials, and hiring staff.

Education is also essential. It is clear there are still misconceptions about this new tool. I have addressed some of these in the document I tabled yesterday. The public needs to know how this legislation will work in their communities.

This bill provides the necessary legislative framework for the next critical steps to be taken. It provides the next government with the opportunity to decide what those steps will be.

It is my hope that the NWT will join the five other jurisdictions in introducing safer communities legislation. Like them, I believe it can be an effective part of the GNWT's effort to make communities safer places for everyone. I believe it is important to have the tools to take action against habitual destructive activities that undermine other efforts to achieve our goal of healthy, safe and vibrant communities. This new tool would be added to the actions we are already taking in partnership with other departments, agencies and communities to tackle these serious issues.

I would be pleased to answer any questions the committee may have. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Bell. There will be no response from the Standing Committee on Social Programs as the report from the standing committee is already before the House. At this time, I will ask Minister Bell if he has witnesses he would like to bring into the Chamber. Minister Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: I do, Madam Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. I will ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to please escort the witnesses to the table.

Minister Bell, for the record, could you please introduce your witnesses?

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Madam Chair. With me is Janice Laycock and Janis Cooper, Department of Justice. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Bell. At this time I will ask the committee if there are any general comments.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Clause by clause.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Bill 7, Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act, interpretation, clause 1.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 2.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 3.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 4.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 5.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 6.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 7.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 8.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 9.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 10.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 11.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 12.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 13.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 14.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 15.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 16. Minister Bell.

Committee Motion 22-15(6): Amend Clause 16 Of Bill 7, Superseded

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that clause 16 of Bill 7 be amended by adding the following after subclause (7):

(8) Notwithstanding section 15, an application by a resident to vary a community safety order stays the operation of the order unless the court directs otherwise.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Bell. We will just wait for that motion to be circulated. The motion is in order. To the motion. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I have a motion to amend the motion that the Minister just presented. Madam Chair, as the Minister indicated in his opening statement, he's suggesting to make about five motions in this bill. The Standing Committee on Social Programs has had a chance to review the bill and, as you are well aware, the recommendation of the committee was to defer the bill and in light of that, we have not had a chance as a committee to review the amendment being made here that the Minister is bringing forward. We would like to suggest that...I have a motion here in that regard.

Committee Motion 23-15(6): Refer Bill 7 To The Standing Committee On Social Programs, Carried

I move that Bill 7, Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act, be referred to the Standing Committee on Social Programs. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Lee. We will circulate your motion.

All right, committee. Under the rules of the Legislative Assembly, Rule 54 states, "A motion to refer a bill, resolution or question to Committee of the Whole or to a standing or special committee shall take precedence over amendments to the bill, resolution or question." Ms. Lee's motion is, therefore, in order. To the motion. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. We, as a committee, have filed a very extensive report on this bill in the House a couple of days back. It is as a result of a quite extensive public hearing process. We appreciate the Minister bringing forward a number of amendments that he feels would address some of the issues that were raised in the report. However, Madam Chair, I need to state, as committee chair and as a member, that there were a number of issues that were raised in the report that would not be, in our opinion, able to be addressed by way

of amendments. So, for that reason, and specific to the motion that the Minister just made, we, as committee, have not had a chance to review that.

We are aware, as a consensus government here, that all of the legislation that we have passed already and some of the really large ones that we passed in this Assembly and this very session, the Workers' Compensation Act, the Liquor Act, there were a number of amendments that went through. There were dozens and dozens of them, and all of them took a lot of time to study what the motions meant, what the amendment meant and what effect that it would have and how it would address the issues that are before us. Simply, we have not had a chance to do that. Referring this bill back to the committee is not to say that we do not support the spirit of the bill or the intent of the bill or the cause or wanting to do something to address some of the serious drug issues and the bootlegging going on. Simply what this motion is trying to say is that this bill is not ready for third reading, that it needs more work. Members want to be able to do more work. We are aware of the fact that this House adjourns in two days, but the Standing Committee on Social Programs is willing to sit and meet and report for the benefit of the next Assembly all the issues that were brought to the committee through our public hearing process and also entertain five motions that the Minister has put forward to us.

