



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

5th Session

Day 34

15th Assembly

HANSARD

Monday, March 5, 2007

Pages 1141 - 1202

The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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Box 1320
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories
Tel: (867) 669-2200 Fax: (867) 920-4735 Toll-Free: 1-800-661-0784
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Published under the authority of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Monday, March 5, 2007****Members Present**

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

ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good afternoon, colleagues. Welcome back to the House. Orders of the day. Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Health and Social services, Mr. Roland.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**Minister's Statement 77-15(5): Addictions Programs And Services**

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is no denying there is a substance abuse problem in the NWT. Northerners drink more and drink more often than southern Canadians. The 2004 addiction survey found that 36 percent of northerners over the age of 15 drank heavily at least once a month. More recently, crack cocaine and crystal meth are addictive substances turning up in northern communities. Substance abuse causes upheaval in the lives of our residents, from children to seniors.

My main purpose of speaking today is to highlight the various options available to NWT residents for assistance with addictions. The work we do with families and communities is essential to stop the cycle of addictions and underlying mental health issues.

The Department of Health and Social services continues to invest in programs and services that offer those experiencing mental health or addictions problems the most appropriate care.

Through the client-focussed approach of the integrated service delivery model, northerners have access to primary community care teams who can empower them to address their addictions or mental health issues. There is also a range of high quality addictions programs, many of which are available at the community level. For other more specialized services, people have access to territorial programs.

The department is working to promote healthy lifestyles. We are developing a plan to launch a territorial addictions awareness campaign that aims to reduce and stop our youth from using alcohol and drugs. Prevention services offered at the community level include:

- the "Friends for Life Resiliency" training program, where community group leaders are trained to counsel children on ways to prevent the anxiety and depression that may eventually lead youth to use alcohol and drugs;

- the "Suicide Prevention" training program, where communities train their own residents in suicide prevention; and
- community wellness workers who provide education, prevention, basic counselling, referral and aftercare services to local residents.

The foundation of the NWT Mental Health and Addictions Strategy are the resources being developed in communities across the NWT. In terms of community counselling, I would like to highlight the following improvements:

- qualified mental health and addictions counsellors, who provide healing and counselling services at the community and regional level, are supported by clinical supervisors who ensure quality care;
- programs like Alcoholics Anonymous and Crack Busters provide peer support in communities across the NWT;
- non-government organizations such as Inuvik Family Services and the Tl'oondih Healing Society in Fort McPherson, provide community counselling;
- Tree of Peace in Yellowknife offers a comprehensive day program for those recovering from addictions;
- on-the-land prevention and healing programs are being developed by communities and health and social services authorities; and
- the NWT Helpline is answered by trained volunteers 365 days a year to help those in distress or direct them to find the right resources.

For those already dealing with addictions, often the first step toward recovery is through detoxification. Medical detoxification beds at Stanton Territorial Hospital and the Social Withdrawal Management Program at the Salvation Army are important services provided in the NWT for NWT residents on a referral basis.

A critical service for many people dealing with addictions is residential treatment. Each year over 150 NWT clients are referred to the Nats'ejee K'eh Treatment facility. So far this year, an additional 39 clients have been referred to southern facilities for more specialized treatment.

I must also stress the importance of ensuring clients returning home after treatment have access to support services within their communities to help them in their recovery phase. Mental health and addictions counsellors and community wellness workers support clients and their families once they graduate from a treatment program. Groups like Alcoholics Anonymous and Alanon also play an important role in the aftercare of our residents.

Mr. Speaker, addictions affect many of us and this government continues to place a priority on offering programs and services to prevent, treat and follow up with people suffering from addictions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Minister's Statement 78-15(5): International Polar Year

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the polar regions have profound significance for the Earth's climate and ultimately environments, ecosystems and human society. However, we still remain somewhat unaware of many aspects of how polar climate operates and its interaction with polar environments, ecosystems and societies.

International Polar Year, which started on March 1st, is an opportunity to add to this knowledge. During this two-year program of science, research and education, Canadian and international researchers from universities, northern communities and governments will work to advance our understanding of the cultural, social, economic and health dimensions of the circumpolar north. They will also examine the geophysical climate and biological processes in both the Arctic and Antarctic polar regions. This is the fourth International Polar Year. The first was held in 1882, the second in 1932 and the third in 1957.

International Polar Year will have a significant impact on the Northwest Territories, particularly once Canadian and foreign scientists will begin their research here. These scientists will be working through our research facilities including our Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, Aurora College and the Aurora Research Institute. Several GNWT scientists and researchers are expected to be involved in these research projects.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada has pledged \$150 million towards International Polar Year. We expect to hear shortly how and where this federal funding will be used. We also expect to hear details on national research projects that have been approved by the federal government.

Our government has taken steps to prepare for the influx of scientists and researchers to ensure that the results of the polar research directly benefit our communities.

This week, representatives of aboriginal governments, regional aboriginal organizations, Government of the Northwest Territories departments, the national International Polar Year office and communities are meeting in Inuvik to discuss community capacity and opportunities to participate in this two-year event.

In addition to enriching our knowledge about the circumpolar north, Mr. Speaker, International Polar Year will generate benefits for our communities. Some of these benefits will flow from providing goods and services to the scientists, researchers and their teams; others will flow through involvement of residents in the research activities. The research projects should also provide training and

development for the next generation of NWT Arctic researchers and educational materials for our schools.

The greatest legacy of the International Polar Year will be its ability to provide more information about the circumpolar north including the possibilities of new scientific discoveries. Learning more about our North, its processes and how it is changing is invaluable to all of us as we deal with issues like climate change and contaminants.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories supports this valuable work. We will work with communities to ensure they have the opportunity to participate and benefit from it as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi cho.

---Applause

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

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On Territorial Coordination To Address Issues Of Water And Climate Change

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, every country in the world is facing pressures on water, on fresh water, including Canada, including the Northwest Territories. We know that. We can see that around us. We know that river levels are dropping. We know that groundwater is disappearing. We know there is enormous pressure south of us for research development that has a direct impact on what comes flowing through into the Northwest Territories.

Our concern about water is fuelled by climate change, which in turn is fuelled by a burgeoning population which is now about six billion people, which is expected to reach over 10 billion people in the next decade or so. That, in turn, fuels an insatiable demand for resource development and the pressure on us is to balance the resource development with a sustainable environment, a healthy environment, which has been built on water.

Climate change is manifesting itself to us most fundamentally by water and what is happening to the water that comes into our territory and flows through into the ocean.

Mr. Speaker, there is a need for us, as a territory, to coordinate our efforts, internally first with the aboriginal governments and with the other stakeholder groups as we did with the Caribou Summit to plan out how we want to address the pressures that are tied to us and coming to us from water. Internally, we have to organize ourselves as a government and as a territory about how we use water ourselves, but of equal importance is how do we address the pressures in other jurisdictions, the transboundary issues, specifically in Alberta.

Right now, we have bands like Deninu Kue going on their own speaking their concerns about the tar sands development. We have the Dehcho people going to northern Alberta to talk about their concerns with the other aboriginal governments. Clearly there is a need for a united northern front which does not yet exist. Our obligation as a government is to coordinate that in the

coming months as we look forward to life past the 15th Assembly about how we are going to organize ourselves to deal with that particular issue which, in turn, will lead to that fundamental discussion about resource development, what is our best interest, how fast do we move and how fast do we exploit all the resources we have at our disposal. Mr. Speaker, I request unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as we will hear today, the issue of water and climate change is fundamental to the Northwest Territories and our survival, and I think, as a government, we have to take better steps to strengthen the processes we currently have to deal with those issues. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Changes To Northern Wildlife Resulting From Climate Change

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I want to talk about climate change and the impact it's having on our wildlife. Mr. Speaker, if you have lived in the North like I have for the past 25 years, you can't help but notice the changes in our climate. As a young boy in the early 1980s, I can remember when winter was a solid block of 10 to 12 weeks of minus 30 or colder. Sure, today as you look outside, we do get some cold weather, but it certainly isn't the same in duration as it has been in the past. Our winters, undeniably, are getting milder.

The increased evidence of evasive species into our territory is something that our government must pay close attention to: white-tailed deer, coyotes, cougars and, with these new species, there are also worries about new insects. Speaking from personal experience, just last summer out near Long Lake here in Yellowknife, I saw at least 20 to 30 frogs. I am not a biologist but having grown up here, it was something I had never seen before. These were not the small, typical brown frog that I had seen as a young boy, but rather they were green, aquatic looking frogs that were well over six inches in length and there were many of these frogs there.

The environment is changing. That is a given. What we have to do as a government is ensure that we have enough resources to study and track our wildlife and how it is being impacted by climate change. I listened closely to the Minister about the \$150 million that is earmarked for the International Polar Year. I would like to know when we can sign up to get some of this funding.

The Bathurst caribou management plan calls for an additional \$8 million necessary to carry out the work to manage, count and track our caribou. We've had many discussions in this House about caribou during the past year. I believe that climate change is having a direct impact on migration routes, calving grounds and on our ability as a government to get accurate data on their whereabouts.

Mr. Speaker, we need additional resources and the reality is we aren't doing enough to manage our wildlife through this era of climate change. Mr. Speaker, as the latest grappling over the caribou numbers has shown us, we need to do much, much more. Mahsi.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Sustainability Of Northern Water Resources

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Among the many issues that face governments today, one stands out with glaring importance and that is the sustainability of clean, fresh water. It is our most precious resource; the very essence of life on this planet. In all of Canada, in all of the world, Mr. Speaker, Canada -- and especially our part of Canada -- is blessed with a ready abundance of clean, renewable water.

Great Bear and Great Slave lakes alone are listed as the seventh and ninth largest in the world by area. So it's little wonder, Mr. Speaker, that we northerners have taken this tremendous gift for granted for so long. But the signals are undeniable. Clean water is a gift that we can no longer count on as a given. It is under enormous threat due to our warming climate and the disappearing glaciers and snowfields of the South that feed the rivers flowing north.

