



# **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

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## **HANSARD**

**Friday, June 2, 2006**

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**The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Friday, June 2, 2006****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, Honourable Michael McLeod, Mr. McLeod, Mr. Menicoche, Honourable Michael Miltenberger, Mr. Pokiak, Mr. Ramsay, Honourable Floyd Roland, Mr. Villeneuve, Mr. Yakeleya

**ITEM 1: PRAYER**

---Prayer

**SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey):** Colleagues, before we begin today, Nunavut recently lost a long-serving political figure when Jobie Nutarak, most recently the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut, was killed in a tragic snowmobile accident on April 22, 2006. Mr. Nutarak was hunting 400 kilometres from his hometown of Pond Inlet when he lost his life riding over rough terrain. Mr. Nutarak was the first confirmed Member of the Nunavut Legislative Assembly when it was first opened in 1999 representing the Tunnunig riding. He was re-elected to the Assembly in 2004, and was acclaimed as Speaker of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Legislative Assembly in March of 2004. Mr. Nutarak was involved in local politics as a member of many boards and councils in Nunavut. Mr. Nutarak was survived by his wife and five children who live in Pond Inlet. I got to know Jobie fairly well as our paths crossed in Speakers' circles. I found him to be a man of genuine integrity and had pride in his political accomplishments.

Sadly, I must announce the passing of a respected resident of the Tlicho region, Joe Migwi. Mr. Migwi was a respected Tlicho elder who was involved in the negotiations of the Tlicho land claims and was also deeply involved in the Tlicho community and organizations. Please stand and join me in observing a moment of silence in memory of our colleague Jobie Nutarak from Nunavut and respected Tlicho elder Joe Migwi.

---Minute of Silence

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, colleagues. Please be seated. Orders of the day. Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

**ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS****Minister's Statement 9-15(5): Celebrating The Success Of Graduates**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning. Mr. Speaker, the months of May and June are a popular time to celebrate educational achievement as students graduate from high schools, post-secondary institutions and various technical training programs.

Graduation ceremonies have been taking place throughout the NWT, where achievement is formally acknowledged and grads given awards for their achievements in academics, athletics, fine arts, leadership and community involvement. I have had the pleasure of attending graduation ceremonies this spring in Inuvik and Fort Resolution. I will be attending ceremonies in Fort Simpson on June 3<sup>rd</sup> and Tulita on June 9<sup>th</sup>.

Whether they have won awards or not, each and every student who has successfully completed their programs should be exceptionally proud. We celebrate completion of high school, adult literacy and basic education, apprenticeship or post-secondary certificate, diploma and degree programs. Graduation from these programs is a significant marker in the journey of lifelong learning and takes hard work, dedication and perseverance.

Over the years, high school graduation rates have steadily increased across the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, in 2005, the high school graduation rate was above 50 percent for the first time ever.

---Applause

This year, Mr. Speaker, compared to last, there are almost double the number of students registered to write diploma exams. This suggests growth will continue.

During 2005-06, there has been a 34 percent increase in the number of students enrolled in Grade 12 in small communities. The results of grade extensions are evident in high school completion rates as well as by increased post-secondary student enrolment at Aurora College, with 610 full-time students and 5,734 part-time students for 2005-06.

At the college, we saw the first graduates to complete the Bachelor of Science in Nursing Program in the Northwest Territories. These NWT graduates bring a high calibre of skill and the added bonus of a northern perspective to patients and to people they serve.

I also would like to congratulate the graduates of the Office Administration Program. Delivery of this program was made possible through a unique partnership between Aurora College, the Mine Training Society and industry, including BHP Ekati, De Beers and Diavik.

Although award ceremonies for many apprenticeship and technical training programs do not coincide with the academic school year, I would like to recognize the achievements of individuals pursuing careers in the trades and occupations at a time when the economic landscape of the North has never seen a greater demand for a skilled workforce.

Adult Learning and Basic Education Program completion ceremonies will be held at Yellowknife Campus and Thebacha Campus in Fort Smith on June 9<sup>th</sup>. Yellowknife Campus will recognize the achievements of 20 ALBE students, 17 Access students and 14 students from the Literacy Outreach Centre. Thebacha Campus will celebrate the accomplishments of 13 pre-technology and 33 ALBE students. At Aurora Campus in Inuvik, an ALBE completion ceremony on June 16<sup>th</sup> will honour 40 ALBE students. ALBE completion ceremonies will also be held

in many community learning centres throughout the NWT. We hope many of these students will choose to continue pursuing their studies; or they may enter into the workforce with the confidence that comes with graduation.

I would also like to take a moment to recognize the network of support behind every successful graduate. This includes:

- family members and relatives who often ensure students have enough sleep, food and give that extra little push and support when times get tough;
- community members who volunteer their time to assist in classrooms, with school teams and trips as members of our district education boards and authorities;
- teachers who dedicate themselves to encouraging each student to become the best they can be and promote the advantages of being open to learning;
- adult educators and college staff who understand the special pressures adult students face while realizing their educational goals; and
- community leaders who, through their public support of education and training, highlight the value of education and celebrate the success of those participating in programs.

We can all be proud of our northern students and their success. Each of them will help the NWT realize its full potential as they realize their own.

Mr. Speaker, I invite Members of the Legislative Assembly to join me today in applauding the achievements of our students. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. McLeod.

**Minister's Statement 10-15(5): 2006 Get Active NWT Community Challenge**

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in April, I was pleased to launch the 2006 Get Active NWT community challenge at the Circle of Northern Leaders meeting in Norman Wells.

This campaign is a friendly challenge to NWT residents to increase their physical activity. I want to thank all Members of the Legislative Assembly for their enthusiastic participation and to recognize Mr. Miltenberger and the other Mr. McLeod for having the most steps on their pedometers.

---Applause

At the end of last year's Get Active challenge, over 6,400 residents of the Northwest Territories participated and made a commitment to being physically active. In total, participants logged over 101,000 hours of physical activity.

The 2006 Get Active NWT community challenge is now in its fourth week and I am extremely pleased to report that more than 5,500 residents have registered. This

represents 13 percent of the NWT population who have committed to being physically active this spring and summer.

Mr. Speaker, some communities have demonstrated outstanding participation and I would like to take a moment to recognize Colville Lake, Deline, Whati, Lutselk'e, Tuktoyaktuk and Wrigley who are leading with the most citizens registered to date.

There are also other impressive results for me to report. In the month of May, students at the Harry Camsell School in Hay River logged an incredible 954,000 minutes. Over 10 children in Deline participated in the community carnival scavenger hunt and, as a result, logged 15,000 minutes of physical activity. In Tuktoyaktuk, residents have been active in basketball, soccer and floor hockey and have logged over 650 hours.

I know many individuals will continue to carry on with their personal commitments to physical activity and healthy lifestyles after the Get Active community challenge is over. To all those sound role models, congratulations on your efforts and the example you set.

Mr. Speaker, each year in Canada, more than two-thirds of deaths result from four groups of chronic diseases: cardiovascular disease, cancer, type 2 diabetes and respiratory illnesses. These chronic diseases share common preventable risk factors including physical inactivity, unhealthy diet and tobacco use.

The Get Active NWT campaign is one of a number of efforts that the Government of the Northwest Territories is supporting to promote all residents to live healthier lifestyles. If we can convince even a few more people to be physically active, the cost savings for our health care system are huge and the lifestyle improvements immeasurable.

I would like to thank all the Members of the Legislative Assembly for helping to set an example through your participation in this year's challenge and I encourage you all to continue promoting Get Active and other healthy lifestyle choices. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

**ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

**Member's Statement On Condolences To The Families Of Richard Apples And Joe Migwi**

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. (Translation) Today is a sad day for the Tlicho Nation. We are mourning the death of two members of the community of Behchoko. Mr. Speaker, it was just two weeks ago when one of our young community members, Richard Apples, went missing after his canoe capsized. Three days ago, his older brother found his body on the Marion River. It's a sad day, but at the same time the family and communities of Behchoko are appreciative of the efforts of their families and friends and are relieved that they are able to bring their son home to rest.

Mr. Speaker, just yesterday afternoon about 2:00 p.m., an elder of Behchoko, Joe Migwi, passed away. He was a

highly respected elder in the Tlicho region. He was also recognized within Canada, too. Mr. Migwi was a former chief and grand chief for the Tlicho region. He was also recognized for his contribution to the Tlicho Agreement, having been involved with the negotiations of the Tlicho Agreement since its inception and serving on the advisory council.

Mr. Speaker, both Richard Apples and Joe Migwi will be sadly missed. Our deepest wishes to their families to be strong. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

#### **Member's Statement On Consideration For "Safer Communities" Legislation**

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have to tell anyone in this House today about the rising problem we have in our communities with drugs. We have an annual \$22 million drug habit in the Northwest Territories and it's projected to get worse as we grow. In this House, we talk about the drug problems; we talk about the help for the drug addicts; we talk about catching the criminals who traffic the drugs, but we rarely talk about the citizens in our communities who are living next door to these drug dealers.

The local newspaper reported last year that in a Yellowknife neighbourhood, residents had to call police repeatedly over several years about what they considered to be a crack house. Mr. Speaker, because of the neighbourhood crack house, in one month's time five neighbourhood residences had strung-out individuals gaining or attempt to gain entry into their homes while they were in them. The RCMP dispatcher actually asked the neighbours if they would consider moving, since they had called about the problem so much.

We do not want that activity in our neighbourhoods, Mr. Speaker. We do not need them affecting and bothering good, honest people. These are un-associated dangers that these people do not need to have happen around their home. We do not need to have these people operating drug houses around our schools or playgrounds for our children. We do not need to have drug traffickers strategically locating themselves near our schools just to infect those children.

I want to propose implementing the safer communities and neighbourhoods act. It's legislation that exists in Saskatchewan. This program has been well received in Saskatchewan and in other provinces and territories. Presentations have been made to the Yukon and Nunavut governments by the Saskatchewan government. We need solutions today to get these drug dealers out of our communities. We need effective enforcement tools.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Justice in Saskatchewan says safer communities legislation will improve community safety by targeting and, if necessary, shutting down residential and commercial buildings and lands that are habitually used for illegal activity such as producing, selling or using illegal drugs, prostitution, solvent abuse or other unlawful sale or consumption of alcohol. Mr. Speaker, they are doing something.

Mr. Speaker, at this time, may I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement?

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, this legislation will empower the citizens to take back their neighbourhoods by reporting problem residences and businesses to the RCMP or whatever enforcement agency. This type of legislation needs to become in practice now. This would allow authorities to take immediate action about this addiction plague. It is time to put our residents' safety first, Mr. Speaker. I will have questions for the Justice Minister at the appropriate time to see how we can move quickly on a discussion paper and possibly a bill to implement legislation like the one I have talked about, maybe even in this session. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

#### **Member's Statement On Congratulations To Nahendeh Graduates**

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today, I, too, would like to express my congratulations to graduates and especially to the Nahendeh riding. As well, I would just like to commend the Minister of Education for sending his appreciation to all grads, parents and teachers that are out there as well.

In today's world, more and more education and prosperity goes hand in hand. Without graduates from our schools and our colleges, our future and the future of Nahendeh can be bleak. Today, I want to dedicate my Member's statement and commend the graduates of Nahendeh, to the youth, the adults, the single parents and grandparents that have taken the time in their life to further develop their own skills to improve their lives and those around them.

I realize today they will be doing what their parents and grandparents did, but in a different way. Long ago, every year the people of the Dehcho separated for long periods of time to travel across this beautiful land to hunt, gather, trap and to provide for our families in our communities. They, too, have been doing this and will be doing this as they travel far away to learn new skills to provide for their families and their communities. As the MLA for Nahendeh, I am very proud of them. I have known most of the young students and adult students all of their lives. I am very honoured to have them complete their academic accomplishments. This year, as well, I am pleased to see that half of our student graduates, 45 percent of our student graduates will be from the small and remote Nahendeh communities, Mr. Speaker.

This government has committed to regional and community capacity building. This can only be done one student at a time, one generation at a time, and one community at a time. This year's theme, with my participation with the graduates, will be "You are Already Leaders." These students have already taken on responsibilities of being role models. I wish success to every one of them in their endeavours in the future. Mahsi cho.

---Applause

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

**Member's Statement On Proactive Actions Required By Government To Regain Public Trust**

**MR. VILLENEUVE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, first I would just like to send out my condolences to the residents of Behchoko for their recent passing of a couple of their community members. In particular, my great uncle, Joe Migwi on my mother's side. He will be sadly missed, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday I had an opportunity to meet many northerners from different communities across the NWT while I attended the AFN residential school update meeting here in Yellowknife. Although the topic of conversation mainly dealt with the residential school compensation issues, many people expressed dismay about this government's fluctuating level of support and action when confronted with issues and concerns on housing, health and justice.

Mr. Speaker, the reason I selected the Health, Housing and Justice departments as targets of some constructive criticism today, it is simply because it is these departments of the government which seem to fluctuate the most when it comes to questions of accountability, transparency and responsiveness. What I mean by fluctuating, Mr. Speaker, is that when there is a public outcry for better or more housing in a particular community, the Housing department reacts by cutting through all the red tape and swiftly gets houses on the ground. When there are dire health concerns, our communities yell loud enough. The Minister immediately holds a community meeting to address these concerns. When there is general consensus that there has been an injustice committed, there is already an internal review underway. The point I am trying to make, Mr. Speaker, is that why do we need a public outcry, a crisis situation or wait for the pot to boil over before this government takes immediate action, action which is usually efficient and effective? By this I mean we have to be more proactive and continue communicating with the public what this government's plans are and processing public's feedback on issues. I believe many of these public concerns and requests can be avoided. Then we can regain the public's trust and confidence in this government which I feel, along with many of these northerners that I spoke to, has seriously deteriorated over the past few years. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

**Member's Statement On Congratulations To Nunakput Graduates**

**MR. POKIAK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Honourable Charles Dent for his opening Minister's statement this morning.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues, the Honourable Charles Dent, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment; the

honourable Robert McLeod, MLA, Inuvik Twin Lakes; and invited distinguished guests attended the 2006 Aurora College convocation ceremonies on May 12, 2006, in Inuvik. Forty-three students from across the Northwest Territories were honoured and congratulated for their accomplishments by the invited guests.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my personal gratitude to those students from the Beaufort-Delta and across the Northwest Territories. These students accomplished their dreams even though it meant leaving family and friends in their home communities. Leaving home to further their studies is an accomplishment alone. I can attest to that because I did that 25 years ago.

Mr. Speaker, it is the beginning of a new life for those who graduated on May 12, 2006. I wish each one of them success in their future endeavours. Mr. Speaker, each student from the Helen Kalvak Elihakvik School from Ulukhaktok held their Grade 12 graduation ceremonies on May 25, 2006. I would like to extend my congratulations to its eight students and would like to encourage them to pursue their dreams by attending college or university.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, there may be at least six students graduating this year from Mangilaluk School in Tuktoyaktuk. They will be holding their graduation ceremonies on August 4, 2006. At this time, I would like to extend a personal invitation to the Honourable Charles Dent, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, to attend this special occasion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Members' statements. The honourable Member for the Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

**Member's Statement On Congratulations To Fort Providence Graduates**

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is with great pleasure and pride that I rise today to recognize students from my home community of Fort Providence who are graduating from the Aurora College this year. Last month we had three students who celebrated their graduation from the Thebacha Campus in Fort Smith: Alana Krutko, Arlene Canadien, and Joyce Villeneuve. This month the students studying at the Nahecho Keh Learning Centre in the community are celebrating their graduation. I am very pleased that there are far too many of them to name here today. Forty-two students will be graduating from several different programs, Mr. Speaker. This is a very great achievement. Never have we had so many students graduating at one time before.

---Applause

Never have we had so many people from the community acquiring valuable skills needed to improve their lives and the lives of others. It is important to mention that 90 percent of the students enrolled in the trades program passed their trades entrance examinations.

---Applause

Also, many others have plans to continue their education at the diploma level through the Aurora College program. This success is a source of pride to everyone in the

community. It really gives us all hope for the future. Northerners are facing new opportunities as well as new challenges. The academic success we are celebrating now only produces more success to celebrate in the future.