I want to say, for the record, also, that the motions that the Minister is suggesting did not come to our attention until last week about an hour or two before we had our clause-by-clause meeting. I just want people to know that we just simply had not had the time to consider all of the motions that the Minister put forward. I want to stay on the technical side of this bill. I am going to leave it at that. I believe that other Members may want to add to their views on this particular motion. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Lee. To the motion. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am going to speak in favour of Ms. Lee's motion to bring these new amendments and new ideas back through the committee process to the general public. Madam Chair, this bill is certainly one of the newer and I think bigger ideas that this Assembly has undertaken. Just on the surface of that, we should never be afraid of looking at new ideas and applying them as they can be appropriated here in the NWT. Universally, we saw a need. We appreciate the need in every one of our communities, big and small, for new ways to address the problems of addictions, bootlegging, drug dealing and other kinds of behaviour. Bringing in a new option and something that would allow communities to have more control over this kind of thing was conceptually very welcome. But the process under which that would happen, the mechanics as outlined in the bill, were found wanting in many areas. So, Madam Chair, as much as there is a need for this, the public, we found through our report, as Ms. Lee has referenced, is one of the most extensive, most detailed, objective and comprehensive reports that I have seen the committee do. It is a good piece of work. It proves that the public does not have confidence in the way this new law was being proposed. It wants to see something like it done, but we need to invest the time to correct misconceptions, to help get people better informed, to certainly amend and adjust some of the flaws that are contained in here. This Assembly and this Minister I think should be pleased with the amount of work that has been done on it, but it is not

something that the public, the general people of the NWT I believe, are ready to accept and make work. Let's understand that time, awareness, education, discussion and consultation are a very important part of law-making and having new laws land on their feet with the people they are intended to serve. We have not allowed enough of that to happen. I am reminded, Madam Chair, that this idea or new law was not originally on the agenda of the 15th Assembly when we came into office. It came in a very rapid and unexpected fashion about midway through our term I think at the expense of other legislation, Madam Chair. So it has been a difficult one for committee to adjust to as well.

I believe this is a good start. It is one that I am supportive of, but that we should have no hesitation to hand it over with a very strong recommendation to our successors in the 16th Assembly to finish a job that got a reasonably good start. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Braden. To the motion. Next I have Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I want to speak in favour of this motion to refer as well. In my 12 years in this Legislature, I have never seen a bill that has been so roundly and thoroughly criticized from so many points of the compass, at the community level, by professionals. It has been problematic for me since I first saw it. It needs work. I think we should take the time to do this right. It came very late onto the legislative agenda, I believe less than a year before the end of this term. I think it stepped over and queue-jumped over other pieces of legislation, in my opinion.

I think there are some serious flaws in this. It is very problematic setting up state police and all the issues about evidence and anonymous phone calls and all of these different issues that have been raised and they haven't been addressed even by these latest amendments offered by the Minister. So I agree that this should be looked at in a more measured and thorough way to try to address it to see if it even deserves to see the light of day. But that should be done not in the dying minutes of this Assembly but by the new, fresh Assembly that is going to be coming into office here in the next six weeks. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Next I have, to the motion, Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I, too, will support this motion as put forward. This is one legislation that most of my colleagues always said that it came to us late in the game. As a member of the Social Programs committee, I think we did a very good job going into the communities to review the SCAN legislation. We heard what the people had to say. We are bringing it back. We have listened to them and we are doing what we heard. I think it is only right that the legislation be referred to the 16th Assembly. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you for those brief comments, Mr. Pokiak. Next on my list to the motion is Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, it has certainly has been a roller coaster ride lately, the last couple of days or a couple of weeks, on this particular SCAN legislation that is before us. I would just like to make it clear that there was an article in the newspaper; of course, don't believe everything you read or hear. It is not the first time, of course, that the newspaper has done that,

but I just want to state my piece here that this whole thing I would like to commend the Minister and his department and staff for bringing this forward.

I know where the Minister's heart is. He wants to work for the people. He is listening to the elders about the drug abuse, the substance, the dealers in the communities. At the same time, Madam Chair, the motion that is in front of us is asking for a referral to the next government. I, not just myself, but other leaders around the table here, have been consulting with our leadership amongst ourselves. This has not been an easy ride. It is a very sensitive issue. We want something done in the communities. The elders are pressuring us to have something done in the community. That is why we have been working with Minister Bell on this particular issue. At the same time, Madam Chair, you may call it flaws within the legislation. Those are issues that we need to deal with. Those may be some challenges that we must tackle. But I have been told over and over by my leadership, by elders that I have spoken to, it is always a statement that has been brought forward. I am sure other regions know for a fact that elders have always told us don't rush things, take your time, do it right and listen to your people, listen to the people of the North, listen to your people of the region.