Mr. Speaker, our northern waters are virtually under attack from the voracious pace of development in Alberta and British Columbia, the devastating effects of the Bennett Dam on the Peace-Athabasca delta after more than 30 years of impact are all too well known. They were followed up in more recent years by major pulp and paper development in northern Alberta and today the insatiable appetite for fresh water from the tar sands development. Tomorrow, Mr. Speaker, it may be an enormous hydro development virtually on our doorstep on the Alberta side of the Slave River near Fort Smith.

While there are many things that we can do as individuals, and communities, and territorial governments to manage and conserve water at our local levels, it is the threats from outside that we must heed. It is imperative, Mr. Speaker, that we use every resource available of research, traditional knowledge, treaty and modern day agreements, national and international law, to protect our rights to clean, reliable, uninterrupted waters. We must be at the legislative and regulatory tables that are now deciding what they will do tomorrow with the waters that we will inherit from them. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We must not be timid, we must not be coerced. This is one legacy that we, as northerners, must be unified on for the survival and the prosperity of our children. Mr. Speaker, we must not allow ourselves to be sidelined by a national government that has already signalled that it values Canada's reputation as a new energy superpower more than it does as a

sustainable place for Canadians to live. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Adherence To Land Claim Water Management Provisions

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

Mr. Speaker, over the years, there's been ongoing discussion and meetings on preserving fresh water here in the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, we just heard over the news that the oil sands in McMurray is about to get a green light to expand the oil sands, or has it already been given a green light from the federal government? I may be a bit too late on the newflash. The Fort McMurray oil sands is of interest to all of us here in the great north. The water passage, the water flow system from McMurray to the NWT are all interconnected to the communities, however you want to look at it, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, water is sacred to us, the people of the North; especially those that oversee the management of water, land and wildlife: the aboriginal governments. We have always protected and preserved the clean, healthy water for our consumption, and for the respected neighbouring species and wildlife.

Mr. Speaker, I can only speak specifically to the Tlicho Agreement, an agreement that was signed off by this Government of the Northwest Territories. There are some important chapters we must keep in mind when dealing with the water and land management. First is chapter 21 of the Tlicho Agreement, since the water is of high importance here in the North. Chapter 21 explains the water rights and management. Also chapter 22, land and water regulations. Mr. Speaker, we have to respect these important chapters. The word, R-E-S-P-E-C-T. Mahsi.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Shared Responsibility For Protecting Northern Water Resources

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to raise the issue of climate change and water here in the House. I'm aware that the general public and many Members of this House, note the direct correlation between these two very important issues facing northerners, Canadians, and basically all humankind over the next hundred years if no steps to address these concerns are taken today.

Mr. Speaker, we often hear of many countries holding many conferences every day and many meetings on climate change and clean water management and the impending doom of humankind if we do not make a concerted effort to deal with the world's rising temperatures because of CO₂ emissions and the looming water crisis that both developed and non-developed countries will experience. I can go on and on about all

these issues, Mr. Speaker, but there are many books on these issues and I encourage many people to pick them up and read them as they've become more important to many young folks today.

Because I am an aboriginal northerner, Mr. Speaker, I will keep my concerns raised on issues related to my constituency of Tu Nedhe and how climate emissions and water quantity and quality and, in particular, the use of are raising many eyebrows in my constituency and the lack of acknowledgment and support by our government to adamantly defend our First Nations' stand on proposed changes on our water supply systems due to increased development in the Mackenzie River water basin.

Sole responsibility to protect our major water supply in the NWT should not, and does not, lie in the hands of one First Nations band here in the NWT, in particular the Deninu Kue First Nations. But it seems like they are the only ones who are standing up to address and defend our water supply when issues of large expanded oil sands development within the Mackenzie River water basin are being addressed at an inter-jurisdictional forum of this importance.

Mr. Speaker, we all have to be united on issues of a global nature and importance, like this water and climate change. Our unity has to begin with a government and the people they represent stepping up to the plate together at all times to ensure that everyone's rights to clean water and pristine environment are paramount to our survival and our spiritual integrity. Mahsi.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Mackenzie River Basin Summit

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, some time ago when I was in Tulita and listening to the elders speak on water and the climate change -- this was about 10 or 15 years ago -- Chief George Kodakin and Chief Paul Wright spoke on the things that were going to come down the valley to affect our people on the Mackenzie River. Chief Kodakin and Paul Wright spoke, just popped into the community hall. They were talking about the prophecies and they were talking about the water being an issue and how the weather was going to change in the future. Not being very interested in politics at that time as I am today with my other Members around this House here, I thought why are these elders talking about climate change and water? It's not going to happen. Paul Wright talked about how the river is going to be dirty and how one day when we put our fishnets in the water, that when we lift them up there's going to be no fish or there's going to be dead fish in them, and it's not going to be very good fish to eat, and how the river system is going change in the Mackenzie River, and Mr. Kodakin talked about how the weather is going to change. That's how the elders talked to us.

Even today, the weather is changing on us. Yet, you know, just hearing it on the radio, my colleague said the Alberta tar sands has conditional approval to go ahead, and how critical it is for us in the Northwest Territories that it's going to have a huge impact on our lifestyle and our

life and the lakes in the Northwest Territories, the Mackenzie River, and we're opting for big development. There's a real fine balance.

Mr. Speaker, the six members on this Mackenzie water basin that we rely on to have clean water in the future and to ensure the integrity of this clean water, to ensure that we can have, that we take for granted, they're coming to meet. We should have, as I heard, a territorial response or a territorial meeting to look at this issue here. It's not only in the South; it's all down the Mackenzie River here. We as northern people, our future generations depend on it.

So again, going back to the elders and to those prophecies, it is coming true. We don't do anything. But we could change it. We certainly can change it for our children, change it for our life, and this government certainly needs to step up to the plate to bat for nice clean water. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On GNWT Position On Large-Scale Resource Development In Alberta

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, globally, 2006 was the sixth warmest year on record, continuing a trend of increasingly hotter years. According to scientists, the 10 warmest years since climate data started being collected on a global scale in 1961 have occurred since 1995. Since the start of the 20th Century, the global average surface temperature has risen almost approximately seven degrees Celsius. However, warming has accelerated dramatically since 1976 and is now at a rate that is approximately three times higher than that of the century scale trend.

Through the burning of fossil fuels and other activities, humans have pumped large amounts of the greenhouse gasses, such as carbon dioxide, into the atmosphere trapping the heat at the earth's surface and causing widespread warming worldwide and this is profoundly changing the earth's climate.

Mr. Speaker, I'm talking about things on a global issue, but here we are in the Legislature, the 15th Assembly of the Government of the Northwest Territories, sitting here in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. We are the leaders. We have a role to play. This is not an activity for us to take a spectator's role. This is for us to get in the ring and start fighting because this has to do very much with us. We have a greater role and a greater opportunity to influence policy and legislation, with regard to greenhouse gas emissions, than anyone else. If legislators don't have an opportunity to affect the outcomes with respect to these issues, who does? I think it's high time that we stopped taking a sideline approach to this issue and get more active and more outspoken about this.

I, for one, as a Member of this Legislature, do not know what our government's position is on the incredulous expansion of the Alberta Athabasca tar sands project just south of us. I don't know what this government's position is on the creation of a hydro dam on the Slave River. I don't know who goes to the meetings and represents us except, perhaps, some senior bureaucrats when these

kinds of issues are being discussed. I think they are too important to leave to our staff, as good as they may be at communicating our position. I believe that these issues need to be elevated to the position of Premier and the highest level of discussions in our land, because Canadians expect that of us...

MR. SPEAKER: The time for Members' statements has expired, Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just in conclusion, I just want to say that Canadians have indicated that protection of the environment is one of the highest priorities facing this country today and again I say that we, as legislators and as representatives of those people, have the responsibility to ensure that high standards are set and that we get in the fight. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Members' statement. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Member's Statement On Environmental Accountability Of The Mackenzie Gas Project Proponents

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The David Suzuki Foundation produced the document entitled "All Over the Map: 2006 Status Report of Provincial Climate Change Plans." This report looks at provincial climate change efforts. It assesses each province's plan and analyzes each one's commitment to meeting the challenges of climate change. It says, with a couple of exceptions, most provinces and territories aren't leading in areas that they could be. Mr. Speaker, sadly, the Northwest Territories isn't one of those exceptions. In fact, the status report lists our performance as poor. Saskatchewan was the only province with a worse performance than ours.

Mr. Speaker, one of the recommendations the report makes is to cancel the Mackenzie Valley pipeline project and develop a sustainable energy and economic development strategy instead. As we all know, plans for the Mackenzie Valley pipeline and further natural gas production will lead to skyrocketing GHG emissions in the territory. Industry, like I mentioned, is the major contributor to the problem -- just over 50 percent of the GHGs, Mr. Speaker -- and we keep putting significant pressure and focus on residents to tighten their belts, but as we ignore the big groups we put pressure again on the smallest offenders.

Is this a case strictly based on "The Emperor Has No Clothes" and we're afraid to say no to the big giant? I don't know, Mr. Speaker. But Members of this House passed a motion in support of the pipeline, but I also think at the time we had the understanding that a resource revenue sharing agreement was pending and the territory would derive some benefit and control over our future.

Mr. Speaker, oil and gas industry has given us weak responses in order to avoid using the lower emissions that a Great Bear River project to develop a power station on the Great Bear...Sorry, Mr. Speaker. But that project on the Bear River could provide a lot of clean, cheap energy. If the pipeline goes ahead, the producers should be held accountable for their increase to their greenhouse gas emissions. These companies make billions of dollars in profit each year, Mr. Speaker. We have given them the carrot, Mr. Speaker, in the form of a comfort letter in the past, but perhaps now we should be using the stick approach. I think we should be considering and be willing to look at issues such as carbon tax levies that could be used to help fund the Great Bear River project, the hydro project, that could help power communities along the Mackenzie Valley. Mr. Speaker, may I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement?