Mr. Speaker, my only regret is that I will not be able to attend the graduation ceremonies in person, which is taking place today, but I know my colleagues here in this House will join me in congratulating these students on their fine achievement and wishing them well in their future endeavours. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

**Member's Statement On Concerns With GNWT Human Resource Service Levels**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I am going to discuss an issue that I have brought up in this House numerous times in the past couple of years. That is how our government is handling the amalgamation of our human resources.

Mr. Speaker, last year I had a number of constituents who were very concerned over how they were being treated by the new HR division, now the Human Resources department. Some of the stories were very alarming. The Minister knows these well, and I do thank him for helping me resolve those issues. That was last year, Mr. Speaker.

Between then and now, have the business processes and the treatment of individuals improved any? The answer for me is still an emphatic no. The Minister's answer to fix HR was to rush out and hire an American company by a sole source \$450,000 contract to come in and tell him what was wrong. Results from this consultant's work should be forthcoming soon, as the Minister stated I think it was yesterday. The problem, Minister Roland, is that the problems are still very evident in your department. Phone calls are not returned. Files remain incomplete. Responsibility is bounced from one person to another person and getting a record of employment, well, that would require quite a degree in patience as it sometimes takes up to eight weeks. The service levels remain unacceptable, Mr. Minister. People still stop me at the store, in the street, with horror stories about how long it is taking them to get their first pension cheques. Just the other day a man told me a story of how he waited 20 months to get his retirement issues resolved. He had to work two jobs once he left the employ of the government in order to make ends meet.

What I am very interested to hear from the Minister today is whether or not this sole source \$450,000 contract has done anything at all to improve the services to our employees and to the public we serve. I want the Minister and the Members of this House to know that I do still remain committed to the amalgamation process of our HR services. However, I remain very skeptical of our government's ability and its leadership to take whatever corrective steps that are necessary to make this new HR department as accountable, transparent and as effective as possible. Comments I hear from employees and the public is that it remains, in the words of many, a mess.

Mr. Minister, I am leaving out many expletives that accompany the words "a mess." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

**Member's Statement On Process Issues With GNWT Health Insurance Provider**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to speak again today to something that has been raised in the House numerous times before. As we are all aware, the Government of the Northwest Territories, its boards and agencies, are one of the largest employers in the Northwest Territories. As such, the GNWT's public service health care plan, as administered by Sun Life Financial and paying 80 percent of prescription's cost, is probably the second largest defined benefit health care program in the NWT, after the aboriginal non-insured health benefit plan administered by the federal government. The problem, Mr. Speaker, is that the Sun Life plan this government participates in does not allow NWT pharmacies online real time access to Sun Life for approvals and confirmation of receipt of the bill for the filled prescriptions. The majority of other health insurance providers allow for this type of online access and issue cheques to pharmacies every two weeks. By batching two weeks of prescription onto one cheque, the administrative burden on pharmacies is lightened. When the pharmacist receives a cheque and batch information from one of the other health insurance providers, it is a simple matter for the pharmacy to check against their transaction records. In contrast, Mr. Speaker, under the Sun Life plan, each prescription is submitted separately and each transaction has its own cheque issued by Sun Life. The pharmacist also does not know whether the prescription is approved for payment until they get the cheque.

So for a small pharmacy, like the one in my community with about 800 government employee prescriptions on file, they could easily be looking at 1,000 cheques and prescriptions they must reconcile each month as opposed to the two cheques and batch lists that other health insurance providers supply.

Mr. Speaker, I had correspondence with the Minister of Human Resources on this issue before. The response that I received seems to indicate that there are no problems with pharmacies billing Sun Life directly on behalf of government employees and that this is just a simple matter of the employees signing over their billing rights to the pharmacy. Mr. Speaker, it is not that simple. It is a matter that needs to be resolved. I will have questions for the Minister at the appropriate time today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

### **Member's Statement On Need For More Funding For Non-Government Organizations**

**MR. BRADEN:** Mahsi. Good morning, Mr. Speaker. Funding for non-government organizations is an issue constantly raised with me and my colleagues and our committees when we meet with organizations doing very valuable work in the voluntary sector.

Mr. Speaker, NGOs and their volunteer efforts cut across all areas of our daily lives here in the communities; cultural, economic, educational, environmental, sporting and, of course, social programs. Mr. Speaker, there is no question that without their contribution, life in the NWT would be much different.

An issue particularly is the acute need of those organizations such as the YWCA, the Tree of Peace, the Council for Persons with Disabilities, the Yellowknife Association of Concerned Citizens for Seniors, to be able to offer their staff competitive wage packages that will allow them to be able to stay in business.

Mr. Speaker, staffing for these organizations really is becoming a revolving door as they bring people into their payrolls, get them up trained and familiar with the circumstances in the North. They are very often the first people that the government and other agencies want to have and so they are easily lured away.

Mr. Speaker, the YACCS organization, this is the Concerned Citizens for Seniors here in Yellowknife, with a staff of 30 sees a salary variance of approximately 20 percent in comparison to government. A recent review by the YWCA, which has 150 staff delivering much needed social programs, found that its frontline workers receive \$10,000 a year, or about \$5 an hour less than similar public service positions. These differences do not, Mr. Speaker, reflect further variances that are caused by pensions that governments and larger operations are able to offer.

Mr. Speaker, it is urgent that we look at the need for NGOs if government is to continue to rely on the contributions these sectors make to our society. Mr. Speaker, it is time this government recognizes the true value of these organizations lead by volunteers to our society. It is time we add new cash to their resources, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

### **Member's Statement On Over-Expenditures And Delays To Capital Projects**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, every year in the NWT, the government undertakes capital projects. These projects can range from construction of new schools, student residences and major renovations, to existing buildings. Mr. Speaker, I am becoming alarmed at the number of projects that go over budget, and in some cases are not awarded at all. Some of the projects, Mr. Speaker, have to be re-tendered with changes made to the design and to keep within budget.

A good example of these high costs, Mr. Speaker, would be the Deh Cho Bridge. The first figure I heard was \$25 million. Then I heard another figure come in at \$40 million. Then I heard \$60 million. The last I heard was \$140 million. The price of steel is not getting any cheaper.

Another good example would be the student residence in Inuvik that was recently delayed because the tenders came out over budget. We could be in danger of losing our building season if we have to put it off for another year. That begged me to ask, Mr. Speaker, if we are over-designing our buildings. I believe you can design a building that can be functional and attractive at the same time. Mr. Speaker, I believe we need to get a grip on the number of projects that continue to go over budget and be delayed, because we continue to lose our building seasons and people have to wait to get into new buildings. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

### **Member's Statement On Due Diligence For New Housing Proposals**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to speak on the Novel housing concept. Mr. Speaker, for me the rules of engagement for this government in the ATCO Novel housing is pretty straightforward. It is very straightforward. We, the people of the NWT, are to get a real good deal by taking over the used workforce trailers from the pipeline company after it is finished with them. We are lobbying for ATCO to get this contract, in the hopes that we will end up with at least 830 used but converted mobile homes at the end of the day at a cost better than anything else comparable, certainly a lot cheaper than stick-built homes and presumably a lot better than unused, unconverted, brand new mobile homes in the market. Mr. Speaker, I have to ask, where is the evidence? The government has spent already hundreds of thousands of dollars on touring the facilities and staffing. Yesterday, in the House and in committee, the Minister tells us, in fact, it will cost us more to buy the used ATCO trailers and convert them to Novel housing than the conventional approach under its own affordable housing initiative. This is not taking into consideration all the liability this government is assuming on this project, Mr. Speaker, because the Minister said we would get 530 units spending \$100 million and yet we will spend twice as much to get only 300 more.

Mr. Speaker, if this is such a great project, I would like to suggest a few things and one is that the government should stay out of this project. ATCO is a big company; they have all the resources; they can do their own lobbying. Let them bear all the liability, let them buy those trailers or keep those trailers because it is their trailers they're making, they're going to rent it to the pipeline companies. Let them convert them, let them transport them and then the government could be the biggest buyer for them. If the government insists on assuming this liability, I have to insist on better numbers, on a better deal and better due diligence. The only way for this government to be transparent and responsible on this project is to do a tender. The government must send out a tender and say, for \$200 million, who can provide us...

**MR. SPEAKER:** Sandy Lee, your time for Member's statement has expired.

**MS. LEE:** Mr. Speaker, may I seek unanimous consent to just finish my sentence? Thank you.

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

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I challenge you and challenge this House; we have to at least ask the industry to see what they can do with \$200 million in terms of providing housing. At the end of the day, ATCO could be the winner, but we would all be aboveboard. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. Members' statements. Returns to oral questions. Recognitions of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member from Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

#### ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. (Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have visitors. I am thankful that they are here. Noel Bishop, Jeffrey Mackenzie beside him, and George Weyallon. They are from Behchoko. I would like to thank them for visiting the House.

---Applause

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

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a former classmate of mine, Adelle Gaudet. Her name now may have changed, but it was Gaudet when we were in school together. Thank you.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. If we've missed anybody in the gallery today, welcome to the gallery. It's always a pleasure to have an audience here. I hope you're enjoying your observance of the House. Oral questions. The honourable Member from Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Braden.

#### ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

##### Question 32-15(5): Funding For Non-Government Organizations

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions this morning are for the Minister of Finance and perhaps FMBS, and this relates to the arrangements that our government has with many non-government organizations in the delivery of services for our government, Mr. Speaker. Very recently, the voluntary sector and our government put together a study on this area and the study poses a number of very useful questions. I think they'd do well to be heard in the Assembly this morning. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask, for instance, what policy or

legislative change or program guidelines would enable more NWT departments to adopt multi-year funding arrangements for work done by voluntary groups, Mr. Speaker?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister responsible for FMBS, Mr. Roland.

##### Return To Question 32-15(5): Funding For Non-Government Organizations

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the area of multi-year funding agreements with non-government organizations or NGOs, as we reference them, is something that we have looked at and we have worked with departments to try to identify areas of how we improve in this area. We do have an avenue where we can do that. Of course, every multi-year agreement is dependent on the Assembly's approval of the year's budget that comes up. We are also looking within our Financial Administration Act to review where we're preparing to come forward to this House with a rewrite of that act and looking at those areas to see where we can clarify, even, I guess, put a stronger position in that would address that area. Thank you.

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

##### Supplementary To Question 32-15(5): Funding For Non-Government Organizations

**MR. BRADEN:** Mr. Speaker, it's encouraging to know that under the FAA review that we're going to be looking further into it. I guess for now a number of organizations experience a lot of delays and uncertainty in their funding and their stability. Mr. Speaker, how can our funding mechanisms today be streamlined to improve access to funds and reduce administrative time and stress to these organizations and I would venture, Mr. Speaker, to our own civil service? Thank you.

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

##### Further Return To Question 32-15(5): Funding For Non-Government Organizations

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as we proceed forward from a day-to-day basis as all the rules and policies are in place, those organizations requesting multi-year funding can go to the department they are receiving their funding from and on that basis that department would review that situation and proceed from there. If it requires any other decision items, that would come forward to FMB. Thank you.

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

##### Supplementary To Question 32-15(5): Funding For Non-Government Organizations

**MR. BRADEN:** Mr. Speaker, it's about this time of year that the departments, all the departments begin assembling their business plans for the coming fiscal year. In this, especially in the social program envelope departments, Mr. Speaker, are the core or the service agreements with a number of these organizations. Mr. Speaker, is FMBS going to really seriously look at the variances that have been so well illustrated by a number of these organizations and the difficulties they are having

in our competitive job market? Are we going to address this for the coming fiscal year, Mr. Speaker?

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

**Further Return To Question 32-15(5): Funding For Non-Government Organizations**

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In a specific request as we'd look at variances or the request for further funding, again, each organization would approach the department responsible for the particular area they are delivering a service and put their requirements in. The department would then, as part of their forced growth submission for the upcoming year, include them in their forced growth submission. So, for example, if an NGO was working with the Department of Health and Social Services or a board, one of the health boards out there, they would put in their request and if the board is accepting of that, would move their request forward to the Department of Health and Social Services. If there was agreement there, then it would come forward in overall Health and Social Services requests for forced growth. There lies the problem. On an annual basis would come forward for forced growth requests. They would have to go through our process and get approved and then be put into the business plan submissions. So that goes back to why we have to, on an annual basis, move forward. Even though there may be a multi-year agreement, it ultimately comes back to this process we use. So these organizations that have requested funding increases from the department, it's included in their forced growth submissions as we prepare for the next budget cycle. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Roland. Final supplementary, Mr. Braden.

**Supplementary To Question 32-15(5): Funding For Non-Government Organizations**

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The process is well defined and well understood even with some of its problems, but I guess what I am looking for, Mr. Speaker, is a clear understanding and an acceptance of the fact that NGOs are really being squeezed by a tough job market. What is our readiness to step up to the plate and help them continue to survive, Mr. Speaker?

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

**Further Return To Question 32-15(5): Funding For Non-Government Organizations**

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think all departments as we enter this next phase of business plan preparations come forward for a request for forced growth. There is going to be, I guess, quite a competition between departments as for their request and what gets approved, because ultimately the requests far outweigh the resources we have and we'll have to make some decisions based on that. We had recognized that NGOs delivering programs on our behalf are impacted and that's why in a number of organizations, for example, we laid out the third-party accountability framework, which will allow us to move into the multi-year funding stages that are being requested. Secondly, there needs to be recognition that as all departments review these, what areas are a primary delivery of what we call would normally fall under our responsibility and those

areas we have recognized in a number of areas and allowed forced growth to come forward as in previous years they have not. In other organizations somewhat removed, it would become more difficult, but they work with each department and those departments would increase or include those in their forced growth submissions. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Roland. Oral questions. The honourable Member from Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

**Question 33-15(5): Consideration For Safe Communities Legislation**

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm committed to finding innovative enforcement tools to make our communities and our neighbourhoods safer. We all know that crack houses unfairly can take a community area hostage by putting good citizens in jeopardy in horrible ways that I've talked about in my Member's statement. I brought forward a copy of the Safe Communities and Neighbourhood Act to the Justice Minister and I will be tabling a copy later today. So my question to the Minister of Justice is, has he had a chance to look at the act and open up some type of dialogue between his provincial counterparts on the usage of this type of act in the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister responsible for Justice, Mr. Bell.

**Return To Question 33-15(5): Consideration For Safe Communities Legislation**

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the information from the Member and his support and advocacy for having us look at new and innovative ways to ensure community safety. This is something that we've been pursuing for quite some time. We have looked at other jurisdictions, looked at similar models. There are about four Canadian provinces, three Canadian provinces and one territory right now, with similar legislation and we have been in discussion with these provinces and territories to understand how effective this legislation and the enforcement of it has been. So we are analyzing models. This is something I think I look forward to having further discussions with Members about, but certainly there is some validity to continuing to challenge ourselves to find new and effective ways to make our communities safe. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

**Supplementary To Question 33-15(5): Consideration For Safe Communities Legislation**

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Justice Minister, for that answer. Mr. Speaker, this is truly an important issue to me and it is an important issue to the citizens in Yellowknife Centre and, to no surprise, I'm sure the whole Northwest Territories. So I should put the Justice Minister on notice that I will truly be relentlessly pursuing this issue for the next several months to ensure that we will be bringing forward a safe neighbourhood enforcement tool to our enforcement people. So, therefore, would the Minister be willing to look at this act, look at a way of adopting this type of act and bringing it

forward as a discussion paper sometime in the fall so Members can look at doing something in a timely way within our Territories so we can get the enforcement people the right enforcement tools to help our streets be safe? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Bell.

