

provided me with some raw data on what is used annually here since 2006-07 on road salt.

As I said in my Member's statement today, in the last six years, it has increased over 200 percent. What type of monitoring of the impacts of road salt usage is happening by his department to ensure that we are not creating problems with the environment such as the rivers, ponds and streams? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Department of Transportation has been using road salt for the de-icing agent in the Northwest Territories for the past 26 years. If the Member would like some detailed information on possible environmental impact of the use of road salt, I would be more than happy to ask the department for that. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, in answering the Minister's question, I will say yes.

Mr. Speaker, Environment Canada, as I am aware, has done a fair bit of research along Highway No. 3 to study the impact of road salt. Is the reason why the Department of Transportation wouldn't typically monitor the amount of road salt considering the amount we use? At the same time, why do we use road salt? Why don't we just go with gravel, which is a product naturally found here so we wouldn't be introducing anything new and doing any harm to our environment? Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, the application of road salt happens when the temperature is minus 10 and rising in periods of close to freezing. It is considered to be better application than the gravel in those instances. It is not used all the time, all winter, but predominantly in the fall and the spring. Because our climate is changing and we are seeing more days where we are susceptible to freezing rain, the use of salt has increased. If the climate continues to change, that trend is likely to continue. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, and I appreciate the answer from the Minister. Interestingly enough, through my research and, of course, some of the response for the Minister, it highlights minus 10 or warmer is basically the time, I'll say the opportunity to use road salt, because if you use it when it's colder than minus 10 it doesn't work. So would the Minister of Transportation be willing to re-evaluate the Department of Transportation's usage of road salt in the Northwest Territories because of the possible negative effects that are happening? I shouldn't say possible, these are known negative effects that are happening to our environment. Would he be willing to review that policy? Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you. As I mentioned earlier to the Member, I'd be more than happy to go back to the department to get their understanding of what any potential environmental impact is with the use of road salt. But like I said, we've been applying that to the roads here in the Northwest Territories for the past 26 years. So I will get that information. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Not to sound combative, but just because we've done it for 20 years this way doesn't mean we couldn't do it better or another way tomorrow. We've all been using the same beaver pelt hats where they use mercury on them in order to be safe. So, I'll take the Minister's point, though, and if he could provide that to the standing committee as well as all Members, that would be very useful for us, especially the companion of the Environment Canada study that has been looking at the lakes along the highways here. Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you. Yes, we'll do that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Blake.

QUESTION 87-17(2):
LONG-TERM CARE NEEDS
OF MACKENZIE DELTA ELDERS

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are directed to the Minister of Health and Social Services. Is the Minister willing to review the decision to end long-term care at the Joe Greenland Centre and come up with a plan that meets the needs of elders in the Mackenzie Delta? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Blake. The Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The long-term care facilities need to be located near larger centres where we have physicians and nursing care and so on. Right now it makes it very difficult to put long-term care in the smaller communities where that service is not available 24/7. That's been the issue in the past. Because physicians are not available 24/7, it's difficult to keep long-term care in the smaller centres like Aklavik. Thank you.

MR. BLAKE: Is the Minister going to increase the amount of home care workers as an interim measure until we receive a long-term care facility? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Yes, we have. In the difference between the year when last year when the Joe Greenland Centre had housed the eight