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, on this issue we need clear leadership. We need to show who's in control of our resource development and tell industry that they have to listen to us. It's about seriously protecting our environment. Further, Mr. Speaker, one thing people have to learn is it's a privilege to work here in the Northwest Territories, it's a privilege for industry to be doing something here. So because the technical control still may lie in the absentee landlord, also known as Ottawa, we can't forget that the Northwest Territories government still has moral control over our revenues. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Collective Action Required To Protect Northern Water Resources

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm also happy to join my colleagues today in speaking about protecting the health of our water and our environment as a whole. In doing so, Mr. Speaker, I'm reminded of the time some 29 years ago when my family and I took our long flight from Seoul, South Korea, to Yellowknife via Osaka, Japan, Vancouver, Edmonton to Yellowknife. I was a young girl and there were certain things I took for granted as being unchangeable cardinal rules that I had to revisit upon arrival in Yellowknife. Such as there are four seasons of even three months in a calendar year or that the sun goes down by 6:00 p.m., even in the middle of the summer. Of course, coming to the land of the midnight sun, it was something I had to change my thinking on, and those are pretty fundamental changes at that age. But one that I would always remember and one that I never thought would change is the sight of countless white spots that I could see from the air. We couldn't figure out what they were until we landed and we had to ask around. We finally figured out these were the frozen lakes in the early spring of May. Coming from the world where there had been summer for a couple of months, I didn't realize that there were so many lakes and that they would still be frozen. Of course, where I come from, there were two-

thirds of land mass are mountains with rivers and streams running through them.

One thing, Mr. Speaker, that I also learned and I still can't get over is how big Great Slave Lake is. It's actually almost probably as big as the country of 40 million people that I came from. I always thought that even if everything else changed in the world, that we would always have the water that we could rely on as long as I lived. But almost 30 years later, that is all changing.

Mr. Speaker, one thing I didn't know then but I do know now is that we also live downstream from Alberta. In early '90s various sawmills and timber production companies were the ones that were contaminating our water, but now the insatiable appetite for water in oil sands is making those issues small in comparison. Mr. Speaker, may I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement?

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to finish by saying we must find a way to do our resource development project in an environmentally sensitive manner. The debate that we're having in this House is a call for challenge for everyone in this House and the leaders near and far to join in a united and collective action to protect our water. I'm happy to put my foot forward and add my voice to this important call for action. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Members' statement. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

Member's Statement On Birthday Greetings To Mary Kendi Of Aklavik

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker...(English not provided)

Good afternoon. I would like to say a big happy birthday to a wonderful lady, Gaegou Mary Kendi of Aklavik who turned 92 yesterday, March 4, 2007.

---Applause

Mr. Speaker, Mary is a well-respected elder from Aklavik. So many people have met her over the years and she's touched so many lives in her 92 years, but, more importantly, Mr. Speaker, Mary has always shared her knowledge and wisdom with the younger people.

More importantly, Mr. Speaker, Mary, who is well into her nineties, continues to participate in community meetings. You see her at the different assemblies that go on, and yet, Mr. Speaker, at 92 she's still very active. So, Mr. Speaker it gives me great honour to recognize a great role model and someone who inspires so many people that she has touched over her years, but also, Mr. Speaker, may she have many, many birthdays to come. At this time I would like to, again, wish Mary a very happy 92nd birthday. Happy birthday, Mary.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Members' statements. Returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize Chief Fred Sangris from the Akaitcho.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Welcome everybody in the gallery today. I hope you're enjoying the proceedings. Oral questions. Honourable Member from Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 411-15(5): GNWT Position On Alberta Tar Sands Development

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement I alluded to questions as to what our government's position is on a number of major potential, some more imminent than others, on the Alberta side of the border. In light of the tremendous impact this could have on the Northwest Territories, I'd like the Minister responsible for the environment to detail for us what some of the positions that our government has taken with... Let's talk about the tar sands specifically. We know that there's been an approval process that's been underway and that the Alberta government has basically been given a green light to issue permits and licences to proceed with this expansion. I would like to know what role our government had, if any, in those discussions and what legal right, I guess, we have to participate in that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister responsible for Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. McLeod.

Return To Question 411-15(5): GNWT Position On Alberta Tar Sands Development

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the last couple of months we've been very busy at ENR trying to get a handle on a number of issues that have come forward, including the issues reflecting some of the concerns on water, climate change and bringing some of our strategies forward. Mr. Speaker, our department has been in contact with a multi-stakeholder group through the department of the Alberta government and the tar sands. We've contacted the Environment Minister and have set up some meetings. We've also been in contact with some of the organizations that have voiced concern. Mr. Speaker, we've now, more recently, just signed off on a framework agreement that will help us work with the Government of Alberta on controlling the water quality and water quantity. So that's gone out the door.

There are still a number of other issues we need to talk about. I've made contact with the Minister of Environment; we've set up a meeting for March 20th -- Honourable Rob Renner -- and are going to talk about some of the issues that have come forward as a result of

activity in Alberta. I should point out, Mr. Speaker, that under the Mackenzie River Basin Board's requirements, prior notification protocol, the Government of Alberta has to advise us on any activity that's happening south of the border. Having said that, Mr. Speaker, we have to remember that some of this still falls under federal jurisdiction, so we have contacted the Minister of Environment, Mr. Lunn, and we also have contacted the Minister of Natural Resources. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 411-15(5): GNWT Position On Alberta Tar Sands Development

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that's a very good answer, however, I think we need a slightly larger role than to just be advised of what they're going to proceed with on the Alberta side of the border. We need to do more than...

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: We need to do more than monitor the development taking place down there. I'd like to ask the Minister what kind of agreements, memorandums of understanding, transboundary agreements, do we currently have in the Northwest Territories with Alberta that would give us the legal teeth to be more than just stakeholders? We're a little more than a stakeholder in this story. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 411-15(5): GNWT Position On Alberta Tar Sands Development

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I certainly agree with the honourable Member that we're more than just a stakeholder; we have to deal with all the downstream effects that come through development or climate change or otherwise. Mr. Speaker, it's been several years now that the Mackenzie Valley Basin Board has been in existence and part of the strategy is to sign transboundary agreements with all this jurisdictions. So far, the Northwest Territories is the only jurisdiction that has signed the agreement with the Yukon and now we have just signed the framework agreement. So I think we're ahead of the game. None of the other jurisdictions are at the same level we are. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 411-15(5): GNWT Position On Alberta Tar Sands Development

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister what juncture are we at right now in terms of having any tangible affect on the expansion of the tar sands in the Fort McMurray area at this time? What tool is at our disposal to have an impact? Thank you.

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

**Further Return To Question 411-15(5): GNWT
Position On Alberta Tar Sands Development**

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are a number of projects that are included as part of the tar sands, some of them that have just come to the forefront within the last year. We have been in contact with the proponents in that area. The Government of Alberta has put forward, for the first time, a water management plan for the Athabasca River. We have signed a framework for all the different waters that flow into our jurisdiction. I think we have a lot of issues to deal with and I don't make any bones about it that we still have a lot of work to do. Having said that, we've done a lot in a very short time. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 411-15(5): GNWT
Position On Alberta Tar Sands Development**

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Another question then, Mr. Speaker, for the Minister. We have scientific data today that would indicate that our river and lake levels are lower than they have been historically. Can the Minister tell the House, is there any correlation between the activity that's happening in the tar sands and those lower water levels; and if he can't tell us, how can we obtain the research that can tell us what the correlation is? We need to know those answers.

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

**Further Return To Question 411-15(5): GNWT
Position On Alberta Tar Sands Development**

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are looking at some of the possible affects that are causing the low waters. Mr. Speaker, I can only point to the most recent study that was done, that was done in 2004. The Mackenzie River Basin Board released its State of the Aquatic Ecosystem Report which showed that the overall surface water quality was fine and that it was capable of supporting all the aquatic life and plants and animals. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Question 412-15(5): Environmental Accountability Of
Mackenzie Gas Project Proponents**

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to follow up on my Member's statement. As the Member for Thebacha would say, all these issues are interrelated. So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Premier if the pipeline goes ahead, will the public purse of the Northwest Territories be held accountable for the increase in our greenhouse gas emissions, or will industry be held responsible? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. I'm going to rule that question out of order. That's a hypothetical question, Mr. Hawkins.

---Ruled Out of Order

Oral questions. Do you want to rephrase that question or ask a supplementary question, Mr. Hawkins?

**Supplementary To Question 412-15(5): Environmental
Accountability Of Mackenzie Gas Project Proponents**

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what will the Premier be doing to ensure that the industry will be paying for their own greenhouse gas emission problems? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Return To Question 412-15(5): Environmental
Accountability Of Mackenzie Gas Project Proponents**

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, currently it is the federal government who issues the permits and certificates for the conditions on which the pipeline would be built, if it's built. We have made, and will continue to make, interventions on any further public hearings with regard to the recommendations for permits and certification. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary To Question 412-15(5): Environmental
Accountability Of Mackenzie Gas Project Proponents**

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, how does this government plan to deal with these emissions? If the Premier says the federal government is in control, do we ignore this or what are we doing to make submissions to the federal government about making sure that industry is accountable for the emissions that they create? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 412-15(5): Environmental
Accountability Of Mackenzie Gas Project Proponents**

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A lot of these issues are questions that are being considered right now by the joint review panels, by the federal government and, I'm sure, by industry themselves. So there is no definite answer of how the company would be held accountable, if they are and in what ways. Mr. Speaker, our approach now is to make interventions wherever there is the opportunity holding that the industry should be held responsible. Mr. Speaker, I might say, as well, that we have been in negotiations with the company and the federal government, we've had discussion with them, on the concept of using hydro energy instead of gas from the pipeline for their power needs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary To Question 412-15(5): Environmental
Accountability Of Mackenzie Gas Project Proponents**