**Further Return To Question 33-15(5): Consideration For Safe Communities Legislation**

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Mr. Speaker, I'll certainly come forward in that time frame for a discussion with committee. I think we need to understand what the best options for us are. In other jurisdictions I think there are new offices that are created that are really outside the work that the RCMP are doing and we have to have a discussion around what the best model for the Northwest Territories would be. I think this community safety approach is something that I'm supportive of, but I want to understand the cost benefit. You have to ask yourself if we'd be better served to put the resources into the RCMP to help them do their job. I don't know the answer to that question, Mr. Speaker, but it's one that I want to pursue, discuss, analyze, and I'll certainly be back to committee to look at this and other options. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Question 34-15(5): Exploring Options To Meet Housing Needs Other Than Convertible Workforce Housing**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Housing Corporation. Mr. Speaker, I should say that, as I stated yesterday, I believe this government is going down the right path in terms of providing affordable housing in our communities that are desperately needed under the Affordable Housing Initiative. Mr. Speaker, by spending \$100 million over the next three years, we're going to build 530 units. That's a great use, and in the process we're going to build infrastructure and capacity in communities and we need to continue that. What I would like to see, what I see is that this \$200 million plus budgeted for ATCO Novel project should at least be given the consideration as to what else could we do with that \$200 million. Could we continue to build 530 at \$100 million by doing multi-plexes and such, which ATCO Novel project does not allow? So I'd like to know, does the Minister not think that he should at least look at all options? Does he not think that he should take off his ATCO Novel sunglasses and look at other options? You know, at the end of the day that might be the best project, but there's no due diligence. So I would like to know, would Minister commit to looking at what possible options are there for \$200 million? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Krutko.

**Return To Question 34-15(5): Exploring Options To Meet Housing Needs Other Than Convertible Workforce Housing**

**HON. DAVID KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there's probably a million options out there for \$200 million, but the option that Novel provides is one chance in a lifetime to take advantage of a major activity,

which is happening in the Northwest Territories via construction of a pipeline, which will leave behind a legacy, which basically that often only comes by once in a lifetime. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 34-15(5): Exploring Options To Meet Housing Needs Other Than Convertible Workforce Housing**

**MS. LEE:** Mr. Speaker, I believe too that this could be one chance in a lifetime to get a major, major boondoggle. So, Mr. Speaker, I really think that seriously this government has to start comparing apples to apples. The biggest incentive for this ATCO Novel housing is that it is so much cheaper than building stick built, and I agree with that because it costs up to \$190 per square foot to build stick built. But it's about time for the government to compare these used trailers with brand new trailers. Would the Minister do an analysis of how much it would cost us to get 830 new mobile homes instead of going through all the liability and buying used workforce housing and converting them and transporting them and not knowing really what we are getting into? Would the Minister at least give that a consideration? Thank you.

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

**Further Return To Question 34-15(5): Exploring Options To Meet Housing Needs Other Than Convertible Workforce Housing**

**HON. DAVID KRUTKO:** Mr. Speaker, we're already in the process of doing that. That information is being compiled. We are making sure that all logistic costs, the total cost of the project will be financially sound and that we are not going forward until we have that information in front of us. The information is being compiled today. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Third supplementary, Ms. Lee.

**Supplementary To Question 34-15(5): Exploring Options To Meet Housing Needs Other Than Convertible Workforce Housing**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to accept that, but I have to be alarmed by that because we were told by the officials from the department saying that we're getting calls from all over the place, but none of them work, none of them will work, we're not going to look at it. That is a very irresponsible thing for the government to do for a \$200 million project. I need an objective analysis to make sure that we're spending \$200 million well. So would the Minister tender this project? At least do a request for proposals. What does he have to lose? If this project could stand on its own, it will win. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

**Further Return To Question 34-15(5): Exploring Options To Meet Housing Needs Other Than Convertible Workforce Housing**

**HON. DAVID KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, like I said earlier in my comments, this is one chance that we're looking at. It's an ambition that's looked on by CMHC, ourselves, the federal government are involved, we're involved. Where we can see a 40 percent saving in regards to delivering housing in the Northwest Territories, we will definitely look at it. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 34-15(5): Exploring Options To Meet Housing Needs Other Than Convertible Workforce Housing**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's a 40 percent savings that's going to be spent on doing project financing, on risk taking, on project management costs. There is so much more liability and cost to this project that we would not otherwise have if we were to buy new housing. New housing, you could buy it at \$100 for a square foot as opposed to \$120 for ATCO Novel. I want to be proven wrong. I want the Minister to look at it. Would he send out a request for proposals and have the industry answer to this \$200 million mega housing project? That is the least that this government...(inaudible)...look for. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 34-15(5): Exploring Options To Meet Housing Needs Other Than Convertible Workforce Housing**

**HON. DAVID KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe we did that already through the market housing initiative. Basically, it's an initiative that's been in place. We've put out calls for bids and proposals. We know what that cost is. So we've already done it and regardless of what we did with market housing, it still wasn't good enough for the Member on the other side. Thank you.

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

**Question 35-15(5): Concerns With GNWT Human Resources Service Levels**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister responsible for the Department of Human Resources. The statement that I made today was very similar in nature to ones that I have made in this House many times before in the past year. Today we've spent \$450,000 via a sole sourced contract to an American company to have a look at what's wrong with our Human Resources department. I'd like to first of all start off by saying last year I was getting complaints from residents, from employees, the public, former employees about the effectiveness and the accountability and the level of service at our HR department. I'm just wondering, the first question, Mr. Speaker, for the Minister is, I'd like to know if the work has been concluded. This \$450,000 contract; has the work been concluded and what has changed? To me, things haven't changed. But

for the Minister's sake, what has changed at HR with this expenditure of \$450,000? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. A couple of questions there. Honourable Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board, Mr. Roland.

**Return To Question 35-15(5): Concerns with GNWT Human Resources Service Levels**

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, first I guess I should state for the record as well, as I've stated probably a number of times before as this issue's come up, when a decision was made just over a year ago to implement the HR amalgamation, we had to first go through and identify all the staff within the various departments and boards and agencies that deliver programs for our government, and pull that staff in and locate them into offices in communities and regions and headquarters here, and continue to try to do the work that was being done. When we identified the staff to bring them forward, coming with them were a lot of old files, that the Member's referenced, that we needed to clean up. So the focus has been on those old files, to clean them up. In fact, I think we've done a fairly good job since we've gone through the first phase of the Hackett Group review. The review is still ongoing. In fact, they're up here as we speak, looking to further the type of work that we do within HR and to see if in fact that work should be improved and where it can be improved. The initial work that was done a couple of months ago identified over 100 areas that we needed to improve on or change our processes, as well as work on our PeopleSoft program. That has been ongoing. In fact, we've had some good improvement in those areas, but there still remains a need for serious improvement in the pay and benefits section and that work is ongoing now as we move forward. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Roland. Supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

**Supplementary To Question 35-15(5): Concerns with GNWT Human Resources Service Levels**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I guess if the focus has been on old files, it obviously hasn't been on customer service to both our employees, the public, people who are applying for jobs, because that lack of customer service is very, very evident to the people I've been speaking with, Mr. Speaker. Just in terms of records of employment, let's just look at that for a second here. I'm wondering if the Minister's aware that by legislation you're supposed to supply a record of employment to an employee within 10 days. I'm wondering if the government has some special deal concocted so that they can break the rules that they have in place on supplying records of employment, because, Mr. Speaker, it happens every day. People wait for records of employment for up to eight weeks, and I want the Minister to answer why. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Roland.

**Further Return To Question 35-15(5): Concerns with GNWT Human Resources Service Levels**

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I've tried on a number of occasions to answer why. The Member obviously doesn't like the response. Yes, I am aware that the record of employment sections

that require us to have that available to the employee in a matter of days. So the fact is yes, we know we've failed in that area and that's why we're doing this work, is to change the way we do things, to make sure that a file when it starts gets processed through the departments and comes to HR with the accurate information so we can give that record of employment to the employees that are moving on. There's a lot of work that needs to be done; we recognize that. In fact, the old files, a number of those we've cleared up totally on some of the backlogs. There's other areas we need to further do improvement on, and that's what we're doing now. When we did the amalgamation, pulled the staff in, they were still doing systems and processes that are tied to a way that was not efficient and effective. We recognize that. That's why we've gone out and got the contract, and we're starting to implement some of those changes to get the people, our past employees, the information that they need to move on. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Roland. Supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

**Supplementary To Question 35-15(5): Concerns with GNWT Human Resources Service Levels**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't know how much longer employees, former employees and the general public are going to have to wait. I've been waiting for a year to see some improvement at the HR department and I haven't seen it. I want to ask the Minister when the general public, employees and former employees are going to get the level of service that they deserve. When is this work going to be done? When is the Minister going to present any type of information to Regular Members in this House so that we can see where these 100 areas of improvement, as the Minister speaks of, where they are? When is this going to happen, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Roland.

**Further Return To Question 35-15(5): Concerns with GNWT Human Resources Service Levels**

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that we have a number of employees that end up for long periods of time not getting the proper information. But there's hundreds, if not thousands, of files that are handled in a satisfactory manner that deal with existing employees, whether it's medical travel, leave, lieu time, all of those things. So they're ongoing on a daily basis and getting done within the required amount of time. We do have a large backlog of files that we've worked on. When we pulled this unit together there was over 1,000 files backlogged, some of them for years. That's one of the reasons why we've gone down this path, is to improve the way we do business. In fact, as I had stated, we're starting to put some of the pieces together that we should be focussing on, not putting out fires but dealing more proactively, and that was an employment equity policy. But I will be updating this House as to some of the areas where we've seen some improvement. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Roland. Final supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

**Supplementary To Question 35-15(5): Concerns with GNWT Human Resources Service Levels**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I've told the Minister this before, but these problems that we're encountering today in HR came from the various departments when he amalgamated HR, and I think it's incumbent upon the Minister to show the leadership and go back to the departments where the problems came from, and they exist in a number of departments and he knows which ones they are. Go back and recoup some of the money, Mr. Speaker. The Minister didn't answer my question. When will service levels improve? That is the big question, Mr. Speaker, and I want the Minister to commit to when service levels will improve for employees, former employees and the public. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Roland.

**Further Return To Question 35-15(5): Concerns with GNWT Human Resources Service Levels**

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the service levels that we are performing to are improving daily. Yes, we have some outstanding files that we're working on and trying to improve. Yes, during the amalgamation process some of our existing employees, from September until now, have had to wait longer than is expected. We're tightening up those time frames and going to change our processes to make sure they get the information in an adequate amount of time. Thank you.

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

**Question 36-15(5): Ekati Mine Labour Dispute**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Premier and it's in regards to the ongoing labour dispute between the Ekati diamond mine and the UNW, Mr. Speaker. I made a statement at the beginning of this session about how difficult this situation is for both parties involved. I have written to the Premier on this issue, as well. I am sensitive to the complexities on this. It is an issue that involves two parties in the private sector and it does involve issues under the jurisdiction of the federal government which has the responsibility of labour and other areas. But having said all that, this is an industry that's important for the North. There are workers who are without an agreement, and I was hoping, and I've said in this House, and I think we were all hoping that there will be an agreement, but that is not happening. One of the suggestions that I made to the Premier was whether or not he'd be willing to appoint a Premier's envoy to see if he could meet with the two parties and see if there's anything the government can do to bring the two parties together or to accommodate, facilitate. I realize it's a sensitive matter, but I was reading a book yesterday and President Clinton, you know, jumped in on when the baseball game went on a strike. There's a role for the governors like us to look and see what we can do. So I'd like to know what the Premier is thinking on this issue. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. Honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

**Return To Question 36-15(5): Ekati Mine Labour Dispute**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There's no doubt that the mining industry is important to our government and to the people in the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, to my knowledge, there is a process that's ongoing, a negotiating process and it has to go through its various stages as both sides work diligently to come to an agreement. Mr. Speaker, as the Member has pointed out, this is really under the Canada Labour Code. While there may be a place for us someday in this, I believe that it's premature for us to begin to intervene in this process in any way at this point. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Handley. Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

**Supplementary To Question 36-15(5): Ekati Mine Labour Dispute**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand that this is within the jurisdiction of the federal Minister of Labour, but there are times when the federal Minister of Labour would intervene, appoint mediators or arbitrators, and the Premier is stating that this is premature. I don't know; I think that this has gone on for a very long time. I think we could even say that the two parties are very far apart. Could the Premier just say what is giving him an indication, what is the bar or the timeline or the landmark that he's looking to see when he thinks that it's time for him or this government to do what we can? Not to intervene, but what we could do to facilitate the process. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Premier.

**Further Return To Question 36-15(5): Ekati Mine Labour Dispute**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I have to say again that there is a process that is ongoing. Mr. Speaker, I know there was a news item this morning -- I didn't catch it all -- on this. But there's two sides in this. There's an offer on the table. There's, I believe, some consideration of it. These are negotiations that are ongoing and it would not be appropriate for our government to intervene at this point while negotiations are still going on. Some day if this comes to a complete grinding halt, then it may be necessary. But at this point, Mr. Speaker, I'll restate that I believe it's too early for us. There is a responsibility for each side, in fact both sides, to work toward an agreement and I trust that both sides are doing that today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Handley. Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

**Supplementary To Question 36-15(5): Ekati Mine Labour Dispute**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Maybe the Premier has information that none of us have, because as far as I know, maybe the Premier can share with us on this because as far as I know the company made a final offer and the union does not feel that they can accept the offer. Not because of the details of the package, but because of some of the things that the company's asking for that the company cannot accommodate. I don't see any other extra sources, anything changing that could bring the two

parties back together. So maybe the Premier has something to share with us that I'm not aware of. I don't understand what he's working with. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Handley.

**Further Return To Question 36-15(5): Ekati Mine Labour Dispute**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, when two sides at a bargaining table come to an impasse, that isn't the end of the whole process. Mr. Speaker, there is a process of mediation; there's a process of arbitration. Those are things that the federal Minister responsible for the Canada Labour Code has to make decisions on. So, Mr. Speaker, really we're partway through a process here. There's other steps that can be followed and should be pursued before our government, without any authority in this matter, tries to intervene in this. So, Mr. Speaker, I just urge both sides to work toward an agreement. If they can't do it at the negotiating table, there are other measures that can be taken. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary To Question 36-15(5): Ekati Mine Labour Dispute**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Premier make a commitment to this House that he would talk to the federal Minister of Labour in order to ascertain that they're paying close attention to this issue, and to see what are the options that the government has to ask them to mediate or whatever federal process there is? I'd like to know if he could report to the House about what his options are in that regard. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. Honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

**Further Return To Question 36-15(5): Ekati Mine Labour Dispute**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I have not spoken directly to Minister Blackburn on this issue. I have been talking on several occasions with Minister Prentice, the Minister of DIAND. I know he's very aware of this, and the federal government, who has authority in this matter, is watching this very closely. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Question 37-15(5): Consideration For "On-The-Land" Alcohol And Drug Treatment Programs**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I spoke about the drug and alcohol programs in the Northwest Territories and I want to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services, has his department reviewed the situation of the drug and alcohol treatment programs and would his department consider a project-by-project of treatment programs on the land versus the residential units that he has now in the Territories? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

**Return To Question 37-15(5): Consideration For “On-The-Land” Alcohol And Drug Treatment Programs**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the next week or so we're going to be finalizing and sending out a document for feedback in regards to next steps when it comes to alcohol and drug treatment and mental health treatment, as well. We'll be looking for feedback from the Members. We'll be sending it out far and wide across the land, to authorities, to chiefs and band councils and to cover all the whole spectrum of stakeholders. As well, if the Member has a specific suggestion or proposal he'd like to make, we're always prepared to, as the Member knows, work with him to see what is possible. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

**Supplementary To Question 37-15(5): Consideration For “On-The-Land” Alcohol And Drug Treatment Programs**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Minister's offer in terms of offering some suggestions to proposals. He's being quite open about receiving them. I want to know now the next steps in terms of advising the stakeholders. It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that during the Joint Review Panel hearings that communities have indicated that alcohol and drug treatment is the number one issue. We heard it over and over again. So I'm trying to understand why do another community consultation with the stakeholders? We know what it is. We read in the newspaper on a weekly basis on the crimes that are committed by using alcohol and drugs. So I think if the Minister is prepared to move to a next step, we'll get the programs in the communities on the land. So I want to ask the Minister would he again look at the reason for going back into the communities to talk to the stakeholders. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Miltenberger.