There is a report here that highlights that, but I must state for the record that there are people out there that want this to go through as well; maybe through SCAN or a different model, but we must tackle the drug dealers and the bootleggers in the community. It is a huge issue. Every single one of us are dealing with it on an everyday basis. This, whether it is or not, we have to move on, Madam Chair, somehow. So after considerable consultation with my respected leaders, elders and community members, I was given direction to support referring this SCAN, Bill 7, to the next government, the 16th Assembly. I think we need to take it slow. We cannot push through legislation so fast. That is what I have been told. So I just want to pass that on. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. To the motion. Next I have Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Chair. I, too, will be voting in favour of this motion we put forward. I commend the Minister and his department for bringing this forward. I believe they want to do the right thing. We want them to do the right thing. The whole of the Northwest Territories wants us to do the right thing. The right thing is to get these people off the streets and, as the bill says, make the neighbourhood safer. But at the same time, our committee was given this bill and we were asked to bring it out and listen to what people had to say. I thought we did that.

It has been a tough couple of days because I hear now the bill might be going through even though people have told us that it has some flaws. There are a few amendments on the table, but I don't think that is enough. I spoke to an elder in Inuvik this afternoon that I usually call on now and then for advice. I said, what do you think? I explained to her that this was a bill that the spirit, the principle is something that we all want to see. I said, but this was a bill that was brought in from down south. This wasn't a bill like the Liquor Act that was written here by us, for us. It wasn't. She said, well, I like the idea of the bill. But the fact that it was something that was taken from down south is not going to apply up here. With some changes, it may work. But it has to be tailored for the Northwest Territories. I spoke to another lady who knows about acts and practically read the whole thing. Her view

was the same. I said, well, they proposed amendments. Do you think those will work? She said no. She said it has to be a complete rewrite, as far as I'm concerned.

We have people that we call on for advice, but eventually it comes down to us as MLAs making a decision. But we have to listen to that advice. We have to. We can't come in here and then start ignoring advice after we get in here because, with two quick strokes of a pencil any one of us can be out of here that quick. If we don't listen to them, then they will exercise that right and I will respect them for that. But we do have to listen to what people are telling us. Otherwise, why have a Social Programs committee take this on the road if we are not going to listen to them? People have long memories. You didn't listen to us then. You won't listen to us now.

The spirit of this bill is very good. We have heard from social agencies. Who more than social agencies want to deal with the issues of alcohol and drugs, because they are the people in the front line that have to live with this all of the time. They have to deal with these people. When they are telling us that this is a good bill, the spirit is good but it is flawed, we have to listen to them. We are not the ones that have to deal with it. We are back here. We are sending these people to the front and we are not arming them. Then when they ask us for something, then we have to pay attention to what they say because it makes sense. They know all about this. They are the ones that are going to have to deal with these people. They are the ones that deal with the effects of alcohol and drugs and all the other social issues that go on in communities. When they speak, I show them the respect and I listen to them.

Madam Chair, I commend the Minister again, but we need one that is made in the NWT. I am going to vote in favour of referring this to Social Programs for the 16th Assembly. But this spirit is good. When we refer it to the 16th Assembly, I am positive that they will recognize that and move forward on it and not just let it disappear, because people want something done. This is a start. It has to have a solid foundation to put anything on top of it, otherwise it is just going to come crumbling down. This could be that foundation. As it is written, it is almost impossible to support. I listened to the advice of the people. Ultimately, the decision comes down to me sitting here as their representative. I have to make sure that I make the best decision on their behalf. This is what I told them I would do. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. To the motion. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, there are many things that will catch my eye, but there are only a few things that will really catch my heart. This SCAN legislation is one of them. It is very close to me. I can really understand where the Minister is coming from. When he first introduced this bill in the House here and he brought it to committee and we took it to the road, we heard the people in the communities speak from their heart and from their personal experience. I can empathize, sympathize and can also relate with them. People that were talking, some of them are here today and some of them are not here.

Madam Chair, we are good people in our communities. Some of them are my friends who we are talking about. Some of them are my constituents who I am working for. Some of them are just not listening to anybody and just continue to do what they are going to do. It is sort of a "catch me if you can" attitude. We will catch you. There

are consequences to what they are doing to our children. There are consequences to what they are doing to our people. These people are competing against us. As government, we hate competition in some of our business. These people, through this motion, may live another day just to read it. But they should really think about what they are doing to their people through this proposed legislation that the Minister has brought forward for us to think about.

I commend him because he is a leader that looked at this issue that is very serious in the North. It is something that he is proposing to do because we have talked about treatment centres and programs. It just seems like we have not enough soap box, not enough money to deliver on some of these programs we want. We could go back further to the federal government in terms of them not providing us with enough money. We go through that whole scenario. Madam Chair, the matter of the fact is that people in our communities are looking for help. People in our communities want something to get done. We have a lot of good suggestions. This suggestion here of a SCAN, the proposed legislation, not yet. It is a good idea. It is a good concept. We need to continue working on shaping it. We have to shape it, all of us and with our members and with our elders, as Mr. Lafferty has said. Take into some serious consideration as to really think about this as workers. There are too many questions out there.