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Speaking of emissions and working with industry, Mr. Speaker, on the same issue, what is this government doing to ensure that the Mackenzie Valley gas project hooks into the Bear project so we can ensure that we can keep emissions as low as possible? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 412-15(5): Environmental Accountability Of Mackenzie Gas Project Proponents

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, the discussions have been ongoing for some time with regard to the Bear River project. Given the current schedule of the pipeline if the Bear River project even were to move ahead today, would not be there and in place in time to provide energy for the start-up of the pipeline. So our discussions will be more for supplementing the initial needs and then also to meet the needs of what are referred to as infill stations. Mr. Speaker, those negotiations still have to continue with the company. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 412-15(5): Environmental Accountability Of Mackenzie Gas Project Proponents

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, the Mackenzie gas pipeline SEA has already been signed and I didn't see any provisions in there to ensure that we could work to get emissions as low as possible or anything else. What is the Premier doing on the moral fabric, or moral legislation that he has as Premier to say we need you to commit? So what is the Premier doing for leadership to ensure the Mackenzie Valley gas project will either sign on to the Bear River project or to commit to ensuring we have the lowest emissions possible? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 412-15(5): Environmental Accountability Of Mackenzie Gas Project Proponents

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have no authority to demand the company use one kind of energy or another. Mr. Speaker, in terms of whatever the moral obligation is there, we have continued to persuade the company that using clean energy, hydro energy, is the way to go. We will continue with negotiations with them. Mr. Speaker, it's not included in the SEA but at some point if we're able to achieve an agreement, then those terms will be laid out in that agreement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 413-15(5): Discussions Of Caribou Matters At Meeting Of Territorial Premiers

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are addressed to the Premier. Prior to the rise of the House, the Premier indicated he would have an opportunity to meet with his northern colleagues, Premier Okalik and Premier Fentie. He indicated he would touch base with them on the issue of completing the Porcupine herd survey, the Beverly Qamanirjuaq survey, as well as touch base with Premier Okalik on the potential to move towards the protection of the calving grounds in Nunavut. I'd like to ask the Premier if he can update us on whether he's had those discussions and what the substance of those discussions were? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 413-15(5): Discussions Of Caribou Matters At Meeting Of Territorial Premiers

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did have discussions with my colleagues, Premier Fentie and Premier Okalik. We agreed to work together on any future surveys and whatever may be happening and that we would have our biologists work together. Mr. Speaker, I also took the opportunity to meet with the Minister responsible for aboriginal First Nations and Metis affairs in Saskatchewan to talk to him about the possibility of working together, particularly on harvest numbers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 413-15(5): Discussions Of Caribou Matters At Meeting Of Territorial Premiers

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the Premier could indicate the degree of receptivity that Premier Okalik may have demonstrated with regard to the protection of the calving grounds.

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

Further Return To Question 413-15(5): Discussions Of Caribou Matters At Meeting Of Territorial Premiers

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, Premier Okalik seemed very much in favour of working together and agreed to have his biologist meet with our biologist to begin to do that. I didn't sense anything but a very receptive hearing from him. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 413-15(5): Discussions Of Caribou Matters At Meeting Of Territorial Premiers

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, would the intention then be for the Minister of ENR to follow up with his counterparts in the Yukon and Nunavut to make sure that we don't lose whatever momentum was built up as a result of the Premier's meeting? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 413-15(5): Discussions Of Caribou Matters At Meeting Of Territorial Premiers

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, the Minister for ENR has already started discussions with his counterparts in the Yukon and Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 414-15(5): Caribou Herd Population Surveys

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of ENR. On Friday I had the opportunity to attend a meeting with the Barren-Ground Caribou Outfitters Association and a number of ENR officials. As well, Chief Sangris was there and some other MLAs. The underlying concern at that meeting was whether or not we are counting the caribou appropriately. I'd like to start off by asking the Minister of ENR, at that meeting there was some discussion about numbers in terms of harvest amounts. In the initial proposal that went to the Wekeezhii Renewable Resources Board, the number was 5,700. Subsequently, ENR has come back and said the harvest -- some animals taken were attributed to the Bluenose herd -- accounted for 535-odd animals, which would reduce the harvest of the Bathurst herd to 5,300, 52 and change. I'm wondering if the Minister, given this new information, would be able to instruct his officials at ENR to go back and advise the Wekeezhii Renewable Resources Board of that inaccurate information that was provided at the onset. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister responsible for Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. McLeod.

Return To Question 414-15(5): Caribou Herd Population Surveys

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, an application for a judicial review has been filed in the Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories regarding reduction of big game hunting tags for the barren-ground caribou. Since an application for judicial review has been filed, it would be inappropriate for me to comment on these issues at this time, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 414-15(5): Caribou Herd Population Surveys

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that's quite convenient now that the Minister doesn't have to answer any questions on caribou. I hope that he can answer some questions on funding. The fundamental thing, I believe, is we need to get some more funding to look after wildlife. We need legislation to look after wildlife and we need some support from this government. The Minister, in his statement earlier today, suggested that the federal government is coming up with \$150 million for the International Polar Year. How is his department going to try to access some of these dollars to study and count the caribou here in the Northwest Territories?

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

Further Return To Question 414-15(5): Caribou Herd Population Surveys

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we've already identified sources of funding through our budget process that would help us through our biophysical analysis that needs to take place. We also have identified some dollars that we need for the caribou surveys. Mr. Speaker, we have a caribou management plan that has a budget of \$8 million that is needed to do a long-term plan, and we will continue to

work towards identifying those resources. As part of the International Polar Year that I made a statement on earlier, there are some initiatives that will complement what we're doing. Mr. Speaker, at this point it hasn't been firmed up. Our staff, along with aboriginal governments and other people, are meeting with the federal government and the people from the International Polar Year Committee and they will start looking at the different projects. I wish to assure the Member that caribou is part of the concerns that we've brought forward. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 414-15(5): Caribou Herd Population Surveys

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, resources are needed desperately and \$8 million was the number that was discussed at the meeting on Friday and I would suggest the government not spread that out and look for any funding opportunity to get the necessary money to get the work done. Mr. Speaker, my next question...Again, numbers were the big thing. This has nothing to do with tags, so I assume the Minister can answer this question. The Ahiak herd is now the largest herd in the Northwest Territories. When -- and, Mr. Speaker, this is the big question -- is the government going to work with the Government of Nunavut to set up a management board to look after this largest herd in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: I'm going to rule that question out of order, Mr. Ramsay, pending it's before the courts right now, hunting of caribou.

---Ruled Out of Order

MR. RAMSAY: That's not before the courts.

MR. SPEAKER: Oral questions. Honourable Member from Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

Question 415-15(5): Community Consultation On The Impacts Of Resource Developments On Northern Waterways

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with the recent news on the expanded oil sands projects in McMurray, one would assume that ENR is getting or receiving the day-to-day reports from that jurisdiction. When could this be shared with the general public of the NWT; more specifically, the aboriginal governments? Mr. Speaker, news may not have reached some communities where the Dene language is an asset. Mahsi.

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

Return To Question 415-15(5): Community Consultation On The Impacts Of Resource Developments On Northern Waterways

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, we are more than willing to share any information that we have regarding the oil sands. I'm not sure if the Member is asking us to provide that to the communities, but that information that we have we'd certainly be willing to share. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 415-15(5): Community Consultation On The Impacts Of Resource Developments On Northern Waterways

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi. Yes, Mr. Speaker, I was asking for the information to be shared with the communities. Mr. Speaker, the next question I'd like to ask the Minister is, the Minister has indicated that it's federal jurisdiction, but at the same time we have our own jurisdiction here in the Northwest Territories; more specifically, the aboriginal land claims agreement, which were also signed by the federal government. So, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister have these aboriginal governments been consulted or been involved with meetings with the project? Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 415-15(5): Community Consultation On The Impacts Of Resource Developments On Northern Waterways

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, aboriginal water rights that are acknowledged in the comprehensive agreements are, of course, a subject of discussion in the bilateral negotiations and agreements. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 415-15(5): Community Consultation On The Impacts Of Resource Developments On Northern Waterways

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my next question will be when can we see these consultations in the communities, because all those projects that are happening down south also connects to the North into the communities through the watershed. So it's important that there's constant communication with the communities. When can that happen, since the news is out already? Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 415-15(5): Community Consultation On The Impacts Of Resource Developments On Northern Waterways

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Regarding the issue of water quality and water quantity, some of the discussions have already started to take place. The Dehcho has had a gathering called the Dehcho Keepers of the Water Gathering, and there's been a Tlicho gathering also. Mr. Speaker, the management of water in the Northwest Territories is still with the federal government. We continue to work with the Department of INAC and the Department of Environment, and we certainly will have our discussions with them. We are more than willing to share the information we have and keep the Members up to date as negotiations proceed. Thank you.

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

Question 416-15(5): Transboundary Water Agreements

MR. BRADEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My questions this afternoon are for Mr. McLeod who is the Minister for Environment and Natural Resources. Mr. Speaker, good laws can ensure that we have good protection in place for our water sources and the lands around them. Could the Minister advise, are the transboundary laws that are now in place adequate to ensure that the water flowing into the NWT will be clean and safe and uninterrupted from today onward, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Honourable Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. McLeod.

Return To Question 416-15(5): Transboundary Water Agreements

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure if that's something I could give a clear answer as whether they're appropriate for today. Things have changed a lot in the last while. The previous generations did not have to deal with the same impacts for our water systems as we do today. Climate change, exploration, the oil boom in Alberta and the exploration that's happening in the Northwest Territories is certainly having an impact. We are continually trying to improve our positioning through agreements with other jurisdictions and we have, so far, been able to sign one with the Yukon and we have signed a framework with Alberta. We continue to talk with B.C. and Saskatchewan, and the provinces themselves have started coming forward and putting their own plans for water management, as Alberta has announced already. We have to continue to make sure the plans are adequate, and as part of that we will review legislation that we have in place to ensure that that continues to be so. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 416-15(5): Transboundary Water Agreements

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, as the Minister has indicated, there are a couple of agreements in place: one with the Yukon and most recently this framework agreement. These things are not achieved quickly; I know that. I think perhaps these are the only two that the Mackenzie Basin Management Board has achieved in its 10 years. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to see if the Minister could advise, is the framework agreement that's been negotiated with Alberta, is that public and, Mr. Speaker, in what ways does it give the NWT authority or sanction or influence at the decision-making table? Does it truly strengthen our role in decision-making about water resources, Mr. Speaker?