**Further Return To Question 37-15(5): Consideration For “On-The-Land” Alcohol And Drug Treatment Programs**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the Member's statement yesterday he pointed out very clearly the debate between community services and enhancing those as opposed to building and focussing a lot, or almost extensively on the type of residential facilities and anywhere in between, as the discussion has unfolded. That's part of the issue that we're looking at. Clearly where we're up and down the valley, there's concern about the impending development of the proposed pipeline. We also have to sit down, now that we know for sure that there's been a commitment to the \$500 million that is going to flow through the aboriginal governments and to the affected pipeline communities, to be able to sit down with them to look at how we pool our resources with those resources and determine what's the best way to move forward on a number of issues. If in fact at the end after these discussions, the decision is that we're going to enhance in a specific way alcohol and drug treatment services, then we will be looking at working closely with all the community groups, how that is done, keeping in mind that that \$500 million is one-time money. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Short supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

**Supplementary To Question 37-15(5): Consideration For “On-The-Land” Alcohol And Drug Treatment Programs**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the \$500 million has been committed. Residential school money is out, or shortly will be coming out. The communities want drug and alcohol programs in their communities. Tl'oondih has as good program in Fort McPherson. There's good programs down the Mackenzie Valley. Let's get the programs into communities right now. Let's not do any more consultation. Get the programs in there. There's workers that need the help and their families need help, so let's not do any more consultation. Get the programs in the communities. So I'll ask the Minister again, let's quit the consultation and let's have some action from this department to put programs in the communities. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Miltenberger.

**Further Return To Question 37-15(5): Consideration For “On-The-Land” Alcohol And Drug Treatment Programs**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll make sure I highlight that point about don't consult any more and get down to work when the Member next comes forward. Mr. Speaker, we have made a significant investment with dozens and dozens of positions and wellness workers and mental health workers across the land. We have made significant investments and we're going to continue to do that. The Member has stood up in this House and said let's take another approach with some on-the-land programs and a concept that he has contributed about 20 words to. I'm saying if the Member has a specific proposal and some detail that we can look at, tell us what it is and we'll be happy to sit down and look at it, and we'll also meet with the regions and communities and look at how that \$500 million can be added to what we're doing to enhance services. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Minister's to not consult...

**MR. SPEAKER:** A technical difficulty here, Mr. Yakeleya. Your mike is not working, so just hold on a moment. Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you. I will raise my voice in the House. I don't have to? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Just hold a moment, Mr. Yakeleya. We seem to have a technical difficulty here. It's not a matter of not being able to hear, it's just your mike is not working.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Hello? Hello?

**MR. SPEAKER:** I guess your mike is working. Go ahead, Mr. Yakeleya.

**Supplementary To Question 37-15(5): Consideration For "On-The-Land" Alcohol And Drug Treatment Programs**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Believe me, the lights are on on this issue.

---Laughter

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Minister again, and I will make this very clear. Please do not consult. We have studies, mountains and mountains of studies of this program, this issue. Do not consult. Get the action, get the money. Prime example, the Minister of Justice has a pilot project of a wilderness camp in Fort Good Hope. It's dynamite. It's working good. Let's get started. Let's hammer out the issues later on as they come about. Can the people in Sahtu or...Let's get a pilot project on. Bring the families together through a drug and alcohol treatment program, northern-based, aboriginal sensitive and open to everybody. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. I didn't hear a question there. I will remind Members again, it's not time to make statements. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

**Question 38-15(5): Status Of Student Residence Facility Planned For Inuvik**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Education, Charles Dent. I would like to ask about the status of the student residence supposedly being built in Inuvik. Thank you.

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

**Return To Question 38-15(5): Status Of Student Residence Facility Planned For Inuvik**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The current schedule would see the request for proposals going out by the end of this month, with our expectation that the award would take place shortly thereafter and construction hopefully starting by the end of August this summer.

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

**Supplementary To Question 38-15(5): Status Of Student Residence Facility Planned For Inuvik**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The original tender, I believe, closed in February. Now we hear that the new RFP is going out at the end of the month. I would like to ask the Minister, what was the delay from February until now? We are looking at three or four months before they redid it and put it out. So I would like to ask the Minister what was the delay. Thank you.

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

**Further Return To Question 38-15(5): Status Of Student Residence Facility Planned For Inuvik**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once the tenders came in or the responses to the proposals came in to the first request for proposals, we found that

the prices submitted were well above the budget. So in discussions with Public Works, we looked at other projects that had been undertaken in the Territories for student residences, specifically the one most recently in Fort Smith and were told that if we were to modify the proposal, the design, to reflect the designs that had been used in Fort Smith, that it is likely that we would be able to see the project completed in Inuvik for the amount of money that was in the budget. That work was undertaken and then the college was provided with those plans. At that point, the college requested that we make further changes to the plans. We had to go back to the architect and that added some time. So at this point, we are fairly confident that we are at the end of this process. It should be out to the contractors for their proposals. We are still confident that we will see construction starting later this summer.

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

**Question 39-15(5): GNWT Health Insurance Providers Process Concerns**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement, I addressed the issue that has been raised in this House numerous times before. The GNWT, on behalf of their employees, subscribes to a pharmaceutical insurance program with Sun Life and there are some problems and gaps for the service providers under that particular insurance program. I trust by now Minister Roland is familiar with what the issue is, although some of the correspondence would indicate otherwise. We need an online adjudicated, quick, efficient process for the pharmacies in the Northwest Territories. Has the Minister considered changing the company or the program we subscribe to on behalf of GNWT employees and employees of boards and agencies? Thank you.

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

**Return To Question 39-15(5): GNWT Health Insurance Providers Process Concerns**

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the area of providing help through the Sun Life program for pharmacies or drugs for our employees is something that I have just recently been made aware of. I am aware of the correspondence that was sent to the Minister of Health and Social Services from a number of pharmacies. I understand a meeting was held just recently, maybe this past weekend. The issue comes down to Sun Life's automatic billing system that they need to put in. We are informed that that should be in place by 2008, although the pharmacies within the Territories would like that sooner. They are moving down that path and that should alleviate the problems that are coming forward. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 39-15(5): GNWT Health Insurance Providers Process Concerns**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So there are quite a number of insurance companies who already do have provisions for pharmacies. Other employers in the Northwest Territories have their employees covered by services which are available online and at much less cumbersome process than what Sun Life has. I just want to confirm something. Is the Minister saying that Sun Life does not have a different program that we could subscribe to that would provide for that online access? If it's not going to be up and running, if it's a Sun Life deficiency and is not going to be up and running until 2008, I suggest that we switch service providers. Would the Minister consider that? Thank you.

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

**Further Return To Question 39-15(5): GNWT Health Insurance Providers Process Concerns**

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of the things we would have to do is review the contract that was awarded to Sun Life before we would go down that path, but I will commit to have a further review of this to see what some of the problems are and see if they can be resolved sooner. The understanding is that a meeting was held with the Pharmacy Association on Sunday and the Sun Life automatic billing system was one of the major topics. Again, the information we have is they will have a newer system in place by 2008, although the association would like that sooner and we understand why.

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

**Supplementary To Question 39-15(5): GNWT Health Insurance Providers Process Concerns**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the information that my questions and comments were premised on today was a letter that I had received from the NWT Pharmacy Association dated April 27<sup>th</sup>. I was not aware that a subsequent meeting had taken place on the subject. I would ask the Minister, in response to their concerns and the concerns that I have reiterated here again today, would the Minister provide me with some form of a briefing as to the progress on this matter before the end of the session? Thank you.

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

**Further Return To Question 39-15(5): GNWT Health Insurance Providers Process Concerns**

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, in fact as we received the response from Minister Miltenberger back to the president of the NWT Pharmacy Association, we are in the process of putting something together and I will gladly provide that to the Member. Thank you.

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

**Question 40-15(5): Value Of Convertible Workforce Housing Project**

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions this morning are for Mr. Krutko as the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation and the arrangements of the negotiations for the Novel project.

Mr. Speaker, I share the optimism of this Assembly that this very innovative program can play a major part in helping us solve our very, very chronic housing situation. But like some of my colleagues, I have some considerable concerns about the business deal and the degree of risk and exposure that the GNWT is undertaking in this.

Mr. Speaker, it is quite apparent that the negotiation is very fluid and we still don't know exactly what is on the table for us to decide on or make a commitment to. My question, Mr. Speaker, relates to exactly that, the confidence that we should have in the calibre and the quality of this deal. So I would like to know from the Minister, is he prepared to allow the proposal, once it's finalized, to undergo a vigorous independent review for all relevant aspects that can be released to the Members of this Assembly and to the public, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Krutko.

**Return To Question 40-15(5): Value Of Convertible Workforce Housing Project**

**HON. DAVID KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is an ongoing negotiating process and I think people are missing the boat here. The negotiations that are going on are between the Mackenzie Pipeline Group and the people who are going to provide the product for workforce housing. It will go through a tendering process. What we are suggesting is that they consider the ability to convert these workforce camps into housing at the end of the day. Right now, the only company in Canada that has a patent on that idea is ATCO. So we are asking the pipeline company or the Mackenzie Pipeline Group to consider this as an option when they put out a bid for this product. Right now, we don't know who is going to win that bid. It hasn't gone out yet. When we know exactly where the federal commitment will come in, by way of their \$75 million, without that, we will not succeed.

We are in a negotiation process. There are ongoing discussions between the component, which is Imperial Oil, the Mackenzie Pipeline Group and ATCO Structures to look at possibly providing this product for the construction of a pipeline. Again, Mr. Speaker, it is an ongoing process. We have been keeping Members informed through the presentation we gave yesterday to the Social Programs committee and we will continue to do that. As things change, we will keep Members informed. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 40-15(5): Value Of Convertible Workforce Housing Project**

**MR. BRADEN:** Okay. Thank you. The Minister did a great job of confirming everything that I said in my introduction here, but the question was once we get to the point, as the GNWT... The Minister is going to be bringing

a request for an allocation to us for a commitment for tens, and potentially for the long run, hundreds of millions of dollars. I am going to want to know that that is a solid deal and I am going to want independent analysis. Will the Minister enable that to happen before he comes to this Assembly to seek authorization for those commitments; an independent analysis, Mr. Speaker?

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

**Further Return To Question 40-15(5): Value Of Convertible Workforce Housing Project**

**HON. DAVID KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, right now, with regard to the process, we do have FMBS, which is responsible for the financial...(inaudible)...from this government ensuring that any expenditures made by this government are aboveboard and within cost. CMHC, which is a federal agency, is also involved in this and they also want to ensure that accountability is there and that it is within the investment that they make and the cost they provide. So we are already doing that through the reviews and also the committees that have been established to oversee the project, which includes CMHC, ourselves and FMBS on our team. It provides us that ability as we go forward. We are not going into this blindfolded. Every step of the way, we want to ensure at the end of the day if we make any investment, that that investment that we make is exactly the cost we can afford. The other thing is we want a product that will meet the needs of the people of the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 40-15(5): Value Of Convertible Workforce Housing Project**

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, another aspect that I will continue to seek satisfaction on before this project gets my approval is that through it we really take on some leadership and some vision in our housing agenda, Mr. Speaker, and use this to create a sustained housing industry for the Northwest Territories. Between this project and the Affordable Housing Strategy, we are talking \$300 million, something in the neighbourhood of over 1,200 housing units created here. How is it that we have not yet seen how we can use this as a springboard for the creation of a true housing industry in the Northwest Territories, Mr. Speaker?

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

**Further Return To Question 40-15(5): Value Of Convertible Workforce Housing Project**

**HON. DAVID KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what this is going to do by the way of Novel conversions in the Northwest Territories. We are going to invest \$150 million of this \$200 million investment in the Northwest Territories; \$150 million. It's going to generate 660 person hours of work in the Northwest Territories. We are going to have people trained and employed to do the work in those communities. We are looking at building capacity in communities by allowing those communities to have more infrastructure in their communities and, at the end of the day, promote healthy living and accommodate the housing shortages we have in the Northwest Territories. Again, over two-thirds of this

investment is going to be expended in the Northwest Territories. I think that's the part that is key to this proposal. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Braden.

**Supplementary To Question 40-15(5): Value Of Convertible Workforce Housing Project**

**MR. BRADEN:** Right. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, the Minister doesn't see this from my perspective. We may end up with a lot of people trained in conversions and some aspects of how to look after and fix or convert a house. I am talking about something on the ground here, so that we are not exporting our manufacturing jobs to Calgary, that we are keeping them here in the Northwest Territories. That's what I mean by an industry, Mr. Speaker. That's what I am looking for. Will we use this as a springboard to create our own industry?

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

**Further Return To Question 40-15(5): Value Of Convertible Workforce Housing Project**

**HON. DAVID KRUTKO:** Mr. Speaker, if anything, this is going to add to the existing investment that we are making for the 500 houses over the next three years going forward. It's a perfect opportunity for the industries in the Northwest Territories, the manufacturing industry, the contracting business and also for the residents of the Northwest Territories to realize there are real job opportunities going forward with the investment and the efforts we are putting into housing in the Northwest Territories over the next 10 years. With regard to all these efforts we are putting forward, if anything, it's going to better the lives of the people of the Northwest Territories and in our small communities. That is the group we are directing this to. So, Mr. Speaker, this is a perfect opportunity for those industries to form partnerships with communities with the different industries out there to make sure we take advantage of this \$150 million investment.

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

**Question 41-15(5): Affordable Housing Strategy**

**MR. VILLENEUVE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My questions are going to be directed to the Honourable David Krutko, Minister of Housing, with respect to the Affordable Housing Strategy that's going to be rolling out in the next three years. Having worked here and lived here in Yellowknife for quite a number of years myself, I just don't really see the real need for more public housing in Yellowknife because the public housing units here, there are not many people pounding on their doors or phoning their MLAs everyday, as they are in the smaller communities, to raise public housing issues and the need for public housing. I understand that Yellowknife is going to be receiving 62 units out of this Affordable Housing Strategy. Many of those are going to be public housing units and that at \$180,000 per unit, that's just over \$11 million that the government is going to be putting into their Affordable Housing Strategy here in Yellowknife, which has a thriving housing market, which has a lot of people employed and making good money, which has a lot of financial institutions willing to lend out money even to people in the lower income bracket. I think that \$11 million

could be spent where it is better needed in the smaller communities, or it could go into a transient centre, a treatment centre or even a women's shelter here in Yellowknife where it would be well received. Have they really looked at why they want to spend \$11 million on affordable housing in Yellowknife where there is lots of housing, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

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

**Return To Question 41-15(5): Affordable Housing Strategy**

**HON. DAVID KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the investment we are looking at making in Yellowknife over the next number of years is to replace a lot of our public housing in Yellowknife and be able to put more seniors' housing on the ground by way of seniors' facilities for Yellowknife. That is the area that we are looking at. Again, the housing for Yellowknife is basically to replace the existing housing stock we have here in Yellowknife.

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

**Supplementary To Question 41-15(5): Affordable Housing Strategy**

**MR. VILLENEUVE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With the latest briefings that we did receive from the Minister, all of these housing units, there are a lot of single detached units, single family condos, multi-family condos, but there are 62 units that still equates to \$11 million that the government is going to put into the housing market here in Yellowknife. Is that going to disrupt the current market housing framework here in Yellowknife? Are prices for houses suddenly going to go up? Are they going to go down? Has the government even looked at what the ramifications are going to be in the larger centres like Norman Wells, Hay River or Fort Smith where there are 167 units going to be going into these market housing communities? There already is a market there. Has the government really looked at what kind of disruption they are going to create? Thank you.

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

**Further Return To Question 41-15(5): Affordable Housing Strategy**

**HON. DAVID KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again, we do have a lot of housing authorities, especially in Yellowknife. We have the YK Housing Authority. We have the North Slave Housing Authority. We are working with those agencies in which they have come to us with their needs. They identified these areas that they need to continue to build on for their residents in Yellowknife. I think, because of the housing demands also in Yellowknife, especially for social housing, because these are for social housing clients that we want to address those people in Yellowknife and not to compete against the private sector by way of the condos and whatnot that are out there. We are basically going forward on the requests that were made from the Yellowknife local housing authorities in regards to their requests. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. A short supplementary, Mr. Villeneuve.

**Supplementary To Question 41-15(5): Affordable Housing Strategy**

**MR. VILLENEUVE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know that a lot of LHOs around the NWT say their needs are so and so, but basically they just want to be treated fair and equitably with other communities of the NWT. Everybody wants their fair share. That is understandable. I want to mention to the Minister, with this housing authority, I don't see people pounding on the Yellowknife Housing Authority's door to ask for more public housing. If I see an ad in the paper for rent, like subsidized public housing, in the newspaper, I know it is for information only but it is also advertising that, hey, we have public housing available. Come and ask us. Just with that point there, Mr. Speaker, sometimes that need is kind of taken a little bit too top heavy. We have to address it. Is the Minister going to revisit those needs? Thank you.