Madam Chair, I heard the people speak. I have listened to them. It is not a bad thing to defer this bill. The liquor legislation and the Workers' Compensation Board, how many Assemblies have they gone through to finally see the light of day in this Assembly? Several. The Species at Risk Act. I would love to see that we have done some work on the 15th. It is the next Assembly. That is a big piece of work. Maybe it is quite fitting that the Species at Risk Act, also this legislation go together because those things are happening. Those species are going to be at risk.

Madam Chair, we are a consensus government. All these here need to be considered with all the people, 40,000 people in our region. There is a lot of work and lots of good people out there that need help. There are a lot of ways to help them. I agree with Mr. Miltenberger, Madam Chair, in terms of we need a police officer in Colville Lake. We don't need another police officer. Colville Lake said to us in the report they want help. First, we need to go back and get our priorities straight. Again, Madam Chair, I would like to say that, when we look at this here, I am very comfortable that it will be brought up again in the 16th Assembly because this issue here we talked about so many times, Madam Chair, in assemblies in our communities, and we are going to do something about that, the bootleggers, the use of illegal drugs in our communities and other illegal activities. I think that's paving the way for government to really stand up. I commend, again, the Minister for bringing this forward, the leadership that he has brought and to say let's have some good discussions. That's government and you have to go through it slow through our consensus government. Our people out there are the ones who talk to us. I'd like to really give it some serious thought, listen to my people and prepare ourselves properly...(inaudible)...one united voice to say yes, this is a good SCAN. This bill now is ready to be implemented. Madam Chair, I'm going to support the motion. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. To the motion. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to start off by thanking the Department of Justice, especially Minister Bell for his determination in bringing forward this piece of legislation, Bill 7. Obviously, you know, Members have concerns with the rollout of Bill 7. There's a motion before us to refer it back to standing committee. I see the mood and the sentiment in the room is to do that, to refer it back for further review and I just want to say I respect the wishes of my colleagues in doing that. Although I do have a few things that I wanted to say and, again, we've heard from so many of our constituents, and you can go around the room here today, that drugs and alcohol are existing in our communities and causing untold devastation, especially to our young people and families in our communities. There are crack houses, there is bootlegging, and we need to do something about that. Taking action is something I believe needs to be done and we need to show some leadership and show our constituents that we are listening to them and that we are going to try to help give them the tools to help protect themselves so that those who choose to partake in illegal activities in our communities aren't going to be tolerated.

I personally take little pity on those who prey on the weaknesses of others, specifically children. It's hard to put a price on what it would mean to a mother and a father whose young son or daughter frequents a crack house, gets their crack at the same house everyday, the neighbours who have to live next door to the crack house and see this type of activity going on. Or in a small community, the family that loses a son or daughter on a drunken snowmobile ride that got a bottle from the local bootlegger. It's hard to put a price on lives. Madam Chair, we're losing far too many of our young people to the ravages of drugs and alcohol. I really believe we need to listen, we need to understand and we have to come up with a plan to address this. We can't just sit idly by and watch these things happen in our communities.

I know my colleagues are interested in seeing something put in place, whether it's Bill 7, maybe a fix, you know, if we get some more northern content in it, if it's made in the North. There's a myriad of things we could take a look at doing, but I want to go on record today and say if I am back in this House during the life of the 16th Legislative Assembly, I am going to take a serious run at crack houses and bootlegging and see to it that the work that Mr. Bell and the Department of Justice have started gets concluded and that work towards shutting down crack houses, shutting out bootleggers, continues. We have to do that. We have to come up with a mechanism to rid our communities of these people, Madam Chair. It's as simple as that.

Before I go, I came here today, and this has been one of the biggest struggles I've had to deal with as a Member because I feel so passionately about what drugs and alcohol do to our young people and I want to give, you know...I've got a crack house in my riding. I get calls from constituents about traffic there day and night. It's a difficult situation to be in to get calls from your constituents and there's nothing you can do to shut down that crack house. The police know about it; they get calls every day as well. I think something like this, this might not be a fit, and again, I respect my colleagues and I respect their thoughts and their feelings. You know, I came here to today and I always like a good fight. I mean if you want to fight, I mean, I'll stand on principle, I'll do what I have to do; but as much as I like a good fight, I also like to listen and I also like to listen especially to my colleagues and their concerns and especially the public. You know, the

feedback I receive on SCAN and the interest that's been shown in the community, I take all the e-mails, I take all the phone calls I get, I take them to heart, I really do. If folks in the community feel that this legislation needs more work and Members of the Social Programs committee have obviously said they'd like to see it have some more work, that's something I respect.