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

Further Return To Question 416-15(5): Transboundary Water Agreements

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would have to seek further information to confirm whether this document is a public document or not. I would image it is. This document is a document...The MOU is to outline the process, outline the schedule and the

principles and the information that's required to negotiate with Alberta a bilateral water management agreement, Mr. Speaker. I certainly will commit to finding out whether this information can be presented to committee and we'll follow up on that.

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

**Supplementary To Question 416-15(5):
Transboundary Water Agreements**

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, the Minister has advised that, as is the case with so many of the really essential things here in the Northwest Territories, the authority and the control for our water resources rests with DIAND. Just what kind of protocols or framework agreements do we have with DIAND to make sure that they are truly representing our interests, and what assurances do we have that they are actually carrying our voice forward at these transboundary negotiations and, in fact, being the responsible stewards for these water resources that we expect them to be and that they are obliged to be by law, Mr. Speaker?

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

**Further Return To Question 416-15(5):
Transboundary Water Agreements**

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The governments of Canada, Alberta, Northwest Territories have certainly recognized that we have to work together, especially in this situation where the Government of Canada is still the water manager for our jurisdiction. So they will be a signatory to this and will be part of the discussions and negotiations. Thank you.

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

Question 417-15(5): Water Protection Agreements

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I made mention in my Member's statement about the elders and the prophecies about the waters that are forthcoming down the Mackenzie River. I want to ask the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources on this water issue what things are in place that could happen with this territorial government in terms of ensuring that we have a strong water agreement with the territorial government; not just a framework negotiated agreement, something that we could bring back to our people that the water issue is safe and sound in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Honourable Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. McLeod.

Return To Question 417-15(5): Water Protection Agreements

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the framework agreement is the first step towards a final agreement on water. It outlines a number of different things in the contents. It proposes a timeline, a process, it gives definitions and it lays out a vision and costs and funding, and a number of different things, Mr. Speaker, and we're quite confident that this will lead to an

agreement. The time frame laid out in this agreement is a period of three years, and that's what we've embarked on and we signed off the agreement, this first step, last week. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 417-15(5): Water Protection Agreements

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister has indicated three years for a time frame for this agreement. I'm asking the Minister, between now and three years in terms of this framework agreement with Alberta, it's almost like a devolution issue here in terms of responsibility for this water issue with the Alberta government. I would like to ask the Minister what interim do we have as northerners to protect our waters, like the recent agreement that the Alberta government or the National Energy Board gave in terms of the Alberta tar sands projects going up? We might see another one next year and the year after. What strong interim measures do we have that would not deplete our quality and quantity of water in the North?

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

Further Return To Question 417-15(5): Water Protection Agreements

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I think some Members already raised the issue that there are initiatives that are coming forward. Mr. Speaker, at this point we are still dealing on an individual basis. We will be meeting with the Minister of Environment from Alberta. We will also be talking to the federal Minister of Environment and also the Minister of Natural Resources. We need to bring the issue to the forefront and have some comfort that we will be able to deal with issues that are coming forward, and have the proper resources to deal with these issues, and also to have that we're the first point of contact when these are coming forward while this other agreement is being negotiated. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 417-15(5): Water Protection Agreements

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Mackenzie River Basin Board is six members. One of the members is our manager from the federal government. We're also one of the members from the territorial government, and then there are other provinces involved on this board. I want to ask the Minister in terms of the Mackenzie River Basin Board, they're going to meet in 2008 at the summit. What is this government doing to ensure that northerners have a strong voice to sit with the Mackenzie River Basin Board to give them some guidance and direction and give them a good boot and say look after our water here?

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

MR. YAKELEYA: Take care of us in the North. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 417-15(5): Water Protection Agreements

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are the department that provides some of the technical advice and some of the support to the board. We do have a member on the committee and we have very good communication with the board. As to giving them a good boot, I don't know. I think the board is very motivated, very concerned, over the issues and they will continue to work hard towards protecting our waters, as we will as a department and as a government. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 417-15(5): Water Protection Agreements

MR. YAKELEYA: Well maybe, Mr. Speaker, I'll give him a good pair of gumboots, because that's all we're going to have in the Mackenzie River to cross the river one of these days if we don't take care of our waters. This board has an obligation to take care of our waters. The Government of Canada is on there. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister what is this government, his department doing to rally the troops in the Northwest Territories to sit down and give a strong presentation to the Mackenzie Valley Basin Water Board to ensure that the northern interests are taken care of? Otherwise, we're going to have gumboots to walk across the Mackenzie River because there won't be any water left. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 417-15(5): Water Protection Agreements

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This agreement that we are working on and negotiating and the one we just signed the framework for is an agreement that is developed under the Mackenzie River basin master agreement. The board is fully aware of the discussions. They are a board that's out there, but I have to advise the Members that they're an advisory board; the manager of water in the Northwest Territories is still the Government of Canada. So we have to work with them very closely and we have, for the last several months, made it very clear that we're concerned of the issues around water in the Northwest Territories. We've talked directly to the federal Ministers, and other Ministers of this House have raised it as they discuss other issues. So we are bringing it to the forefront, Mr. Speaker, and we'll continue to push that. Thank you.

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

Question 418-15(5): Addressing Mortgage Issues In Small Communities

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I just want to raise some issues with the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation. After the consolidation of the programs into four basic program delivery services, the housing issues are never water under the bridge. I just want to ask the Minister, with the four consolidated programs that came out with now, I notice that in all these

programs there's reference to bank financing required. I know the Housing Corp is getting out of loan mortgage financing altogether with the huge debt that they incurred over the last 20 years trying to finance homeownership. How is the government going to accommodate people in the small remote communities that banks just don't look at? How is the housing program ownership going to be more accessible and how are they going to get financing through the government if they can't get it through the banks and the government's not going to do it either? How is it going to be better homeownership programs for them, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Honourable Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Handley.

Return To Question 418-15(5): Addressing Mortgage Issues In Small Communities

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a first step we are going to offer courses for people who are taking on or considering taking on mortgages so that they understand what they're getting themselves into, they realize what they will have to do in terms of managing their own finances, and the obligations and paying down the mortgage. Mr. Speaker, it's true; we're, as a Housing Corporation, not wanting to continue to carry mortgages ourselves. That's a role for the bank, but, Mr. Speaker, we're open to looking at individual cases and determining how we can help people to facilitate them getting a bank loan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 418-15(5): Addressing Mortgage Issues In Small Communities

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Great, they're offering courses for mortgage, but at the end of the day the banks have the final say in whether you get it or you don't. If they don't offer to a candidate who is probably, maybe in the eyes of the government, somebody that's totally capable of making good monthly mortgage payments, has a job for the last 20 years and hasn't defaulted on their truck or car, but the banks, at the end of the day, have the say of whether they're going to give out the mortgage or not. So if the bank says no, what other options do we have in these programs? There's nothing there that says that the government is willing to help if the banks should refuse your mortgage. How are we going to do that? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 418-15(5): Addressing Mortgage Issues In Small Communities

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, a lot of these situations, in fact housing circumstances and individual people's situations are very individual, so we cannot go galumphing along with some program for everybody that's the same. We're going to have to look at each case, case by case. Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that if someone has a good credit history for 10, 15 years, as the Member has mentioned, they should have no difficulty with the bank. If the bank is concerned about what would happen if the house had to be repossessed, we may make

arrangements that we would, as a last resort, take over the house in the case it ever had to be repossessed for some reason, which we hope it wouldn't have to be. But, Mr. Speaker, we're ready to work with individuals case by case and help them to understand their credit history and, as I say, not go off and try and do something that is a blanket that covers everybody but doesn't make anyone happy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 418-15(5): Addressing Mortgage Issues In Small Communities

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I guess let me ask the Minister if we're going to do it on a case-by-case scenario, the government wants out of the mortgage financing, the banks, perhaps maybe they don't see the whole picture in the community but they're willing to make considerations. Is there anything in these new government programs, these consolidated programs, that clearly says that the banks are willing, or the government is willing to put forward a loan guarantee should you maybe not qualify for a loan based on your individual standings with government, with your credit corporation, or anything? Is there something in there and, if not, is the government willing to put that in there? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Two questions there. Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 418-15(5): Addressing Mortgage Issues In Small Communities

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said, the first step is going to be an education program with four modules to it that people will take. Second is we have a lease program where people can, for a period of time, lease from the Housing Corporation and prepare themselves for taking on mortgages, and then, third, Mr. Speaker, we will help to facilitate people getting bank mortgages. It might be in some cases where we would do a guarantee. In another case we may not do a guarantee. Mr. Speaker, we have to look at each case on its own merit rather than something that's blanket right across. But guaranteeing loans, that's a possibility, Mr. Speaker, depending on the circumstances. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Villeneuve.