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

**Further Return To Question 41-15(5): Affordable Housing Strategy**

**HON. DAVID KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again, we are just completing a census in regards to the Northwest Territories. I think, once we have the final census done, it will give us an idea exactly what the needs are for here in Yellowknife, what the different classes of need we are looking at. Again, it was based on surveys that we did. It has been identified by the Yellowknife authorities to say exactly where they want to see us invest this money. Again, it is something that we will have to look at. By reviewing the existing surveys, we will be able to see where that need is. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Time for question period has expired. I will allow the Member for one last, final supplementary. Mr. Villeneuve. Okay. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to return to item 6, oral questions. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 6, oral questions. Are there any nays? There are no nays. We will return to Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

**REVERT TO ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS**

**Question 42-15(5): Change In Scope To Dene K'onia Facility Renovation Project**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Public Works and Services. I am trying to understand how it is that a report on the Dene K'onia facility in Hay River, which was last year discussed as a renovation project to house the territorial treatment centre, came out on January 11, 2006, and Public Works and Services issued a request for tender in an April newspaper here in the Northwest Territories requesting quotes to demolish the Dene K'onia facility in Hay River and subsequently yanked that tender. I am trying to, again, understand how it is that the report

comes out in January and Regular Members find out about the change in the scope of the project via an ad that his department issued in April. The first question I have for the Minister is, if the report came out in January, why did we have to find out about it via a newspaper ad? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister of Public Works and Services, Mr. Roland.

**Return To Question 42-15(5): Change In Scope To Dene K'onia Facility Renovation Project**

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the normal process is, when a department has an approved project to have work done on and they come forward to Public Works and Services, they request information on, for example, if it is the best thing to do, is do a renovation, then we would provide a report on the things that would need to be done, location, ground conditions, foundation. So we do a report on the existing facility and come up with what potential work would need to be done as part of the renovation. As part of that, we would also look at the cost-benefit analysis. If, in fact, the renovation that is being looked at comes in at a higher cost or if we do a review and suggest that possibilities are that we would get better value for our dollars spent by going to a new project instead of a major renovation, we would prepare that report, give a number of options to the department and wait for their response. In that case, a report was done, provided for the Department of Health and Social Services to come up with what the department would agree to on those options. Then it would follow through on the regular process of their decision-making. When the decision was made, it would come back to Cabinet and then be issued. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Roland. Supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

**Supplementary To Question 42-15(5): Change In Scope To Dene K'onia Facility Renovation Project**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister and I, in his capacity as Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board, had numerous discussions regarding whether or not the Financial Administration Manual directives were followed in this project last year. Again, the questions came up in discussions with the Minister of Health and Social Services over whether or not the FAM directive was indeed followed. I want to get back to the communications. I want to know specifically what communications took place between Health and Social Services and the Department of Public Works in the period between January 11<sup>th</sup> and the time the ad came out in the newspaper in April. What communications specifically took place from your department to the Department of Health and Social Services? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Roland.

**Further Return To Question 42-15(5): Change In Scope To Dene K'onia Facility Renovation Project**

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we can take up the rest of the day if we want on the FAM directive that we spoke about in the past. In fact,

all of our correspondence and records show that we followed that. In fact, we have tightened it up to bring some more clarity for Members. I have a copy of that. It is a letter we provided Members, as well, in this House. The actual communications that went by, I haven't asked my department for a day-by-day process. The report was done as is normal process for Public Works and Services on the review of our facilities. It was handed over to the Department of Health and Social Services. I am not sure what date that was. The Member stated that the report was completed on January 11<sup>th</sup>. I would have to see when we actually forwarded it to Health and Social Services for their decision to be made by them, come back to us and inform us what their decision was. In this case, they chose a replacement instead of a renovation. A tender was put out for demolition. Now, there was an error made there. Instead of communications between the Department of Health and Social Services and Public Works that saw a release of that tender when, in fact, that tender should not have been released. We had some other processes we needed to follow through. That was why that was pulled back. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Roland. A short supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

**Supplementary To Question 42-15(5): Change In Scope To Dene K'onia Facility Renovation Project**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is nice to see that the departments are communicating with one another on a really politically sensitive issue like the Dene K'onia facility and the relocation of the TTC, but, Mr. Speaker, when were Regular Members of this House going to be let in on the fact that the plan was to demolish Dene K'onia, a facility in Hay River, to accommodate the construction of a new TTC in Hay River? When were you going to let us know? You are the Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board. When were you going to let us know that this was the case, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Roland.

**Further Return To Question 42-15(5): Change In Scope To Dene K'onia Facility Renovation Project**

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The fact is there is no tender out there. It has been recalled, as I stated already and as the Members are well aware. The communications within the departments were discussed. The choices were made by the Department of Health and Social Services. The Department of Public Works and Services went out for a tender on that. Further discussions, when it came up, realizing that it should not have gone out, that processes had to be followed, it was pulled back. The Department of Health and Social Services made a decision that it wanted to go down the replacement instead of renovation. The Minister has brought it back for the discussion at that point. We would follow through on the processes that we have established clearly in our FAM directive. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Roland. The Chair is recognizing the fact that Members are choosing to make a Member's statement with every supplementary question. Your rules specifically state that supplementary questions are to be very short and follow up to your original question. So I would like to encourage Members to try and keep your questions as short as possible, and

answers as well, so that we can get more questions asked and answered in the House. Also, I would like to remind Members that questions are to be directed to the Speaker, not directly to a Minister. All questions have to be directed to the Speaker. Thank you, Members.

---Applause

Final, short supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

**Supplementary To Question 42-15(5): Change In Scope To Dene K'onia Facility Renovation Project**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a final supplementary. Who is responsible in the Department of Public Works and Services for issuing that tender? I would like a chronology, as well, of the discussions that took place between Health and Social Services and the Department of Public Works and Services between January 11<sup>th</sup> and the date that tender was issued in the newspaper. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Roland.

**Further Return To Question 42-15(5): Change In Scope To Dene K'onia Facility Renovation Project**

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Ultimately, it comes down to the Minister being responsible, whether it is a contract clerk further down the system that got a phone call that said this is the decision made. We need to issue a contract. There is a chain of command there. Ultimately, I will be responsible for that decision that was made, as well as the decision to pull it back when we knew we had to go through a number of other steps. That was done. I will pull together some information on this and be prepared to show the Members. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Roland. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

**Question 43-15(5): Residential School Lump Sum Payments**

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to ask questions to the honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment just with respect to something that has been in the news lately. It is the residential school lump sum payment program for the common experience. I know that the GNWT is involved, but the Minister can detail for me how they are involved with this residential school lump sum payment payout that is happening. Mahsi.

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

**Return To Question 43-15(5): Residential School Lump Sum Payments**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the federal government has the responsibility for the compensation payments and have set up the Indian Residential Schools Canada Secretariat to coordinate this program. So the GNWT is not directly involved in the lump sum payments, but the GNWT is working to provide files to the secretariat to allow for the verification of student attendance. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

**Supplementary To Question 43-15(5): Residential School Lump Sum Payments**

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Minister mentioned a secretariat. Is there a lead department that is taking part in it, or is there an interagency committee that is coordinating the government directorates, particularly with the schooling and educational records that are kept by our government? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Dent.

**Further Return To Question 43-15(5): Residential School Lump Sum Payments**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this point, there is not an intergovernmental agency. Education, Culture and Employment is responsible for ensuring that student records are provided on a timely basis to applicants or the individuals who ask us for their records. They are doing that. I have committed to the House already in previous questions here or during this session that the Ministers of the social envelope or the Ministers of Social Programs committee will consider this request to work together. We will ensure that we are operating a coordinated response where that is appropriate. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

**Supplementary To Question 43-15(5): Residential School Lump Sum Payments**

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government has indicated publicly as well that they will be clawing back any residential school payment program. Is this an actual policy that is already in place, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Dent.

**Further Return To Question 43-15(5): Residential School Lump Sum Payments**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member is right; all income security programs will exempt the lump sum payments.

---Applause

The social assistance regulations require amendment in order to accommodate that. That amendment has not been completed yet, but work on rewriting the regulation is underway and will be done before the payments are issued.

---Applause

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

**Supplementary To Question 43-15(5): Residential School Lump Sum Payments**

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased to hear that the government is very receptive and

supportive of the lump sum payment program. In particular, there will be many elders that do not need to be taxed or clawed back. Is there an office, a particular number or a contact in our government that can help anybody that is looking for details for this particular residential lump sum payment program? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Dent.

**Further Return To Question 43-15(5): Residential School Lump Sum Payments**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Because this is a federal program, the best number to call is the Indian Residential Schools Canada helpline, which is 1-800-816-7293. I think that, for the public, is the most important number for them to call because they need to contact that number in order to find out how to access the forms, the applications and so on. Applicants do not need to have verification of attendance before applying for this compensation. The first call should be to the commission to make sure that they get their applications in. Once they file their application, then verification of attendance will be required. That is when they need to contact us to get the verification of attendance. In order to find that number, they can either use one of the regional offices to find the appropriate number or use our web site. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Question 44-15(5): GNWT Employees Seeking Outside Employment**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the question I have is for the honourable Minister of Human Resources, Floyd Roland. I wanted to ask the Minister in terms of the government's policy regarding government employees who bid on government contracts. I want to know what the policy states. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister responsible for FMBS, Mr. Roland.

**Return To Question 44-15(5): GNWT Employees Seeking Outside Employment**

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when an employee of our government wants to seek employment outside of their normal work, they would have to seek approval from the deputy responsible for their department and get the okay from that level. Before a government employee can work outside of their normal working hours, they need to seek that approval in writing from the deputy of that department. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Roland. Supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

**Supplementary To Question 44-15(5): GNWT Employees Seeking Outside Employment**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Minister's response. What is the process for this government that may call into question in regards to the approval for that department to give their government employees the clearance to bid on government contracts? Will the Minister consider

reviewing that policy, because right now it is a concern for one of my constituents in the Sahtu region? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Roland.

**Further Return To Question 44-15(5): GNWT Employees Seeking Outside Employment**

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this comes up from time to time. For example, in some of our smaller communities where we have some trained staff in the communities, whether it is to do with work with heating systems and homes or repairing vehicles, if there are no other contractors available in that community, then they are asked to do that type of work. That is where this provision comes from. Because it is available to all employees, it is as well used in the larger centres. What we would look at, for example, is if there is competition in the community or potential conflict with their workload, what they're doing and the job that they're seeking. So it's something that each deputy would have to take into review before giving authorization for that employee to work outside of the government. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Roland. Supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

**Supplementary To Question 44-15(5): GNWT Employees Seeking Outside Employment**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there's an issue here that, with this work being done in my region, that there is a health competition and there is no other contract or other kind of expertise done in this situation, which is totally against what's happening in Norman Wells, in my region, in regard to a recent contract that has been awarded to two government employees that has taken away the livelihood of one person. Now, this is shameful. I would ask the Minister if he would consider this. It's a shameful tactic on government. It's a shameful excuse of this government to do this to one of my constituents. This is a sole income for this person here that's given by a government people. It's sensitive and I want to raise this today with the Minister. Will the Minister reconsider this contract that's currently under review? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Roland.

**Further Return To Question 44-15(5): GNWT Employees Seeking Outside Employment**

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I stated, the issue of the employee of the Government of the Northwest Territories seeking employment outside of their responsibilities, ultimately a decision is made by the deputy of that department to give them the okay. Once that's granted, they're free and clear until an issue may come up that has to be addressed again. It's a case-by-case review by the deputy. I will provide the actual policy, to be clear to the Member, that deputies would have to use. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Roland. Final supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

**Supplementary To Question 44-15(5): GNWT Employees Seeking Outside Employment**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister then inform the deputy that has to again

allow his employees to look at it? It is sensitive, however, it hits right at the crux of a constituent and it does tear away from one solving one issue. It's going to create a problem for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment by having one of my constituents in an income support situation. That's just terrible. So would the Minister again inform the appropriate deputy that he reconsider on this issue, this policy? I know it's sensitive, so I'll just leave it at that. Would the Minister talk to the deputy in charge to look at this policy again? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Roland.

**Further Return To Question 44-15(5): GNWT Employees Seeking Outside Employment**

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would have to speak to the Minister of the specific department and deal with them through the Minister. Thank you.

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

**Question 45-15(5): Change In Scope To Dene K'onia Facility Renovation Project**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to pick up where my last questions left off, and that was before the Minister of Public Works and Services. I listened closely to him and I'm having a great deal of difficulty trying to understand what one Minister, the Minister of Health and Social Services, is saying in terms of the relocation of TTC and the disposition of the Dene K'onia facility in Hay River and what the Minister of Public Works and Services is saying. So on the one hand you have the Minister of Public Works and Services admitting that an error occurred in the ad going out, and on the other hand you have the Minister of Health and Social Services saying it was undertaken in good faith by regional Public Works staff that the ad went out. So what is it, Mr. Minister? Mr. Speaker, thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister responsible for Public Works and Services, Mr. Roland.

**Return To Question 45-15(5): Change In Scope To Dene K'onia Facility Renovation Project**

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again the Member likes to work in generalities of issues that don't seem to work in the way he'd like to see them work, I guess. I know it's a politically sensitive area. The fact is, this Assembly agreed in the House that this project be transferred to another community. With all the issues around it, it still had the approval of this House. Ultimately, once that project was redefined in the sense of where it was located, the department came forward then to follow the next step of the work that had to be done. Public Works did a report, sent it back to the department for their decision on the options that were provided. At that point what should have happened, there was communication issues, it's been raised already by the Minister of Health and Social Services, as well, as I've stated. When the decision was made, the process would have been then to go to the Minister of Health and Social Services. He would come to FMB, raise the issue there. Once there was a decision made at FMB we would advise of any changes to the committee. A letter was written to

the committee; I believe May 26<sup>th</sup> a letter was written. Meanwhile, we pulled that tender back because it should not have been issued. If we felt that it should have been, we would have gone forward, but we still had to go through FMB on the changes to that. But we followed the process. When that error was realized it was pulled, rescinded and at this time the options are still being reviewed as to how we would proceed with that project. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Roland. Supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

**Supplementary to Question 45-15(5): Change In Scope To Dene K'onia Facility Renovation Project**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I see things as right and wrong, black and white. I don't make generalizations. I read what's given to me, I listen to what the Ministers tell me, and I make my mind up, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to just mention to the Minister, we weren't consulted last year, we weren't consulted this year, and I want to ask the Minister why Regular Members of this House were not consulted on the move to demolish Dene K'onia in Hay River. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Roland.

**Further Return To Question 45-15(5): Change In Scope To Dene K'onia Facility Renovation Project**

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the decision that the Department of Health and Social Services arrived at to proceed to replacement instead of renovation was something that then had to follow through the process. The process wasn't followed, so we pulled the tender back. The issue was brought back to the FMB table. A letter was written to Members. But the fact is that when you look at our documentation and requirements, the scope of the project, the \$3.1 million was identified, that was transferred already and voted on by this House. The decision then for whether renovation or whatever is a decision that we made. As long as it remained within that scope, it's in the same community, the dollar figure hasn't changed. The Minister brought that back to the table, we've informed Members, and we're deciding on how that would move forward. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Roland. Supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

**Supplementary To Question 45-15(5): Change In Scope To Dene K'onia Facility Renovation Project**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if you use the same rationale the Minister just mentioned, they would have informed us and consulted with us last year when the money was transferred from Yellowknife to Hay River, and they didn't. That's the point I'm trying to make, Mr. Speaker. The Minister did not answer this question: Why were Regular Members of this House not advised? You're going to demolish a piece of public infrastructure and it doesn't matter what community it's in, the scope of the project changed. We're fed one story last year and had to force feed another story this year. Why weren't Regular Members advised of this change? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Roland.