Again, it's time we did something and that to me is the bottom line. Sooner or later the Government of the Northwest Territories is going to have to do something to impact the operation of crack houses and bootlegging operations in the Northwest Territories. Sooner or later and that day is coming. I think, Madam Chair, all crack dealers and crack houses and bootleggers should be on notice that the next government is going to put in place something to tackle that big bad issue that we really need to start working on, Madam Chair.

Again, I want to thank my colleagues, especially Minister Bell who's put so much time and effort and work into Bill 7. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. To the motion. Next I have Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Madam Chair. I also want to state my support for the motion that's on the floor right now for referral to the standing committee for all the good reasons that all of my colleagues have stated here today. So I'll just be brief with expressing my reasons for support.

One, most importantly being that the general public in the NWT is not really ready for this type, or prepared, I guess, for this type of legislation to be thrown on them along with the new Liquor Act and all other kinds of legislation that we've been passing here in this House. However, I have to really commend the Minister of Justice also and just as much gratitude has to be brought to the Social Programs committee for putting this type of report, a comprehensive report that it is, together to address the Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act and the extensive consultative process that they went through to get this report together. I really have to commend everybody for all their work. Just to let it be known that I don't think all this work is going to be in vain because we're just referring it to the next Assembly and just like my colleague Mr. Ramsay has stated, the chair, that the 16th Assembly will be putting something in place that will address the issue of drug abuse and substance abuse here in the NWT. I do agree with him that we do have to take some action. It's a definite no-brainer that we know that, but I don't think we can take actions that will infringe on basic human rights of freedom and liberty here in the NWT and I think this is what the Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act will do now as it stands.

I hope, and I'm confident, that the next Assembly here will put this Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act very high on their priority list. I'm sure a lot of Members here in the House will be returning and this is one piece of legislation that will be right at the top with the other ones that we have referred back and haven't even brought to the House yet. With that, again, I'd just like to say that I do support the motion here today and I do support the Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act, but not today.

---Laughter

I hope to see something, I hope it's tweaked, it's revamped, and fine-tuned, and the public is well aware of what they're going to be supporting or not supporting. We've got to get more information out there before this

legislation comes back to this House for passing in this House. I think the general public in the NWT will let us know when it's time to do that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Villeneuve. Next on the list I've got Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, I guess I look around the room and it's pretty obvious where the numbers are so I'm going to have to say, first and foremost, I'm going to have to respect the Assembly's direction on this. There's no point in debating it at endless length and pleading when the decision has already been made.

Mr. Chair, one of the calls to action when I was in my election campaign in 2003 was to find solutions for the drug and crack problem. A number of people told me face to face that we had to come up with solutions. They were looking for something. If anything, they were looking for some leadership and some action on this problem because up until that point, not to say nothing was being done, but up until that point, there was a feeling of almost a surrender or a defeatist point of view. Mr. Chairman, I take this quite personally, this act, because I've had a number of constituents -- I happen to be the MLA for downtown and certainly if, God willing, the constituents choose to send me back, I hope to continue to be the MLA for downtown -- but, Mr. Chairman, the fact is the downtown has a number of crack houses and I've continually received calls from constituents regarding crack houses downtown. I've passed all of those on to the RCMP and rightly so, and in many cases it's taken quite a bit of time and quite a bit of pressure. In some cases, we've had very good tenants. In other words, we have crack dealers who know the law, they pay their rent, pay their power, you know, do all the right normal things, but they sell drugs. Some of these are located right next to Mildred Hall. Some are located right down next to our medical clinics. Some are located right next to our seniors downtown. All of that is sort of a mute point at this time. I mean, RCMP know.

Mr. Chairman, I am slightly disappointed, I'm not going to deny that. Even though I've said it twice now, but drug dealing is against the law. As long as we continue to find reasons to stall solutions, I mean, I will say I do respect many of the points brought forward. I've had a chance to read if not every one, almost every single one of the e-mails, and a few have come in especially as of late. I also have the right to disagree, too, as well as they have the right to disagree with me. But how are we going to solve this problem? Everything was sort of a doom and gloom position as opposed to how can we make this act work? I think the Minister has responded quite handily because committee came forward and said that they would like this, this, and this to address their needs and I think the Minister has come back. But that's neither here nor there because there's obviously a lack of will or interest to re-look at this to see if there's a way to possibly make it work.