Supplementary To Question 418-15(5): Addressing Mortgage Issues In Small Communities

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's probably good news. I guess that's a good start. Just let me ask the Minister, is there any thought being put into...I know the housing wants out of the mortgage issue altogether, they're in debt by it, setting up something like a mortgage investment corporation, i.e. government bank, that can deal specifically with this like a bank, but more accommodating to the smaller remote communities which banks really don't pay much attention to. Is that an option, or is that something that they could consider? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 418-15(5): Addressing Mortgage Issues In Small Communities

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, we did have a look at that a few years ago where we looked at how do we provide better banking services in small communities. As a last resort, that may be something that either this government or a future government would want to look at. But at the time that the review was done, I think it was about five years ago, the recommendation was that we not get ourselves in the banking business, but rather we work with the existing banks and facilitate ways for people to be able to use those services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 419-15(5): Need For A Collaborative Provincial/Territorial Water Strategy

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask my questions in follow-up to my Member's statement to Minister of ENR. What I was trying to say in my long-winded Member's statement was how much water we have all around us. As a young girl, I always took it for granted that the health of our water will be protected and that would be one of the last things that we would ever have to worry about. But as we learned, as time progresses and the climate change is affecting us, and the fact that water travels through many jurisdictions and the fact that we're living in the downstream area of the largest resource powerhouse development project south of us, it is really time for us to act. I also believe in balance between resource development projects and climate change. I mean environmental protection. We need both of them. The one thing I think we need to do, and I think that's the main reason for highlighting this issue, is that we really need to get together and have a united front and a collective plan about how we go about doing this and how we work together. I don't think we've done that territorially. I'd like to, at least, we need to do it territorially, nationally...We need to call on our neighbours south of us. I'd like to ask the Minister if he would be willing to look at bringing all the leaders together of our territories to have a discussion in a format like a water summit so that we can have a plan of action as to what to do? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister responsible for Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. McLeod.

Return To Question 419-15(5): Need For A Collaborative Provincial/Territorial Water Strategy

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the honourable Member raises a good point. In the last while we've had a number of issues regarding environment and natural resources that have come to the forefront and the issue of water has certainly escalated in the last year or so. At this point we don't have it in our budget to have a summit, but we'll certainly consider it. I think we've experienced some good results as we've moved on some of the other issues where we've had some workshops and other summits, so I certainly will follow up and look at the issue and see what we can accommodate. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 419-15(5): Need For A Collaborative Provincial/Territorial Water Strategy

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given the size of the resource development projects happening not just in the South but in our territories as well, and the amount of money and resources that have been put toward getting those done, it's really actually, we should bow down our collective heads and think about how come we have not spent as much resource or anywhere near resource and time looking at the health of water. So I'd like to ask the Minister if he could make a specific commitment to do his departmental planning as to what sort of resources are needed in terms of scientists or water workers or water specialists and how to bring the leaders together. Can you come up with at least a departmental plan as to what to do to go about putting some action into place within the next number months? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 419-15(5): Need For A Collaborative Provincial/Territorial Water Strategy

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our department, ENR, has been very focused on trying to get some movement in the area of these transboundary agreements. I think we've moved, we've made some significant progress. We certainly have to get the information out to the different people in the North, the community members, aboriginal organizations and governments, including our own government. I certainly will commit to taking a look and see what resources are available, what other resources we can attract, and I think we have a number of options since it's the International Polar Year and we also have our vital physical studies that we may be able to tap into. But I think there are a number of options out there. We'll do an inventory internally and see if there are other pots of money that we can dip into to hold a summit. I'm not sure we can put it all together given our relatively short time left in our government, but I certainly will commit to trying to do that. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 419-15(5): Need For A Collaborative Provincial/Territorial Water Strategy

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, the water summit is just one part of this. There are going to be a lot more resources and attention that will need to be paid to this issue and it is so overwhelming right now because there are so many different aspects to that. I'd like to know -- and maybe that Minister may not be able to do that within the resources he has -- so could I ask the Minister to put his thinking cap on, now that that's the kind of thing that ENR is supposed to be doing, and could he come up with some concrete plan? Water summit is just one of them, but what do we have to look at in terms of jurisdiction, other partners we need, the leadership we need, collective strategy, united front? What do we need to do to make sure that we are prepared to respond to the resource development needs and environmental protection? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 419-15(5): Need For A Collaborative Provincial/Territorial Water Strategy

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Chair. We certainly take that as recommendation and...Oh, sorry, Mr. Speaker.

---Laughter

Mr. Speaker, certainly we take that as a recommendation. We have the Department of Environment Canada and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada that have responsibility in this area. We will have discussions with them. We've had good history with our workshops and our summits in other areas. So certainly we'll pursue this issue. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 419-15(5): Need For A Collaborative Provincial/Territorial Water Strategy

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could I get him to come up with a plan in writing, at least from a departmental point of view, on what needs to be done and presented to one of the committees for review within the life of this Assembly? I guess it's by June. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 419-15(5): Need For A Collaborative Provincial/Territorial Water Strategy

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We'll certainly do our best to try to accommodate that.

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

Question 420-15(5): Caribou Outfitters Court Challenge

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources. In an effort to observe the rules regarding sub judice in this House and observe those as a Member, I'd like to ask the Member if he could share with Members of this House what the nature of the court action is with the outfitters and the Department of ENR? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister responsible for Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. McLeod.

Return To Question 420-15(5): Caribou Outfitters Court Challenge

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, as of last Friday afternoon, an application was filed for judicial review in the Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories regarding the Government of the Northwest Territories reduction on big game hunting tags for barren-ground caribou for 2007, and since the application for judicial review has been filed, it would be inappropriate for me to comment on these issues at this time.

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

Question 421-15(5): Expanding Access To Hydroelectric Power To South Slave Communities

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, since we're talking about reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and what our government can do to lead by example and show that we are serious about this, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask this government -- and I'm not sure which Minister; maybe the Premier would like to answer this -- how the government would feel about servicing more communities with the Taltson hydro right now when Pine Point shut down the transmission line was built to Hay River, which took Hay River off of diesel, which put us onto hydro. We just use backup for diesel now. Now there are three communities on the way to Fort Providence. There's Kakisa, Dory Point, Fort Providence, all on diesel power at this time. With the investment of some capital we could realize those communities shutting down those diesel operations, keeping them for backup only, and going onto the Taltson hydro. This would require some capital money from this government. We're encouraging diamond mines to go from diesel to accepting the fact that hydro is a more viable way and it would be a great way for the Government of the Northwest Territories to contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. I would like to get the government's response to that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 421-15(5): Expanding Access To Hydroelectric Power To South Slave Communities

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have an energy plan which will be made available next week, and within that there is a hydro strategy. Generally, Mr. Speaker, we're in favour of it. Again, it has to be reasonably economical. If the costs are too high, then sometimes it just doesn't pay to do it. But if there's power available and if it's economically competitive, then it's something that this government is in favour of. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 421-15(5): Expanding Access To Hydroelectric Power To South Slave Communities

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, I understand that the cost of such a transmission line would require about \$10 million in capital and that would be too much for those consumers, for those power plants that are now diesel, to absorb. But industry could come forward with a cost sharing on the capital costs. So at a cost of about \$5 million to this government we could significantly reduce the consumption of diesel and the greenhouse gas emissions to service these communities. How would a proponent go about making such a submission application to this government for \$5 million in capital and how would that be received? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 421-15(5): Expanding Access To Hydroelectric Power To South Slave Communities

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, the proposal like that would be received openly. We, first of all, want to make sure that we have a supply of power. So assuming we proceed with the expansion of the Taltson as a joint venture with other partners and there is enough power there, then we'd be open to do it. Mr. Speaker, of course, depending on the costs and how much our government is willing to put in and how much we might get through the federal government, this could be very feasible and would certainly be a way of getting cleaner energy to those communities, Mr. Speaker. So we'd be very interested in looking at it and doing things creatively as we are with Fort Smith, where we're piloting some electrical heat projects. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 421-15(5): Expanding Access To Hydroelectric Power To South Slave Communities

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think that this is a project that could very easily become a reality and, in order to determine what the benefits would be, I would like to suggest that we would be saving over a million litres of fuel per year and it would also reduce the government's requirement to the territorial support program for these communities. So there are a number of factors that would need to be taken into account. I'd like to ask the Premier if he would commit to at least the cost of a cost-benefit analysis of a review that would show all the potential savings versus the costs vis-à-vis the \$5 million capital that we'd require? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 421-15(5): Expanding Access To Hydroelectric Power To South Slave Communities

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, if we have a proposal we would review it and if there is some money to do a preliminary review, then I'd certainly commit to doing that without, and then know whether we have to go into a full-blown detailed review. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 421-15(5): Expanding Access To Hydroelectric Power To South Slave Communities

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Premier made reference to the potential of some federal support for this. Is the Premier aware of any program currently available through the federal government that could also add support to what this government might be able to do to realize a conversion from diesel generators to hydroelectricity? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 421-15(5): Expanding Access To Hydroelectric Power To South Slave Communities

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, we haven't got all of the detail yet on the eco energy trust. I think that's a program that's aimed at reducing greenhouse gases, finding cleaner fuels. That program is, I think, just one example of a fund that could be tapped into for this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 422-15(5): Incorporating Traditional Knowledge Into Water Management Policies

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of ENR, Mr. McLeod, in terms of the water, again, and climate change issues on the whole. I want to ask the Minister what his department is doing to prepare where you'll have traditional knowledge also with scientific knowledge validate, complement each other to put forward some strong statements by this government in terms of some of these big issues that are facing us today. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister responsible for Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. McLeod.

Return To Question 422-15(5): Incorporating Traditional Knowledge Into Water Management Policies

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we're working with the Government of Canada and also the Government of Alberta to find ways to ensure that the people of the Northwest Territories know about upstream development, and also to learn more about the aquatic environment. There has been a number of conferences that have been held, one in the Deh Cho and one called the Tlicho Water Gathering. We've also had discussions in a workshop that was hosted by Ecology North and Dene Nation. We played, as department, a supporting role providing some technical expertise. Mr. Speaker, we want to continue down that line of providing information, and as we move forward with our bilateral agreement with Alberta we will be also working on a communication plan that will share the information with the people of the North. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 422-15(5): Incorporating Traditional Knowledge Into Water Management Policies

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Great Slave Lake is a big lake in terms of the users and the people that depend on Great Slave Lake, just as Great Bear Lake is the seventh largest lake of freshwater in North America. I want to ask the Minister in terms of his working with his department in terms of providing some support to people around Great Bear Lake area, people around the Sahtu in terms of the issues of water, in terms

of the traditional knowledge. I want him to really know what Paul Wright did say, what did Chief George Kodakin did say when they said in the future you're going to have some issues with water. What did they mean by that? Do we have enough information from our elders in that region as around Great Slave area also? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 422-15(5): Incorporating Traditional Knowledge Into Water Management Policies

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources will certainly have to continue to advocate for sound water management and we need to have all our information from the technical side, from our scientists, from our biologists, from the residents in the Northwest Territories, as we move forward. That includes the aboriginal people, Mr. Speaker, especially the elders in the communities, and, as with other initiatives, we will commit that we will have discussions with the elders also. Thank you.