**Further Return To Question 45-15(5): Change In Scope To Dene K'onía Facility Renovation Project**

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I stated earlier, the information was brought to the House. Some Members disagreed with the decision made of relocating that facility. It was brought to this House, it was voted on by this House, done. We are now at the next phase of looking at that, as we would with every project. When Public Works was drawn into it we would provide the department that's in charge of the project with options whether it's the best value for money. In this case, options were given to the department, the decision was made, and inadvertently, by error, a tender was released that should not have been released because we had a number of steps to follow yet. We've pulled that back. No construction, no tender is out there, no tender has been awarded, no demolition is happening at this point. We're going back and looking at whether in fact this is the best option that's there and looking at the parameters of the project. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 45-15(5): Change In Scope To Dene K'onía Facility Renovation Project**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister still didn't answer the fundamental question here. That fundamental question is, why were Members of this side of the House not informed of the change in this project? Mr. Speaker, if I could, last year we were told that a key factor to relocating that program to Hay River was the fact that there was a facility there. That has changed. It's fundamental; it's simple to see, Mr. Speaker. Why were Regular Members not advised, Mr. Speaker? That's what I'd like to know. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Roland.

**Further Return To Question 45-15(5): Change In Scope To Dene K'onía Facility Renovation Project**

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the fact is that the dollar value of the project remains the same, the community remains the same, the purpose of the facility remains the same and we've informed Members. As we said, a tender was issued in error; it was withdrawn. We've gone back to Cabinet, a letter's been sent to Members, and a final decision. If the project changes in the sense of a higher dollar value, or changes the community again, that would have to come back for a vote in this House. The rest of the steps we've proceeded with and followed. Whether Members disagree with the information they were provided, before that initial decision came to this House we had Members saying that was a good idea. But when it came to this House for decision, all of a sudden it was a big surprise. So I mean we're not going to go back there, Mr. Speaker. The fact is, we followed the process, we're informing Members, there was an error, we've withdrawn that tender and there is no tender issued. Thank you.

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

**Question 46-15(5): Delivery Of Dust Control Programs For Small Communities**

**MR. VILLENEUVE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a lot of our smaller communities, you know, and our elders and people with respiratory ailments like asthma, the coming of summer means the coming of dust; the lack of dust control in these small communities. With the recent removal of \$738,000 for dust control from the Municipal and Community Affairs main estimates it bereaves me to tell these people that, hey, you know what, the dust control issue is no longer a Municipal and Community Affairs priority. It probably never has been under control. The government has spent numerous amounts of dollars looking at ways to control the dust in the smaller communities. I want to ask the Minister, whose ultimate responsibility is dust control now in our smaller centres? Thank you.

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

**Return To Question 46-15(5): Delivery Of Dust Control Programs For Small Communities**

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the responsibility for dust control in the communities lies with the community governments. The community government formula includes responsibility for that portion. We have in the last while included in our business planning some work to do an analysis of what type of materials would be best used in terms of application for dust suppressant and I'm pleased to announce that we have an increase in our budget of \$156,000 for this coming year. We are also continuing to work on our Main Street Chipsealing Program. There's been eight communities involved in the plan. We've finished the work in four communities and we continue to move forward on that front. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Supplementary, Mr. Villeneuve.

**Supplementary To Question 46-15(5): Delivery Of Dust Control Programs For Small Communities**

**MR. VILLENEUVE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have a problem with the community governments taking over their own dust control issues. Is this government going to provide an adequate amount of funding to these community governments to address their dust control issues? Through the EBA report on dust control, there's a lot of recommendations in that report, and is the government going to implement some of those recommendations? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. McLeod.

**Further Return To Question 46-15(5): Delivery Of Dust Control Programs For Small Communities**

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, the study was done for the use of the communities and there is some new monies included in this year's budget to do additional work in terms of studying what would be the appropriate dust suppression to use. However, to the actual cost of what the community may decide to move forward on, whether it's chipsealing of the whole community or

calcium, that would be the community's responsibility, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Supplementary, Mr. Villeneuve.

**Supplementary To Question 46-15(5): Delivery Of Dust Control Programs For Small Communities**

**MR. VILLENEUVE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I don't have a problem with the communities assuming control of their municipal and community affairs, but is the government going to provide any money? Mr. Minister, if you could just tell me straightforward, is the government going to flag money to these communities to say okay, here's \$100,000 to address your dust control issues? Is that in the works, or is this coming out of these Northern Strategy dollars, which is for capacity building or for recreation or for youth development, not dust control? That wasn't included in the Northern Strategy, as far as I know. How are these communities going to address these dust issues without money? Is the government going to provide that? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. McLeod.

**Further Return To Question 46-15(5): Delivery Of Dust Control Programs For Small Communities**

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, we provided a number of different sources of money to the community that we are moving in a process where the communities will make their own decisions, and that includes dust control. We've provided money through the Northern Strategy to each community. We've included a new formula for capital. There is also gas tax that will start flowing to the communities. All these new dollars available allows the community to decide how they want to deal with dust control. We are not going to create another budget for dust control. We have some resources that we've allocated for this year to do further analysis to help the communities to decide where they want to go and what would be appropriate. Further than that, the communities are going to have to start spending their own money. We have turned over all the pots of money to the communities for them to decide, to make their own decisions. So that's where they'll have to get it from, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Final supplementary, Mr. Villeneuve.

**Supplementary To Question 46-15(5): Delivery Of Dust Control Programs For Small Communities**

**MR. VILLENEUVE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, you know, I don't think we really have to study the dust issue to death here because, you know, the EBA report on dust control is very well done, as far as I'm concerned. But again, these Northern Strategy dollars, these gas tax dollars, all these sources of money that the government has offloaded on the community to tell them to spend it any way you want, you know, I don't see anything in any of these spending requirements that mentions anything about dust and that it's your responsibility all of a sudden. The dust control has always been a government responsibility in the past and now, all of a sudden, it's taken off the books because of all this money that's...

**MR. SPEAKER:** What's your question, Mr. Villeneuve? Do you have a question?

**MR. VILLENEUVE:** Why is that, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. McLeod.

**Further Return To Question 46-15(5): Delivery Of Dust Control Programs For Small Communities**

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, the issue of dust control has always been the responsibility of the community government. It has been built into the community government operational funds; it's something that's allocated on an annual basis. The community decides their budgets. If the community decides not to spend it on dust control, that's their decision. We have recently moved into transferring the dollars to the communities in different areas so that the communities can make their own decisions. There is more money flowing now for communities to work with on what their challenges are than there ever has been in the last while.

---Applause

Dust control can be accommodated in the community capacity fund, it can be accommodated in the new gas tax money, they can pave the whole community if that's what the community desires. If there is a problem and they want the government to carve a portion out of it, for us to tell the communities how to do it, that's not something we want to do anymore. The community has to decide where they want to spend the money. The tools are in their hands, they can make those decisions. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

**Question 47-15(5): Maintenance Needed For Highways No. 1 And No. 7**

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's time for my spring road report.

---Laughter

Mr. Speaker, I've got a question for the honourable Minister of Transportation. Just recently, the Dehcho leadership were travelling to Fort Liard, as well as track and field communities were travelling to Hay River, and they report that highways No. 1 and No. 7 have largely been unmaintained. They're saying that there's lots of potholes, it's soft. I'm just wondering, when is this ministry going to spend some of that money that's earmarked for maintenance on those highways? Mahsi.

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

**Return To Question 47-15(5): Maintenance Needed For Highways No. 1 And No. 7**

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's always a challenge to deal with the damage that's been done over the winter months because of frost heaving, because of the level of traffic that's on our roads as a result of resource development. There is also the issue of some areas flooding and those type of things, and it takes

a while to catch up. All our crews are out there. All our own-force crews are out there. Some crews are working overtime if there's areas that need extra attention, and all our contract crews are out there. But we have to ask the general public to bear with us. It's going to take a while. It usually takes several weeks to a month to get back on a regular maintenance schedule and do all the patching. This year we tried to get our crews out early to be able to accommodate the level of repairs that needed to be done, but it's going to take a while. We also need the weather to cooperate with us because if we get a rain storm, then that really escalates the damage that gets done on the roads, especially our gravel roads such as highways No. 1 and No. 7 in the Member's riding. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 47-15(5): Maintenance Needed For Highways No. 1 And 7**

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to read briefly from an e-mail I got. "Dear Mr. Menicoche, blankety, blankety, blankety maintenance, blankety, blankety roads."

---Laughter

Just to highlight the fact that the Minister indicated the desire to get out there soon and I think soon was about a month ago to maintain those roads, Mr. Speaker. Once again, when will our maintenance schedule kick in for the roads, because there are people moving around? They are travelling around lots and safety is their number one concern. Mahsi.

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

**Further Return To Question 47-15(5): Maintenance Needed For Highways No. 1 And 7**

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I am not sure what the Member means when he asks when the maintenance schedule will kick in. We have a maintenance schedule that operates year round. We have a maintenance schedule that we are operating under right now. We are providing extra attention to some of the areas that are causing us some concern. However, we have our crews out there working as many hours as we can provide and we will continue to do so.

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

**Supplementary To Question 47-15(5): Maintenance Needed For Highways No. 1 And 7**

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just with respect to the maintenance schedule, the residents and constituents are reporting that the roads are not being maintained. People who travel quite frequently haven't seen the graders out there. There are indeed potholes. Highway No. 7, that's the Fort Liard one, there are lots of soft spots that need maintenance and filling in, but people aren't seeing anything being done. So when is the ministry going to direct the maintenance crews out there and have a good look at the problems that are occurring? Mahsi.

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

**Further Return To Question 47-15(5): Maintenance Needed For Highways No. 1 And 7**

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, we will have some of our senior staff go into the areas on highways No. 1 and No. 7 to see for themselves if there are some concerns being raised by some of the Member's constituents and look into the issues. Thank you.

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

**Question 48-15(5): Review Process Of The Public Utilities Board**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for Minister McLeod, Minister of the Public Utilities Board. I would like to know from the Minister if the board is required to hold a hearing before making a decision on applications. They had a fuel rider and a pension rider and, as far as I know, there were no hearings conducted on either of those and they were both approved. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister for the Public Utilities Board, Mr. McLeod.

**Return To Question 48-15(5): Review Process Of The Public Utilities Board**

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the board is required to review the applications on public utilities operating in the Northwest Territories regarding rates and rate structures. If it warrants hearings or whether it's actual formal hearings in the community or through a process, what's considered to be a proper hearing, that's the board's decision. I can't confirm with any certainty whether it's an actual requirement; depending on the level of what is requested in the application, I would assume. I would have to confirm that though, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Supplementary, Mr. Robert McLeod.

**Supplementary To Question 48-15(5): Review Process Of The Public Utilities Board**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Minister for that. The Public Utilities Act states that the board has the authority to rescind a decision and they may rehear a matter before deciding it. In this case, it's hearing the matter for the first time. Where does that come from? Does the Minister have the authority to rescind a decision and then hold a hearing? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Minister Mike McLeod.

**Further Return To Question 48-15(5): Review Process Of The Public Utilities Board**

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, the Public Utilities Board was established to serve as an expert body and an independent body to review the rate setting process in the rate setting process. It was also set up to insulate the Government of the Northwest Territories from the potential for conflict in the view of controlling the financial interests. Consumers, of course, have the right to

be treated fairly. Again, Mr. Speaker, I am not sure if I have the answer the Member is asking, if I have the authority to overrule the Public Utilities Board. I would have to take that question as notice, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. The Minister is taking the question as notice. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

**Question 49-15(5): Status Of Canol Heritage Park Project**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of ITI, Mr. Brendan Bell. What plans are in place in terms of enhancing or increasing the Canol Heritage Trail park management plan or just the whole overall view of the heritage park that's been scheduled for...(inaudible)...

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bell.

**Return To Question 49-15(5): Status Of Canol Heritage Park Project**

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Member knows, this is certainly a priority for our department. We have had and been proposing to do some work and had budgeted amounts of money for a number of years. We are now at the point where we have a working committee to move forward. We have nominees as put forward by the region. We are going to work with them to ensure that there is a viable plan for enhancing the project. I expect there will also be a bit of a tour this summer. If the Member is interested in participating with the Premier and others, I believe, as well as Members of the committee, I think that is certainly a good way to kick off our renewed efforts in this regard and in that park. So I look forward to a number of events. I can assure the Member that this is a priority, we are moving forward and intend, certainly, to improve that and to start to implement that plan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

**Supplementary To Question 49-15(5): Status Of Canol Heritage Park Project**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in terms of the working committees now being implemented or in place, can the Minister advise the people in the Territories and also in the Sahtu region when we can see a viable management plan that would see the Canol canyon heritage trail be turned over to the people in the Sahtu for enjoyment of all tourism? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Bell.

**Further Return To Question 49-15(5): Status Of Canol Heritage Park Project**

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Member knows, we are committed to this project. Work is ongoing. In terms of when that can be finalized, the park plan finally implemented, that will depend on some of the consultation that is ongoing and some of the work that we need to do. We are committed to expediting this. I have indicated before that we needed to have

moved faster on this project in the past and I think certainly we have failed to do that but are certainly prepared and committed to moving this ahead now with all of our partners and look forward to being able to do that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

**Supplementary To Question 49-15(5): Status Of Canol Heritage Park Project**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister made reference to a tour this summer with several Members across the House and invited members from the public. I appreciate the support for this tour. In terms of involving people at the level of our elders in having some input into the design and implementation of the Canol heritage management plan, will the Minister commit to the House to involve the elders at that level? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Bell.

**Further Return To Question 49-15(5): Status Of Canol Heritage Park Project**

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's exactly why the committee has been set up and structured the way it has and certainly as they move forward, it's critical to have that regional perspective. We know that they will bring forward the perspective of their people, including elders. We expect that they will consult with them. If the Member is asking about the tour this summer, he knows we are committed to that. There still are details to be finalized and worked out. Obviously if youth are going to participate in this, we have to ensure that we deal with every aspect and issue of safety. We are doing that. We want to make sure that this is well planned and can advance without a hitch. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

**Supplementary To Question 49-15(5): Status Of Canol Heritage Park Project**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this summer, I guess we are going for a little walk in the mountains. We'll see what happens in the seven days. I appreciate the Minister's full support on this and getting some recognition and support. Will the Minister be able to come to the Sahtu and to the Canol heritage summer tour, so his physical presence, not just by his words, and have him show up during the summer in Norman Wells?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Bell.

**Further Return To Question 49-15(5): Status Of Canol Heritage Park Project**

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am currently in the process of trying to finalize my summer schedule, my summer and family plans. Of course, I have someone at home who I have to consult with as well, but I will make every effort to be on the ground for at least part of the tour and I also hope, prior to that, potentially to get out. I know the Member was instrumental in providing a helicopter tour for some Members of the House of the area, of the region. That's something I also look forward to. I think this is a beautiful part of our territory. It's one

that needs more exposure. It's one that needs more support. It really will be wonderful when tourists will be able to more easily access that area. So it has my full support and I will work with the Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Oral questions. Before we go onto the next order of business, the Chair is going to call a short break.

---SHORT RECESS

**MR. SPEAKER:** Orders of the day. Written questions. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

#### ITEM 7: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

##### Written Question 3-15(5): Dene K'onia Facility Project

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the government.

1. Can Public Works and Services, after consulting with another department, authorize demolition of public infrastructure without consulting with the affected MLA(s) and standing committee? If so, does this contravene existing policies?
2. Who approved the publication of the tender to demolish Dene K'onia?
3. What was the correspondence between Public Works and Services and Health and Social Services regarding this issue?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

##### Written Question 4-15(5): Statistical Information

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board.