Something that needs to be said also is the fact that the regulations have not been drafted on this bill. So what do regulations mean? Well, I mean, we've got the structure of the bill and we've got possibly a year, maybe even two years to design the mechanics of how it actually works. Even if, again, I'm fortunate enough to return and find that civil liberties are put to the test that they're just truly unacceptable, I'd vote for the removal of the money in the budget. Essentially, as I've said earlier today, I'll pull the Conservative trick on the gun registry: choke the money,

don't kill the gun registry, just take the money away. So I would take the same principle in the future on this, which is if it doesn't find a balanced approach. What we're voting against, or, sorry, referring back today is the structure that I thought was a solution. I'll concede that the greater Assembly feels at this time that it isn't the solution and I'll respect that. I won't take the Assembly's wisdom on this in vain; I'll take it with respect that a little more work needs to be done.

I just want to say one more thing, which is Mr. Ramsay did highlight the need to focus, I mean really focus on the fact that drugs in our community are a problem and we are fooling ourselves if we can find a way to defend this by slowing any process down that tries to hone in on that problem and deal with it. I am a strong and absolute committed believer in the fact that fighting drugs is only 50 percent of the problem. We also have to offer treatment so then there is nobody interested in buying them because they don't feel the need to have that desire fulfilled. So it's a two-part process. I've never, never thought otherwise for a moment. So I wouldn't want anyone to think that I don't believe that. I highlighted today my concern about not getting an additions centre here in Yellowknife in this term and I'm hoping that that will be a success the next term. But the fact is, I think it's a two-part process.

So, Mr. Chairman, although this is a referral, deep down inside I think it's more of a recycling bin referral. It's really up to the next Assembly whether they decide it's a priority or not. We should really say what it is today, which is it's the Assembly's refusal to consider this or to modify this to go forward. I'll accept that and I'll put faith in the next 16th Assembly to possibly re-examine this and see if they can accommodate some of the needs, and I'll say the very good needs and suggestions brought forward in many of the e-mails that I've seen. I do agree with some of the intent; sometimes maybe I was just so excited to see something come forward that I was willing to accept the product being offered. Maybe that was my excitement of a solution being put forward today and maybe by all of us stepping back, including myself, we will have a better product in the end.

So, Mr. Chairman, with that, I want to thank committee's time. I definitely want to thank the Minister, who I know has worked hard; there are a lot of staff that have worked hard and, of course, committee has put a fair amount of time and energy into this bill. So respecting all that, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Next on the list I have Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will try to be brief but this is a very important matter, a very important motion and I feel I do need to speak to it. Like other Members, first of all, I would like to thank Minister Bell for his foresight and his call to arms, so to speak, to deal with this whole issue of drug dealers and bootleggers in the Northwest Territories. As other Members have said, as well, we are being ravaged by this and in some ways I think we're afraid to stand up to them. We have grown complacent. We talked about that when we talked about the denormalization of alcohol abuse and substance abuse. We have grown complacent. We have learned to co-exist with it. It has become a part of the fabric of our communities to understand that there will be drug dealers and there will be bootleggers. If we are going to make progress, we need to stand up to this, but we need to find the best way to do that.

I respect the work of the Social Programs committee. They are the ones who went out and went on the road and consulted and have spent a great deal of time and work on this particular piece of legislation and I do thank them for that. I'm going to tell you, I think in my community there is a lot of support for legislation like safer communities legislation, but we work in a consensus government here; we do not try to railroad each other. I have been involved in votes that were passed by one vote before and I tell you, at the end of the day, when you win at a vote by one vote, it really, in our consensus style government, doesn't leave a very good taste. If I can give you an example. I remember one day driving back here in a snowstorm to get into the House, barely, to run in and support and just be pressured and lobbied about this motion not to give Yellowknife an extra MLA. I have to tell you, many times since then I've regretted that because that spawned that whole Friends of Democracy court action, and that was one vote. That was my vote. I was on my way from Hay River and I was late and I got here and the Premier of the day, I won't tell you who it was, but anyway...

---Laughter

You know, there was a big pressure and it was all riding on me. I have to tell you...I'm telling you it is not in keeping with the sense and the style of consensus government to ram something through on one vote. So we could possibly have pushed this through, but you know the thing is that it would go to the next Assembly and it would need a lot of modification and a lot of support. It's kind of six of one, half-dozen of the other. We can either take the time now and as Members have committed, and I'll tell you, if I'm back in this government in the next Assembly, I am going to save the Hansard of this discussion here for the day that Members committed to the principle of this particular legislation. I will remember then, too, that it was Mr. Bell who has the foresight to make sure his department got this on the road and we will not forget about it.