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

Question 423-15(5): Fostering School Success Rates

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On February 22nd of this year I spoke about the need for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment to find new ways to encourage our youth to graduate, because their graduation rates are only at 50 percent. I'd like point out two things, Mr. Speaker: Nothing is being done about the truancy; and, why are we treating 50 percent as a standard, Mr. Speaker? My question to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment is what is he doing to encourage young people to attend school, and what manners is he developing to encourage them to stay in school such as Ontario has by looking at taking their drivers' licence away if they do not graduate? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 423-15(5): Fostering School Success Rates

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we need to be careful that we don't miss an opportunity to celebrate the fact that our graduation rate has nearly doubled to the point it has gotten to 50 percent. It's important to remember that the Canadian graduation rate was about 25 percent in the 1960s. It's now, across Canada, just under 70 percent. To make that kind of change over the period of time that's happened, 40, 50 years, and then compare it to how we've doubled our graduation rate in the space of 10 or 12 years, it's pretty amazing what we've done here in the North.

While I would agree with the Member that 50 percent is not good enough, what we are doing to ensure that we get a better graduation rate is ensuring that our programs are much improved in the smaller communities, because that's where the challenge is.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

HON. CHARLES DENT: It's in the smaller communities where we're not seeing the graduations at the highest rate. So through grade extensions and by ensuring that when we bring in new initiatives like we have in this year's budget, they are targeted to smaller communities. We are going out of our way to improve the offering where it counts the most. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 423-15(5): Fostering School Success Rates

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, doing half the job is nothing to be proud of, so...

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Ohhh!

MR. HAWKINS: As I said two weeks ago, this should be considered a children's crisis, Mr. Speaker. It should be a call to arms to find out any way we can to ensure that these kids are in school and graduating, because kids that do not graduate, their future does not look very bright, Mr. Speaker. When we talk about the Mackenzie Valley gas pipeline, you know, they talk about, well, we'll only hire kids with high school. Well, holy smokers! You've just said a lot of these kids out there, in the communities who this is supposed to benefit, can't get jobs. Mr. Speaker, what is the Education Minister doing, like Ontario, to encourage these kids to stay in school?

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

Further Return To Question 423-15(5): Fostering School Success Rates

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're offering better programs. We're working to ensure that we have an adequate number of teachers. We're reducing the pupil-teacher ratio. We're putting money into physical education, into trades. We've increased funding dramatically for students with special needs

AN HON. MEMBER: Yeah!

HON. CHARLES DENT: All of these are aimed to ensure that northern students have the best opportunity to graduate. Mr. Speaker, we have a combination of carrots and sticks and what we have found in education is that the carrot works best. The Member may say that we've only achieved a 50 percent graduation rate, but we've doubled the graduation rate in 10 or 12 years, and that's happened nowhere else in the world. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The time for oral questions has expired; however, I will allow the Member a supplementary question. Mr. Hawkins.

Supplementary To Question 423-15(5): Fostering School Success Rates

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, the Minister has a lot to be proud of because I'll tell you, if you only have 25 percent and you've now doubled; yes, that's a 50 percent achievement, Mr. Speaker. But the fact is...

---Interjection

MR. HAWKINS: We're up to 50 percent, sorry, of our graduating students. That's what I meant. Mr. Speaker, the fact is, those better programs, as the Minister has just pointed out, are only going to half the students. So we put all these millions of dollars into half the students, Mr. Speaker. So the fact is, he talks about the carrot, but we don't do anything about truancy. You know, shame on you only works so far, Mr. Speaker. It doesn't work too good on a 16, 17 or 18 year old, Mr. Speaker. The Minister...

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

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, the Minister now needs to find the stick approach. Is he going to work with the Department of Transportation to say, hey, if you don't graduate, you have to lose your licence? Is he going to consider options? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 423-15(5): Fostering School Success Rates

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, back in the early '90s, the participation rate in high school was less than 40 percent. We're now very close to 80 percent. So we've got the young people in school. It does take a while for the graduation rate to catch up to the participation rate, but, Mr. Speaker, we've demonstrated that we're on the right track. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 423-15(5): Fostering School Success Rates

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We continue to celebrate our failures in the past by calling them now successes. Because we had a 25 percent graduation years ago and now we have a 50 percent...

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

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, is the Minister developing a stronger approach to get these kids in, because they need graduation diplomas in order to get a future job? Mr. Speaker, what is he doing to get these kids into school? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 423-15(5): Fostering School Success Rates

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think we've answered that question. We are, in particular in the smallest communities. That's where we're concentrating our efforts because that's where we need to increase the graduation rate the most. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Written questions. Returns to written questions. Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 8: RETURNS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS**Return To Written Question 40-15(5): Learning Centres In The Tlicho Region**

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Lafferty on February 8, 2007, to the Honourable Charles Dent, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, regarding learning centres in the Tlicho region.

1. Since its inception, how many ABE students have attended the Aurora College program in Behchoko?

From September 1989 to February 2007, there have been 48 full-time students and 160 part-time students in the Adult Literacy and Basic Education -- ALBE -- program.

2. How many of these students have completed their program? How many have received certification? At what level are these certifications?

ALBE upgrading is an ongoing process. After academic assessment is completed, students are enrolled in ALBE and set up with individual education plans. Since upgrading is not a certification course, students do not "complete a program." Rather, they complete levels. All 48 full-time and 160 part-time students have been set up with individual education plans.

3. What programs besides ALBE have been offered to help those students currently in the workforce or who are wishing to upgrade their skills to enter the workforce?

In 2006, the Community Education Preparation Program -- CEPP -- and Teacher Education Program -- TEP -- Access were first offered at the Monfwi Community Learning Centre in Behchoko. The students registered in these two programs do not have a background in teaching. The purpose of these programs is to increase the number of aboriginal teachers. By offering these courses in Behchoko, we hope to increase the number of teachers who will remain in the Tlicho region to work.

Other programs that have been offered to assist students to enter the workforce were: Camp Services; Business English I; Office Procedures I; Business English II; Office Procedures II, in 2003-2004; Camp Cook; Introduction to Computers; Proposal Writing; Dogrib Language 140 and 150, in 2004-2005; and Introduction to Food Preparation; Driver Education; Airbrakes; Standard First Aid, in 2005-2006.

4. The college has cited attendance being a challenge with this program. What was the average rate of attendance for this program on a yearly basis?

In the communities, Aurora College has a better attendance rate with programming that is shorter in duration and where certification is received. Examples include the Standard First Aid and Driver Education Class 7 programs.

ALBE has an ongoing intake and is based on individual education plans. The average attendance rate per program is not available because student attendance is recorded course by course, at the community level. This information is not entered into the student record system that is part of Aurora College's database. Students typically attend programs on a part-time basis.

5. What was the average rate of attendance per program for September to December 2006?

The average attendance rate per program is not available because student attendance is recorded course by course, at the community level. This information is not entered into the student record system that is part of Aurora College's database. Students typically attend programs on a part-time basis.

6. Has the Department of Education or Aurora College investigated why attendance has been a problem in this program? Have they met with community leaders to develop an action plan? When and how many meetings? If not, why not?

Although attendance isn't tracked -- see number 5 above -- the college has heard from instructors that it tends to be lower than expected. In following up on this, the department and Aurora College have queried instructors in other centres and have found that there appears to be a similar trend in lower-level ALBE program attendance across the NWT. While we don't have all the reasons yet, students in lower-level ALBE courses may not have the financial resources to attend on a full-time basis and may have other challenges that keep them from attending courses. As a result, the department and the college have been reviewing and updating the curriculum.

Aurora College conducted exit surveys with all students upon their withdrawal from the program. A review of the reports from Behchoko indicates that the primary reasons for withdrawal includes:

- finding employment;
- lack of student funding;
- difficulty in finding day care or childcare;
- student transferred into other training programs on offer; and
- personal reasons.

In Behchoko in particular, department and college officials have met with community leaders several times over the past few years to discuss programming options.

In 2003-2004, the CLC in Behchoko held a series of lunchtime meetings to discuss the challenges related to ALBE and to explore program offerings. Community agencies and band council members were invited to meet with Aurora College staff, including the campus director and the chairperson of community programs.

In February 2004, a meeting was held to discuss Tlicho community needs. In attendance at the meeting were the Yellowknife campus director, the Aurora College board member for the North Slave, the chairperson of community programs, and two representatives from the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. The meeting identified as a priority the need to prepare students for further education and specifically for the TEP. As a result, the CEPP was developed.

In addition to the partnership in program delivery, Aurora College has entered into an agreement with the Tlicho Training Committee to assess the academic education levels of Tlicho Government employees and to help

develop individual education plans for these employees, thereby allowing them to work towards attaining certified education and training. It is anticipated that ALBE programming will play a major part in the assessment process and development of individual educational plans.

7. What changes has the college made to improve the level of programming in Behchoko?

CLCs are funded to deliver ALBE programming. In the North Slave communities, Aurora College works with the Tlicho Government; the Government of the Northwest Territories; employing agencies, both in and out of the communities; and community residents to offer relevant training programs.

Aurora College has been using labour market funding to deliver skill-based courses in addition to ALBE as a means to bring more ALBE students into the CLC. Examples of such courses include: Camp Services; Business English I; Office Procedures I; Business English II; Office Procedures II, in 2003-2004; Camp Cook; Introduction to Computers; Proposal Writing; Dogrib Language 140 and 150, in 2004-2005; and Introduction to Food Preparation; Driver Education; Airbrakes; and Standard First Aid, in 2005-2006.