Can the Minister provide statistical information over the past five years as follows:

1. the number of WCB applicants whose claim included a medical diagnosis of chronic pain;
2. the number of those same applicants who succeeded in obtaining temporary short-term benefits and permanent long-term benefits; and
3. the number of Workers' Compensation Board claimants whose benefits were affected if they were diagnosed as suffering from chronic pain.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Braden. Written questions. Returns to written questions. Replies to opening address. Petitions. Reports of standing and special committees. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Tabling of documents. The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

#### ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

**Tabled Document 8-15(5): NWT Protected Areas Strategy Annual Report 2004-2005**

**Tabled Document 9-15(5): 2004-2005 Annual Report Of The Western NWT Biophysical Study**

**Tabled Document 10-15(5): NWT Biodiversity Action Plan Report Two: Gap And Overlap Analysis And Recommendations For Future Actions**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following documents: NWT Protected Areas Strategy Annual Report, 2004-2005; the 2004-2005 Annual Report of the Western NWT Biophysical Study; and the NWT Diversity Action Plan Report Two: Gap and Overlap Analysis and Recommendations for Future Actions.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Tabling of documents. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

**Tabled Document 11-15(5): Towards Excellence: A Report On Education In The NWT, 2005**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document entitled Towards Excellence: A Report on Education in the NWT, 2005. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Tabled Document 12-15(5): Summary Of The "Safer Communities And Neighbourhoods Act"**

**Tabled Document 13-15(5): Safer Communities And Neighbourhoods Act**

**Tabled Document 14-15(5): The Safer Communities And Neighbourhoods Act - Yukon Presentation**

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I stated in my Member's statement today, I would be tabling documents regarding the Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act and I have three documents. The first one would be described as a summary of the act. The second document I have to table is the actual act itself from Saskatchewan. The third one is a presentation the Saskatchewan Justice department gave to the Yukon government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

**Tabled Document 15-15(5): Toward New Voluntary Sector - Government Of The NWT Relationships And Funding Arrangements - Final Report**

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table a report entitled Toward New Voluntary Sector - Government of the NWT. Let me start over again, Mr. Speaker. Toward New Voluntary Sector - Government of the NWT Relationships and Funding Arrangements. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Braden. Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Notices of motion for first

reading of bills. Motions. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bell.

#### ITEM 18: SECOND READING OF BILLS

##### **Bill 3: An Act To Amend The Legislative Assembly And Executive Council Act**

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill amends the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act to implement recommendations of the Independent Commission to Review Members' Compensation and Benefits and to make other adjustments related to Members' compensation and benefits. This bill comes into force on the polling day for the general election that follows the dissolution of the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bell. To the principle of the bill.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

Bill 3 has had second reading. Mr. Bell.

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 69(2) and have Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, moved into Committee of the Whole. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Member is seeking unanimous consent to waive Rule 69(2) and have Bill 3 moved into Committee of the Whole. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Bill 3 has had second reading and stands referred to Committee of the Whole.

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

##### **Bill 4: An Act To Amend The Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act**

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill amends the Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act to implement the recommendation of the Independent Commission to Review Members' Compensation and Benefits, that Members who did not elect to receive an allowance under the act after their first election to the Legislative Assembly should be permitted if they are permitted to a subsequent Legislative Assembly to elect at that time to receive an allowance. Such a Member may not buy back previous service. This bill comes into force on the polling day for the general election that follows the dissolution of the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bell. To the principle of the bill.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

Bill 4 has had second reading. Mr. Bell.

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 69(2) and have Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act, moved into Committee of the Whole. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Member is seeking unanimous consent to waive Rule 69(2) and have Bill 4 moved into Committee of the Whole. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Bill 4 has had second reading and stands referred to Committee of the Whole.

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

##### **Bill 5: An Act To Amend The Territorial Parks Act**

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Territorial Parks Act, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill amends the Territorial Parks Act to provide that it is an offence to contravene the order of a park officer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bell. To the principle of the bill.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

Bill 5 has had second reading. Mr. Bell.

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 69(2) and have Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Territorial Parks Act, moved into Committee of the Whole. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Member is seeking unanimous consent to waive Rule 69(2) and have Bill 5 moved into Committee of the Whole. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Bill 5 has had second reading and stands referred to Committee of the Whole.

Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Committee Reports 1-15(5), 2-15(5), 3-15(5), 4-15(5), Bill 3, Bill 4 and Bill 5, with Mr. Ramsay in the chair.

#### ITEM 19: CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, committee. I'd like to call Committee of the Whole to order and ask what is the wish of committee. Mr. Menicoche.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Committee of the Whole would like to consider Committee Report 1-15(5), Committee Report 2-15(5) and Committee Report 3-15(5). Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, Mr. Menicoché. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Agreed. We'll start with Committee Report 1-15(5), Report on the Review of the 2004-2005 Report of the Human Rights Commission. Mr. Menicoché.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Mr. Chairman, Thank you very much. The Report on the Review of the 2004-2005 Annual Report of the Human Rights Commission. The introduction was read into the public record during the sitting of the House.

### Recommendations

The report includes two specific recommendations for amendments to the act.

### Systemic Remedies

The first recommendation is to amend the act to explicitly allow the Human Rights Adjudication Panel to order systemic remedies in addition to remedies to address the situation of individual complainants. Systemic remedies might include requiring an organization to implement employment equity or to change policies that have resulted in discrimination. The report cites the persistence of unequal pay for work of equal value between men and women as an example of systemic discrimination. In such a case, providing compensation or another remedy to one individual complainant would not address the overall issue or assist others being subjected to the same discrimination by the same employer.

The witnesses also suggested there is an inherent contradiction in the act in that it currently allows the commission to initiate complaints, which in practice it would most likely do in a case of systemic discrimination, but does not allow the adjudication panel to grant the corresponding remedies.

The committee was made aware that some other Canadian jurisdictions explicitly allow for systemic remedies in their human rights legislation and that in other jurisdictions the courts have interpreted the acts as allowing for systemic remedies even though they do not explicitly grant this power.

While the committee does not necessarily disagree with the recommendation, we would like to be assured that it would not have unforeseen implications beyond those identified by the commission. We would also point out that our act is as yet new and untested and that it may be more appropriate to revisit this recommendation after we have gained a few years' experience and established our own precedents.

### Recommendation

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight recommends the GNWT review the implications and advisability of including systemic

remedies in the Human Rights Act and report back on its findings in its response to this report.

### Committee Motion 1-15(5): Recommendation To Review Implications Of Including Systemic Remedies In Human Rights Act, Carried

Mr. Chairman, I move that this committee recommends that the GNWT review the implications and advisability of including systemic remedies in the Human Rights Act and report back on its findings in its response to this report. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, Mr. Menicoché. The motion is in order. To the motion. Ms. Lee.

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I'd like to take this opportunity to just make a very short comment about the motion and in support of the motion, but also to say something about how...I can't think of a word, but I guess "good" is a good word; how good it feels to have this Human Rights Commission up and running. I feel like I've watched there from its inception and for the longest time we were the only jurisdiction, or one of the very few jurisdictions in Canada without our own Human Rights Commission and it's really rewarding, I guess that's the word, to see the project start from the beginning and how the consultation, wide consultation was held. Sometimes in this House we don't always see the results of the work we do in a short time frame, and I know for many it was a long time, but eventually we do see an entity like this get started and I know that this office has been very busy dealing with quite a number of cases; more cases than they had ever thought would come around to that office in that short a time. So I just wanted to make a comment on that.

With respect specifically to the motion, this was a revelation to me that in our legislation we did not give consideration for systemic remedies, because I would think that in many of those issues where there are human rights violations or where people are being discriminated against on grounds that are covered under the act, there would be many occasions where it would be more than one instance and it would apply to more than one person, and if we find that an organization or an industry is doing something, or the government department or government agency, I think that's what's covered in this legislation, continues to do the same thing over and over and over, you would think that it would be legislatively more prudent to have an option there to make systematic changes so that the commission and the commissioners don't have to address the same issue or similar issues or similar facts or situations over and over again.

I do think that, and I do agree with a little bit of caution, in this motion to give us time and room for us to work through the details of what the implications are of this if we were to approve systematic changes. So I would like to take this opportunity to speak in support of the motion and vote in support of the motion, and to ask the government to do its due diligence to inquire and find out as to what the situation is in other jurisdictions and how other human rights legislation are covering these sorts of systematic issues. I think it's my understanding that other jurisdictions already have these provisions, although not all of them have them. I always thought that our legislation was more progressive and it was more up to date than most other legislation, so I don't know how or why we missed this element.

Let me just finish by saying I support this motion and I look forward to seeing the work that the department will bring back in response to this recommendation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, Ms. Lee. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Question.

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

---Carried

Mr. Menicoche.

### **Criminal Convictions**

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. The act currently prohibits discrimination on the basis of pardoned criminal convictions. The report recommends that the act be amended in order to prevent discrimination on the basis of "unrelated" criminal convictions. The example provided in the report is of a person with a record for driving while impaired being refused a job that does not involve drinking.

---Interjection

---Laughter

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, there, committee members. I'm going to have to re-read that. The example provided in the report is of a person with a record for driving while impaired being refused a job that does not involve driving. The current act would not protect that person unless he or she had received a pardon. With the recommended wording, the person would have grounds for a complaint by making the case that a conviction for a driving offence is unrelated to a job that does not involve driving. Similarly, a person refused a job on the basis of a conviction from many years ago might have grounds for a complaint.

The committee had a lengthy and spirited discussion on this issue. Some Members are reluctant to support the recommendation because it would put employers in a very difficult position of making judgment calls about what is or is not an "unrelated" conviction. In some cases, it could be very difficult for them to balance their duties toward their clients or other employees with the legal requirement not to discriminate against a job applicant. For example, if a person had a twenty-year-old record for sexual assault and no subsequent convictions, would it be discrimination to refuse to hire him or her for a delivery job? On the other hand, would it be negligent to put customers and other employees in contact with a person whose history included a violent offence? Some Members are concerned that it would be unfair to expect employers to make these kinds of evaluations.

In support of the recommendation, Members pointed to some employers' policies of not hiring anyone with a criminal conviction without giving any consideration to the relevance of the offence. Such policies are making it difficult for many responsible adults who made mistakes in their youth to find employment and provide for their families. Prohibiting discrimination on the basis of unrelated criminal convictions would prevent employers from automatically refusing to hire anyone with a record

and force them to consider applicants on a case-by-case basis.

### **Recommendation**

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight recommends the GNWT review the implications and advisability of amending the Human Rights Act to prohibit discrimination on the basis of unrelated criminal convictions and report back on its findings in its response to this report.

### **Committee Motion 2-15(5): Recommendation To Review Implications Of Amending Human Rights Act To Prohibit Discrimination, Carried**

Mr. Chairman, I have a committee motion. I move that this committee recommends the GNWT review the implications and advisability of amending the Human Rights Act to prohibit discrimination on the basis of unrelated criminal convictions and report back on its findings in its response to this report. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The motion is in order. To the motion. Ms. Lee.

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Once again I just want to put my position on record on this motion. Understandably, and I think the chair of the AOC explained the examples that arises out of some of the discussions that we had in the committee that resulted in this recommendation. I am going to be voting in support of this motion, but with conditions. I think you can see from the motion that the committee is wanting the government to do some research on this. It's very complex and it's an issue that has layers of implications around it. It is the classic question of balancing the rights of individuals versus public interest. I look forward to seeing what the Minister of Justice and their legal advisors come back to the Members with. I would like to take this opportunity to ask him to do a lot of research in this area and see how other jurisdictions are handling this issue and what the implications are. I am mindful and I do understand why the commissioners have brought about these recommendations and there are some good arguments to be made about that, but there are other implications that we must consider. So I look forward to and I'd like to encourage the Minister to respond to this recommendation as soon as possible so that we could, as Members, have an opportunity to discuss this and debate this further in the near future. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, Ms. Lee. To the motion. Just before I get to the next speaker, I just wanted to draw the House's attention to the gallery. I'd like to recognize Mr. Sonny MacDonald, the sub-chief for the Salt River First Nation.

---Applause

Also, Sonny is, in addition to being the sub-chief of the Salt River First Nation, the chair of the NWT Arts Council and his artwork does grace this Assembly that we work in. Welcome, sir, to our proceedings. As well, the other folks that we have in the gallery, welcome to our proceedings this afternoon. Thank you.

Next on the list I've got Mr. Pokiak.

**MR. POKIAK:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, support this motion; however, I would like to make a few comments, I guess, in regard to this motion. I think it might have implications with the GNWT because we do advertise quite a bit for employment in departments. So I think having a motion in place like this may have implications with the government, but again it's something that we have to look at. That's all I want to say, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much.

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

**MR. BRADEN:** Mr. Chairman, I, too, will be voting in favour of this motion. This is precisely the kind of thing that we expect our relatively newly minted Human Rights Commission to do, is bring forward progressive ideas that we can engage in in the interest of individuals. There is certainly an aspect of care to be taken in tying the hands of employers, Mr. Chairman, in being able to choose wisely the type of employees they wish to have. But in committee's presentations, and anecdotally now and then, it seems to be perhaps a bit of a trend here that employers are using criminal record checks and anything on anybody's past as a potential cause for not hiring them. That would certainly be something that on a blanket policy is not something that I think I would be prepared to condone. That is why I think this is a progressive piece of work. The way it was, at least the sense that was presented to committee, Mr. Chairman, was that employers would still be able to have some scope in their choice of how they could discriminate, but that we would want to make sure that the door was open where unrelated convictions would not be an allowable ground of discrimination. So with that, Mr. Chairman, I look forward to voting in favour of this motion. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, Mr. Braden. To the motion. Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to also support this motion here and I look forward to the Department of Justice in terms of how they're going to roll this out into the communities. I had several constituents of mine be turned away because of previous criminal records that were nine years old, and to have these members that are now changing their way of life and actually making some valuable contributions to these land claim boards or other type of boards that we advertise through the government, sometimes their criminal convictions hurts them and they're not considered to sit on several boards because of the criminal records checks and some other things. So it limits them and narrows the pickings, I guess, of good people to sit on the boards. There's a bit of a cry that we have our people who are in the region, northern, and people who are in the North who could do a lot of good work for our community and our region and our government. So I will look with interest in terms of how this government, and specifically the Department of Justice, looks at this recommendation and to see how it's going to be rolled out in the community and how it's going to have an impact and how the changes will occur and what things need to be considered. So, Mr. Chairman, I will be supporting this motion. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Mahsi, Mr. Yakeleya. 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

Before I proceed, I would like to as well recognize the Pages that are in our House here today from Range Lake North School, and we also have Mr. Ian Moir and his daughter, Lauren, is one of our Pages here today. So welcome.

---Applause

Thank you, committee. Mr. Menicoche.

#### Other Issues

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. In the course of our discussion on the annual report, some Members noted the act used the word "sex" to refer to discrimination on the basis of being male or female, and raised concerns that this terminology could be misunderstood or be offensive to some people. The committee suggests this government consider bringing forward an amendment to the act to change the word "sex" to "gender," which is in its opinion a less confusing or more appropriate term.

#### Conclusion

The committee looks forward to monitoring the continued evolution of the Northwest Territories Human Rights Commission, and to reviewing its next annual report.

#### Recommendation

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight recommends that, pursuant to Rule 93(5), the GNWT table a comprehensive response to this report within 120 calendar days.

#### Committee Motion 3-15(5): Recommendation To Table Comprehensive Response To Report Within 120 Days, Carried

Mr. Chairman, I move that this committee recommend that, pursuant to Rule 93(5), the GNWT table a comprehensive response to this report within 120 calendar days. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Question.

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

---Carried

Thank you, committee. Does committee agree that consideration of Committee Report 1-15(5) is concluded?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Agreed. Thank you, committee. Mr. Menicoche.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We'll turn the floor over to Mr. Hawkins.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you. For the record, we're on Committee Report 2-15(5). Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Chairman, An 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. The Commissioner points to a trend of public bodies automatically refusing access to information wherever they have a discretionary exemption under the act, without evaluating whether there are clear and compelling reasons to do so. She is concerned that public bodies, and in particular the Financial Management Board Secretariat, are withholding information just because they can without considering whether they should.

In order to shift the corporate culture toward openness and transparency, the Commissioner believes a top-down approach is necessary. In her words, "if the top members of the bureaucracy and the politicians are afraid of openness, that fear will translate to the department or government and there will be a corporate culture of secrecy. If the corporate culture is one of openness, the rest of the bureaucracy will follow."

As an example of the leadership required, she cites the Premier, management board and Attorney General of Ontario, who recently issued memoranda emphasizing the importance of freedom of information in the democratic process and encouraging a proactive approach to providing information to the public. She recommends the Premier, Ministers and Financial Management Board follow the lead of Ontario by publicly and clearly endorsing the goals of the act and taking positive steps to foster a corporate culture of openness and accountability.

The committee shares the Commissioner's concerns and strongly supports her recommendation. The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight recommends that the Premier, Ministers and Financial Management Board make public statements supporting the principles of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, and 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 to do so.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The motion. Committee motion. Mr. Hawkins.