Out of respect for other Members, we need to consider a made-in-the-North solution. I could not agree with Member McLeod more. We need a made-in-the-North solution. We are not like other jurisdictions. We need to give our communities the tools to deal with these problems; maybe a different model. Cookie cutter legislation doesn't always work in the North. Our communities are very diverse. We've got Colville Lake and a place like Yellowknife. How do you enact legislation that can address the needs of both of those communities? Maybe we need to do a pilot project. Maybe we need to do a prototype. Maybe we need to roll this out in one community or maybe a large community, a small community, and see how it works.

When we did the WCB legislation, because of the complexity of it, we approached it in a workshop kind of environment. We didn't just do it on our routine kind of process that we move legislation along on, because we understood that we wanted to get it right and we wanted to have that dialogue and we wanted to think it out amongst ourselves in collaboration also with the stakeholders.

So I think that it's just very unfortunate timing. This government is drawing to a close; we have run out of time. We could sit here for the next 10 hours and debate these amendments and everything. I don't think that, at the end of the day, we are still going to do justice to a piece of legislation as important as this.

Like I said, the Social Programs committee say they have heard the cries of the communities. We all have, and we need, to respect that and we need to listen to that.

I just want to say one other thing that might be slightly off the topic of the motion here, but we need to think a little bit broader and a little more outside the box. We have been taking about drugs and alcohol in our communities. We can clean up the drugs and the alcohol, but there is a reason why people are enslaved to these things. As a government, and I have said it before and I will say it again, we pay very little attention to the spiritual conditions that give people that meaning of life, that purpose of living. There is no reason...You want to talk about a made-in-the-North solution, why can't we pay attention to that? Why can't we recognize that having a healthy spirit is part of the whole person and a well person? Why can't we do that? We stay away from it; we avoid it; we say that's somebody else's business and we don't want to get involved in that, but our people are dying. Our people are getting caught in things that they cannot get themselves out of and we are trying, as a government, to deal with it.

I will support the motion here today and again thanks so much to the Minister of the Department of Justice for the work he's done on this. It will be back. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Next on the list I have Minister Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, committee. Mr. Chairman, I do have a few comments to make concerning this motion that, if passed, effectively means the end of this piece of legislation unless it's taken off and introduced by another Assembly, possibly the 16th or maybe the 17th. First of all, I want to thank all Members, particularly those who are representing small communities and have personally spent a lot of time over the last few days to come to me to explain their position on this bill, on these issues. While I may disagree, I want to say that I respect the positions they have taken on this bill. As such, Mr. Chairman, the Premier has asked that I inform the committee that government will not vote on this motion and will respect the will of the House.

Mr. Chairman, I also want to recognize the work done by the MLA for Yellowknife Centre, Robert Hawkins, on what I consider a very important initiative. Mr. Hawkins represents downtown Yellowknife. I know he understands too well the horrible impact alcohol and drugs is having on this community. In fact, he spent a number of hours over the last few months talking to me in my office about this various issue in the hopes for this piece of legislation; sometimes with kids in tow, as he mentioned earlier.

Mr. Chairman, as the sponsoring Minister, I support the bill. More than that, Mr. Chairman, as a member of this community and a long-time northerner, I personally believe that this legislation is another important tool we need to fight the scourge of alcohol and drugs in our community. I find it more than just a little ironic, and Members probably will too, that I am proposing legislation that was championed by the NDP governments in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. I guess on this one debate on this one issue I stand with Premiers Calvert and Doer.

Those provinces, along with others like Yukon and Newfoundland, tell us that this type of legislation works, works in their urban areas, works in the more remote communities where the circumstances are similar, in many respects, to the small communities in this territory.

Mr. Chairman, in my eight years in this House, every community I have travelled in in the NWT, I have heard the same stories. Indeed, we have all heard the same stories. Leaders, elders, youth and our residents tell us about how a few people in our communities are preying on others in the community by illegally selling alcohol and drugs. In this community in Yellowknife, there are crack houses operating that the police do not have the time, resources or ability to shut down. These crack houses are having a very real and negative effect on the people in our neighbourhood, in our communities, especially our children, our most vulnerable citizens.

Mr. Chairman, the problems caused by alcohol and drugs is tearing apart families, communities and our territory. As a member of this community, a long-time northerner and as a father, I wanted to do something to stop it and that's why I sponsored this legislation and why today I still consider it an important tool to deal with these problems in our communities.

To be clear and to be fair, this legislation is not meant to be the entire answer. Obviously, as members of the public have pointed out, we must do more as a government and as a society to provide treatment, to provide healing for our people who are struggling with issues related to alcohol and drug abuse. During this debate and over the last little while, there have been many issues raised about how this new tool will be used. I believe that many of those issues are based on misconceptions about the legislation. As well, I think there were a number of specific issues we were prepared to address here today or through the implementation process. But, Mr. Chairman, I think Members know I had a lot personally invested in this and a number of people commented and asked why the rush. I can tell you that personally I didn't want to feel as if I had gone through another Assembly and hadn't done enough to deal with this issue or we hadn't done enough.

So thank you to the members of the committee. Again, I certainly appreciate all the calls and e-mails I received. I appreciate MLA Hawkins' time on this issue and the discussions that we had. I apologize again that I wasn't able to bring this home, but, Mr. Chairman, if it's the will of the House that this legislation not proceed during the 15th Legislative Assembly, I obviously must, and am certainly willing to, respect that decision. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

---Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Minister Bell. To the motion. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When I introduced the motion, I tried to follow the rule of making a statement that is quite narrow and to the motion, but I do appreciate the nature of the discussion by necessity and, more importantly, took on wider statements on the part of the Members. I appreciate very much all the comments and the points the Members made. I think we are doing good work here. I respect everybody's opinion with regard to that.

Mr. Chairman, I think it should be made very clear that at no time during discussions of this bill in the committee or in the public hearings did we ever hear anyone suggesting that we need to do more or that anyone suggested that we ought to do more to address the drug situation as well as alcohol and drug bootlegging. The question here and the support of the motion is not against all those important issues. I think that should be made very clear.

The question here is whether or not the SCAN legislation is the one that will address those issues and do it in a way that makes sense to people and that is applicable to the North. The question is whether or not the SCAN legislation, as written, is going to do that and I think we have received overwhelming input that this is not going to do that as written. Many people support the spirit of the bill, but they would like us to bring it back and work on it more.

Mr. Chairman, let me just remind everybody here, and Mr. Yakeleya suggested that, the Workers' Compensation Act, the Liquor Act, Employment Standards Act, Public Health Act, all of them took years and years of work. I am not saying you should work for years and years to delay it, but these are complex pieces of legislation. SCAN legislation has a wide vision and a very big scope and it's going to set up a whole new infrastructure for dealing with the issue at hand and I think it needs a lot more detail. Even Bill 13, Change of Name Act, which is a simple procedure on changing your name, had about 12 clauses on how to address that step by step. So surely we need to do a lot more work on that.

As the committee chair, I recommend to the House here that we will write a detailed report on the findings that we heard and I will make sure the next government will look at that.

Another thing is we don't have party politics here, so it's not like a new party comes in and they wipe out the old party politics clean and they introduce a new party system. The new consensus government will look at all the unfinished business, and obviously this is going to be accompanied in that and I am sure it will be thoroughly addressed and I am sure it will be spoken about during the campaign as well.

Mr. Chairman, I want to tell the RCMP officers all over the Territories, who I know have supported this legislation, who I know felt this was a useful tool, I respect the work the RCMP do and this should not be taken as anything against what they are trying to do. I think we have civilian rules here and we have responsibilities to make sure the powers we give to the RCMP and other RCMP-like officers are written in a way that are clear and have sufficient checks and balances. I just wanted to state that I look forward to working on this. Thank you so much.

---Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. 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

Does committee agree that Bill 7 be recommitted to the Social Programs committee?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. Does committee agree that consideration of Committee Report 4-15(6) is concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. Committee Report 4-15(6) is concluded and Bill 7 will be recommitted to the Social Programs committee. Mahsi. At this time, I would like to ask what is the wish of the committee.

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. 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. Mahsi.

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 7, Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act, and Committee Report 4-15(6) and would like to report progress with one motion being adopted and that Committee Report 4-15(6) is concluded and that Bill 7 has been recommitted to the Standing Committee on Social Programs for further review. 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 Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Third reading of bills. The honourable Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board, Mr. Krutko.

ITEM 22: THIRD READING OF BILLS

Bill 6: Workers' Compensation Act

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Frame Lake, that Bill 6, Workers' Compensation Act, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. 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

---Applause

Bill 6 has had third reading. Third reading of bills. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Roland.

Bill 15: Liquor Act

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Frame Lake, that Bill 15, Liquor Act, 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 15 has had third reading.

---Applause

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

ITEM 23: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, orders of the day for Thursday, August 23, 2007 at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
5. Returns to Oral Questions
6. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
7. Acknowledgements
8. Oral Questions
9. Written Questions
10. Returns to Written Questions
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motion
15. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
 - Motion 12-15(6), Appointment of Sole Adjudicator
17. First Reading of Bills
18. Second Reading of Bills
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Committee Report 6-15(6), Report on the Review of the Information and Privacy Commissioner's 2005-2006 Annual Report
20. Report of Committee of the Whole
21. Third Reading of Bills
22. Prorogation

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Thursday, August 23, 2007, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 19:38 p.m.