**Committee Motion 4-15(5): Recommendation To Make Public Statements Supporting Principles Of ATIPP Legislation, Carried**

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My apologies. I move that committee recommends that the Premier, Ministers and Financial Management Board make public statements supporting the principles of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, and 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 to do so.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Question.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Question has been called, however, I recognize that there isn't a quorum at this time, so what I will do, before I ring the bells I'm going to take a second to recognize Mr. Vickers' class from Ecole St. Joseph School that's with us here in the gallery today. Welcome, folks.

---Applause

Mr. Vickers' class has a few interesting gentlemen. Mr. Dent's son, Tyler, is in Mr. Vickers' class...

---Applause

...as well as the Premier's grandson, Gage....

---Applause

...and my nephew Ryan is also in Mr. Vickers' class...

---Applause

...and Mr. Ouellette's son, as well. Welcome. Wow.

---Applause

Welcome very much to the Legislative Assembly, to our proceedings this afternoon. It's always a pleasure to have young folks here watching the proceedings of this House. Thank you very much. I will recognize now, committee, that we do not have a quorum and I will ring the bells in an effort to achieve quorum. Thank you.

---Ringing of Bells

Thank you, committee. Question has been called. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? Thank you. Question was called. The motion is passed. Thank you, committee.

---Carried

---Applause

Before we move on to Mr. Hawkins, I'd like to recognize Mr. Mike Olsen in the gallery from First Air. Welcome.

---Applause

Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. 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. The Commissioner recommends that, as a minimum, the chairs and executive directors of boards and agencies be required to take the training, although ideally training would be mandatory for all appointees.

The GNWT advised in its response to the 2003-2004 recommendations that ATIPP training is routinely available to all board members and public servants, and that the Department of Public Works and Services would

make available to board members its records management standards, policies and guidelines.

The committee is concerned that the GNWT's approach to date has been far from proactive and supports the Commissioner's recommendation for mandatory training.

**Committee Motion 5-15(5): Recommendation To Make Basic Records Management And ATIPP Training Mandatory For Chairs And Executive Directors Of GNWT Boards And Agencies, Carried**

Mr. Chairman, I move that this committee recommends that the NWT make basic records management and access to information and protection of privacy training mandatory for all chairs and executive directors of boards and agencies to which the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act applies. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The motion is in order.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

Thank you. Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For the sixth year in a row, the Commissioner's report speaks to the lack of information and privacy legislation for municipal governments.

The GNWT has identified concerns about the impact on day-to-day municipal operations and administration, costs, training and capacity as reasons why municipal information and privacy legislation cannot proceed at this time.

Municipal governments collect a substantial amount of personal information from residents and hold a great deal of information of interest to the public. The need for openness and transparency applies as much to them as to any other level of government. While the committee acknowledges the challenges of developing and implementing information and privacy legislation, we are not satisfied that they excuse the GNWT's failure to take a proactive approach on this issue. Elections and human rights legislation, to name two examples, could also be said to be challenging to implement, expensive and at times inconvenient; however, we recognize their importance in a democratic society and do not question the need to allocate resources to them. Why should information and privacy legislation be any different? As the Commissioner said to us, quoting her Alberta counterpart, Mr. Frank Work, "the right to access to information is precious. No government should ever oppose or impede it on the basis that it is too expensive, too time consuming or that only the troublemakers use it."

The committee would also point out that municipal staff are required to handle personal information and respond to information requests from the public in any case, and suggests that training and guidance in the form of legislation and policies would, if anything, make that aspect of their work less difficult.

The committee has, therefore, taken it upon itself to write to the NWT Association of Communities in order to hear directly from them what is required in order for them to implement information and privacy legislation. Given the time needed to draft new legislation, we do not expect that a bill could be introduced before the next election; however, we encourage the government to begin work immediately to allow legislation to be brought in during the term of the 16th Assembly. In our view, this would provide ample time for the government to resolve implementation concerns raised by municipal governments.

**Committee Motion 6-15(5): Recommendation To Bring Forward Plan For Developing And Implementing Municipal Information And Privacy Legislation For Consideration By 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly, Carried**

I move that this committee recommends that the GNWT bring forward a plan, including timelines for developing and implementing municipal information and privacy legislation that addresses the implementation concerns raised by municipal governments and that will allow for consideration of legislative amendments by the 16th Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The motion is in order.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

Thank you, committee. Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Another of the Commissioner's ongoing recommendations from past years 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. As an example of a concern with how the private sector handles personal information, she cited the continued practice of some NWT businesses of printing credit card numbers in their entirety on transaction slips. In southern Canada, it is now standard to print partial numbers only, which helps to prevent theft.

Although the NWT private sector is already 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 to address complaints and issues of a local nature. PIPEDA also does not protect employees from misuse of their personal information by employers. Some other Canadian jurisdictions, including Alberta and B.C., have already enacted provincial legislation to address the gaps left by PIPEDA.

The GNWT has indicated it intends to review the effectiveness of PIPEDA in 2006 in order to determine whether territorial legislation is also necessary. The committee looks forward to seeing the results of this review.

**Committee Motion 7-15(5): Recommendation To Review Effectiveness Of PIPEDA And Need For Legislation On Private Sector Use Of Personal Information, Carried**

I move that this committee recommends that the GNWT review the effectiveness of the Personal Information Protection and Electronics Documents Act and the need for territorial legislation on private sector use of personal information, and provide a report on its findings to the committee before the end of 2006. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

Thank you, committee. Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. 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 2003-2004 recommendations that information and privacy matters are being addressed in devolution and aboriginal land, resource and self-government negotiations, in the Tlicho Agreement and in the Deline, Gwich'in and Inuvialuit self-government agreements-in-principle. It is unclear to the committee whether the provisions are limited only to information the governments handle as delivery agents for GNWT programs and services, or whether they extend to all the governments' operations. The committee would like more information from the GNWT on the scope of the access and privacy issues being discussed in the negotiation process and how proactive the GNWT has been in encouraging emerging governments to incorporate freedom of information and protection of privacy into their structures.

**Committee Motion 8-15(5): Recommendation To Ensure Access And Privacy Issues Are Considered In Devolution And Self-Government Negotiations, Carried**

I move that this committee recommends that the GNWT ensure access and privacy issues are considered in devolution and self-government negotiations, encourage and offer assistance to aboriginal governments to develop their own regulations where other legislation does not apply, and provide further detail to the committee on its efforts in its formal response to this report. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

Thank you, committee. Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As in past reports, the Commissioner raises the importance of ensuring contractors who handle government information are aware of and comply with the requirements of ATIPP. Her concerns appear to be addressed in part by terms and conditions incorporated into GNWT contracts and the October 2005 amendments to the act, which made contractors directly responsible for protecting personal information. However, the need for ongoing enforcement and monitoring of compliance continues to be an issue. Specific measures she recommends include requiring contractors to notify the public body of any requests or demands made by foreign authorities for personal information, and of any unauthorized disclosure of information that has taken place.

**Committee Motion 9-15(5): Recommendation To Ensure Adequate Measures Are In Place To Monitor And Enforce Contractors' Compliance Against Disclosure Of Personal Information, Carried**

I move that this committee recommends the GNWT ensure adequate measures are in place to monitor and enforce contractors' compliance and to detect and defend against disclosure of personal information to foreign authorities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

Thank you, committee. Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Commissioner's report also emphasizes the need to consider privacy issues before moving public registries online. While information from registries such as the land titles registry has always been open to public inspection, the ability for someone to misuse personal information or collect it in mass for commercial purposes has been limited until recently by the practical limitations of a paper registry in a fixed location. The Commissioner suggests a number of questions the GNWT should be asking itself before moving public registries online; for example, what is the purpose of the registry, and whether individuals should be asked whether they consent to their personal information being disclosed or used for other purposes such as direct marketing.

**Committee Motion 10-15(5): Recommendation To Consult With Information And Privacy Commissioner Before Moving Public Registries Online, Carried**

I move that this committee recommends the GNWT consider privacy issues and consult with the Information and Privacy Commissioner in order to take advantage of

her expertise before moving any more public registries online. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

Thank you, committee. Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Commissioner recommends two amendments to the act to address problems that came to light in the course of a review of a decision to refuse access to information by the former Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development.

The first issue was with a specific provision of the act, paragraph 24(1)(f), which states that a public body must not disclose information that is a statement of financial assistance provided to a third party by a prescribed corporation or board. The Commissioner interpreted the words "prescribed corporation or board" to refer to any corporation or board subject to the act. The department interpreted them to require a specific designation as a "prescribed corporation or board." The Commissioner recommends the act be amended to clarify the meaning of paragraph 24(1)(f).

The second issue was with the department's response to the Commissioner's recommendations, which in her opinion seriously undermined the credibility of the review process. The Commissioner's recommendations were based on the department's argument that the information requested was subject to a specific exemption in the act. On receiving the Commissioner's recommendations, the department declined to follow them on the basis that they had changed their mind about which exemption they wanted to rely on and that they had determined the exemption they had initially cited, and on which the Commissioner based her recommendations, did not apply to them.

One of the Commissioner's concerns with this kind of response on the part of a public body is that it leaves no recourse for the applicant other than to make an application to court and effectively sidelines the role of the Commissioner. The act does not allow for the Commissioner to reconsider a request for review if a department changes its mind about its arguments after she has made her recommendations. In her report, she therefore recommends an amendment to the act requiring public bodies to refer to all relevant sections of the act when responding to the Information and Privacy Commissioner, and to be bound by those submissions. During her meeting with the committee, she suggested an alternative would be an amendment requiring that no final decision be made by the head of a public body until the Commissioner is given an opportunity to make recommendations based on all the arguments the public body wishes to rely on.

In our discussions with the Commissioner it became apparent to the committee that the underlying problem is likely not so much a gap in the legislation as the overall

corporate culture and approach to requests for review of access to information decisions. The Commissioner advised us that public bodies often take what she referred to as a "lazy" approach in making their submissions and fail to provide complete lists of their arguments and the specific exemptions or sections of the act they wish to rely on. As the Commissioner pointed out, the onus is on the public body to demonstrate that an exemption applies. However, because of the poor quality of submissions, the Commissioner sometimes finds herself in the position of having to research and make the public bodies' arguments for them because of the possible consequences of not considering all the angles.

The committee is not convinced that the solution to this problem lies in amendments to the act. We see the problem as relating back to the overall corporate culture and attitude discussed earlier in this report, and therefore suggests that the appropriate response is leadership and direction from the top down to ensure public bodies are more diligent and thorough in preparing submissions to the Commissioner.

**Committee Motion 11-15(5): Recommendation To Set Standards For Submissions To Information And Privacy Commissioner And Provide Leadership To Public Bodies, Carried**

I move that this committee recommends the GNWT set standards for submissions to the Information and Privacy Commissioner and provide appropriate leadership and direction to ensure they are understood and followed by public bodies.

The committee further recommends that the GNWT review the need for amendments to the act to allow the Information and Privacy Commissioner to reconsider a request for review where a public body changes its arguments after the Commissioner has made her recommendations.

The committee further recommends that the GNWT either bring forward an amendment to clarify the meaning of paragraph 24(1)(f) or provide direction to public bodies on how it is to be interpreted. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

Thank you, committee. Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For the second time, the Commissioner's report includes a recommendation that schedule A of the regulations be kept up-to-date in order to ensure new or renamed public bodies are subject to the act. As of the date of our meeting with the Commissioner, the regulations still did not list the Business Development and Investment Corporation, although it was established over a year ago. The committee fails to understand the reason for the delay in making such a simple amendment. We therefore support the Commissioner's recommendation that the regulations be updated at least annually. Ideally, they

should be updated immediately each time a new public body is created or renamed to ensure the continued application of the act.

**Committee Motion 12-15(5): Recommendation To Update Schedule 'A' To ATIPP Regulations Annually, Carried**

I move that this committee recommends that schedule A to the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Regulations be updated at least annually.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

Thank you, committee. Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Commissioner recommends that a link be provided from the Legislative Assembly web site to the directory of ATIPP coordinators as it is currently difficult to find on the Justice and GNWT web sites. She further recommends that a paper directory be made available throughout the NWT.

While the committee is not convinced that keeping an up-to-date paper directory in circulation is feasible, Members do support linking the directory to the Legislative Assembly's web site in order to make it more accessible to users.

**Committee Motion 13-15(5): Recommendation To Keep Online Director Of ATIPP Coordinators Current And Provide Link To Directory On Legislative Assembly Website, Carried**

I move that this committee recommends that GNWT continue to keep its online directory of ATIPP coordinators current, and that a link to the directory be included on the Legislative Assembly web site. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

Thank you, committee. Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At the time of our public review of the 2004-2005 report, the Commissioner raised two additional issues which the committee wishes to comment on.

The first was a concern that the Department of Health and Social Services and health authorities have not sought her advice in the course of the move to electronic health records. As with the shift to online public registries, the change in the management of health records raises a number of privacy issues. The committee believes it

would be sensible for public bodies to seek the Commissioner's expert advice on privacy matters when they undertake such initiatives.

**Committee Motion 14-15(5): Recommendation That GNWT Public Bodies Consult With Commissioner To Identify Potential Privacy Issues In Early Stages Of Projects, Carried**

I move that this committee recommends that the GNWT public bodies consult with the Commissioner to identify potential privacy issues in the early stages of projects resulting in the transfer of personal information to electronic records systems. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

Thank you, committee. Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The second issue the Commissioner raised was a concern with the capacity of existing staff to respond to access to information requests. As an example, she cited the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, which is currently dealing with a high volume of requests due to inquiries related to residential schools. Public bodies typically assign responsibility for coordinating ATIPP matters in addition to an employee's other duties rather than to a dedicated staff person. The Commissioner suggested the GNWT consider either hiring dedicated ATIPP staff for high-volume departments or establishing a central unit of dedicated ATIPP staff that public bodies could access.

**Committee Motion 15-15(5): Recommendation To Evaluate Capacity To Respond To Access To Information Requests, Carried**

I move that this committee recommends that the GNWT evaluate its capacity to respond to access to information requests.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

Thank you, committee. Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the Commissioner stated to the committee: "Secrecy and closed doors lead to corruption and bad government no matter how well intentioned governments may be. It is far easier as a member of the public to accept the bona fides of government when they seem to be open and willing to accept responsibility, even for bad news, than if they appear to be secretive."

The committee encourages the government to heed this advice, and to strive for full compliance with both the spirit and letter of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

**Committee Motion 16-15(5): Recommendation To Table Comprehensive Response To Report Within 120 Days, Carried**

I move that this committee recommends that, pursuant to Rule 93(5), the GNWT table a comprehensive response to this report within 120 calendar days. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

Thank you, committee. Does committee now agree that consideration of Committee Report 2-15(5) is concluded?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you. That is the Report of the Review of the 2004-2005 Annual Report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. Thank you, committee. Recognizing the clock, I will now rise and report progress. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Can I have the report of Committee of the Whole, please?

**ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Committee Report 1-15(5), Report on the Review of the Annual Report of the Human Rights Commission, and Committee Report 2-15(5), Report on the Review of the Annual Report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, with 16 motions being adopted. I would like to report that committee reports 1-15(5) and 2-15(2) are concluded and, Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Do we have a seconder? The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

**ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY**

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Orders of the day for Monday, June 5, 2006 at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions

5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
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 1-15(5), Designated Budget for Art in GNWT Buildings
17. First Reading of Bills
  - Bill 1, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2005-2006
  - Bill 2, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2006-2007
  - Bill 6, Engineering and Geoscience Professions Act
  - Bill 7, Pharmacy Act
  - Bill 8, Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act
  - Bill 9, Write-off of Assets Act
  - Bill 10, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2006-2007
  - Bill 11, Tourism Act
  - Bill 12, Garnishment Remedies Statutes Amendment Act
18. Second Reading of Bills
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
  - Committee Report 3-15(5), Report on the Review of the 2004-2005 Annual Report of the Official Languages Commissioner
  - Committee Report 4-15(5), Progress Report on Priorities and Objectives (2006)
  - Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act
  - Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act
  - Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Territorial Parks Act
20. Report of Committee of the Whole
21. Third Reading of Bills

22. Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Monday, June 5, 2006, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 14:04 p.m.