The college has also made significant changes to improve the programming delivered in Behchoko. In response to community requests for such programming, the college has developed and delivered the CEPP that is now in its second phase. The TEP Access Program is being offered from September 2006 onwards. In addition, the college is committed to deliver year one of the CEPP in Behchoko in fall 2007-2008.

Securing classroom space is an issue in Behchoko. Prior to the fall of 2006, the adult educator provided ALBE instruction in the smaller of the two Monfwi CLC classrooms, while CEPP was delivered in the larger classroom. However, when space for delivery of the TEP Access Program could not be found in the community, CEPP took over the second classroom and the adult educator was, therefore, required to use her office to offer ALBE instruction on a one-on-one basis. This is a temporary solution to the lack of available classroom space. The college is working closely with the Tlicho Community Services Agency to locate additional space for fall 2007-2008.

8. Will the department conduct a review of the current Aurora College programming in Behchoko including courses being offered, evaluation of instructors, relevancy of the programming, et cetera?

Aurora College carries out internal reviews of its instructors, courses and relevancy of programming on an annual basis. Instructors are evaluated annually according to the GNWT's performance appraisal process and related policy.

Program reporting that includes reference to course offerings in each CLC is undertaken on an annual basis and reviewed by the chairpersons of Developmental Studies and Community Program, respectively. Program reviews are completed annually in consultation with the Tlicho Education and Training Committee.

As a follow-up to the February 2004 meeting on Tlicho community needs, the college shared its findings with the

community and set programming priorities in accordance with outcomes identified at a follow-up meeting in April 2004. As well, Aurora College has focussed its programming on the delivery of the CEPP, TEP Access Program and Aboriginal Language and Cultural Instructor Program. In regard to academic upgrading, the college has secured additional funding to provide the requested skills-based courses. Aurora College is committed to its partnership with the Tlicho Education and Training Committee to ensure future programming will continue to meet community needs.

Return To Written Question 41-15(5): Caribou Population Estimates

I have a Return To Written Question 41-15(5), asked by Mr. Ramsay to the Honourable Michael McLeod, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, on February 9, 2007, regarding caribou population estimates.

As of last Friday afternoon, Caribou Pass Outfitters Limited, Qaivvik Limited and Bathurst Inlet Developments (1984) Limited filed an application for judicial review in the Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories regarding the Government of the Northwest Territories' reduction of big game hunting tags for barren-ground caribou for 2007. Since an application for a judicial review has been filed, it would be inappropriate to comment on these issues at this time.

Return To Written Question 42-15(5): Caribou Management Actions

Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Written Question 42-15, asked by Mr. Braden on February 12, 2007, to the Honourable Michael McLeod, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, regarding caribou management actions.

As of last Friday afternoon, Caribou Pass Outfitters Limited, Qaivvik Limited and Bathurst Inlet Developments (1984) Limited filed an application for judicial review in the Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories regarding the Government of the Northwest Territories' reduction of big game hunting tags for barren-ground caribou for 2007. Since an application for a judicial review has been filed, it would be inappropriate to comment on these issues at this time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. 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 responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board, Mr. Krutko.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 104-15(5): WCB Comprehensive Response To Committee Report 5-15(5)

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled Workers' Compensation Board Comprehensive Response. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Tabled Document 105-15(5): Alberta Finance, Superintendent Of Pensions - Policy Bulletin No. 34, 50 Percent Unlocking

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A couple weeks ago I had a Member's statement about unlocking some of your RRSPs. I have some information from the Government of Alberta regarding a policy to yet again unlock 50 percent of your RRSPs. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Before we go to the next item on the Order Paper, the Chair is going to call for a short break.

---SHORT RECESS

MR. SPEAKER: We will return to orders of the day. Item 14, notices of motion. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

ITEM 14: NOTICES OF MOTION

Motion 19-15(5): Climate Change

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Friday, March 9, 2007, I will move the following motion: now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for the Sahtu, that this Legislative Assembly strongly recommends the government, in all its decisions and actions as a participant on environmental regulatory bodies, advocate for:

- the precautionary principle;
- the polluter pay principle; and
- the completion and implementation of comprehensive watershed management and land use plans as soon as possible in order to safeguard water sources and maintain ecosystem integrity across the basin;

and furthermore that this Legislative Assembly strongly recommends the government:

- set targets to reduce its own greenhouse gas emissions;
- develop incentives to encourage residents to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions;
- encourage all other sectors to develop their own emission management plans and targets; and
- work with the Government of Canada to develop means of encouraging the resource development industry to minimize its greenhouse gas emissions;

and furthermore that this Legislative Assembly strongly recommends the government develop a comprehensive plan to raise awareness and address the expected impacts of climate change on the land and water, wildlife, public safety, transportation, and public infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time, I will be seeking unanimous consent to deal with this motion today.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Notices of motion. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

Motion 20-15(5): Right To Water

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Friday, March 9, 2007, I will move the following motion: now therefore I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, that this Legislative Assembly recognizes that all peoples have a fundamental human right to water that must be recognized nationally and internationally, including the development of appropriate institutional mechanisms to ensure that these rights are implemented; and further that this Legislative Assembly recognizes that this right includes access to water bodies for purposes of harvesting, travel and navigation, and mechanisms to prevent or seek redress for any action that may affect these rights; and furthermore that this Legislative Assembly recognizes that this right must take precedence over the use of water for industrial and commercial purposes; and furthermore that this Legislative Assembly endorses the application of the precautionary approach in all management decisions or actions that may affect the quality, quantity or natural rate of flow of water within the basin; and furthermore that this Legislative Assembly urges all parties to complete and implement comprehensive watershed management and land use plans as soon as possible in order to safeguard water sources and maintain ecosystem integrity across the basin.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time, I will be seeking unanimous consent to deal with this motion today.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Notices of motion. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Motion 21-15(5): Referral Of WCB Response To CR 5-15(5) To Committee Of The Whole

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Friday, March 9, 2007, I will move the following motion: now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Sahtu, that Tabled Document 104-15(5), Workers' Compensation Board Comprehensive Response to Committee Report 5-15(5), be moved into Committee of the Whole for discussion.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time, I will be seeking unanimous consent to deal with this motion today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Notices of motion. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Motion 22-15(5): Setting Of Sitting Hours By Speaker

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Friday, March 9, 2007, I will move the following motion: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Frame Lake, that the Speaker be authorized to set such sitting days and hours as the Speaker, after consultation, deems fit to assist with the business before the House.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time, I will seek unanimous consent to deal with this motion today.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Notices of motion. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. Motions. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to deal with the motion I gave notice of earlier today.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to deal with the motion he gave notice of earlier today. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You may proceed with your motion, Mr. Ramsay.

ITEM 16: MOTIONS

Motion 19-15(5): Climate Change, Carried

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS the impacts of climate change can be seen in:

- receding shorelines and lower water levels;
- depleted populations of fish and wildlife;
- increasing numbers of invasive species;
- warmer winter temperatures, less predictable ice conditions and shorter winter road seasons;
- thawing of permafrost;
- higher sea levels and melting sea ice;
- increased forest fires and insect infestations;
- less predictable weather patterns; and
- shifting vegetation zones;

AND WHEREAS a petition claiming that the United States is violating the human rights of Inuit by refusing to sign any international treaties to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions is currently before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights;

AND WHEREAS the NWT's 2001 greenhouse gas emissions amounted to 1750 kilotonnes, of which

- 52 percent came from industry;
- 18 percent from the transportation sector;
- 7 percent each from the commercial and industrial electricity sectors;
- 5 percent from residences;
- 4 percent from community electricity; and
- 3 percent from government;

AND WHEREAS the Yukon government, in July 2006, released a Climate Change Strategy that includes:

- broad goals targeted at enhancing the awareness and understanding of climate change impacts;
- taking measures to reduce the levels of greenhouse gas emissions in the Yukon;
- building environmental, social and economic systems that are able to adapt to climate change impacts; and

- positioning the Yukon as a northern leader for applied climate change research and innovation;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Sahtu, that this Legislative Assembly strongly recommends the government, in all its decisions and actions as a participant on environmental regulatory bodies, advocate for:

- the precautionary principle;
- the polluter pay principle; and
- the completion and implementation of comprehensive watershed management and land use plans as soon as possible in order to safeguard water sources and maintain ecosystem integrity across the basin;

AND FURTHERMORE that this Legislative Assembly strongly recommends the government:

- set targets to reduce its own greenhouse gas emissions;
- develop incentives to encourage residents to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions;
- encourage all other sectors to develop their own emission management plans and targets; and
- work with the Government of Canada to develop means of encouraging the resource development industry to minimize its greenhouse gas emissions;

AND FURTHERMORE that this Legislative Assembly strongly recommends the government develop a comprehensive plan to raise awareness and address the expected impacts of climate change on the land and water, wildlife, public safety, transportation, and public infrastructure.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased to have the opportunity to move this motion on climate change that we see before us here today. I think it's imperative that the government is shown to be a leader in developing changes for climate change, necessary measures to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and we should start by looking at our own operations. I know that the government has done some work in this regard, but this motion speaks to that.

I would like to commend the government on its actions with the pellet boiler that was installed at North Slave Correctional Centre last year. It is measures like this that we can be seen to lead by example. We need to look at alternative power sources and do whatever we can to ensure that we are looking at wind, hydro development and also bio fuels. We need to have a more proactive approach to development of these resources, Mr. Speaker.

We also can't second guess any opportunity to partner with industry to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, both in our communities, in our own operations, and around the territory. We have to do what we can, Mr.

Speaker, and we have to do our part. As a Member of the Legislative Assembly, we are trying to set that example, we are trying to lead by example and we also have to pave a path for the future for other generations that are going to come. We need to all be on the same page.

I know in my Member's statement earlier today, I talked of how things are changing here in the Northwest Territories. Winters aren't what they used to be, animals are coming here that never used to live in the territory and things are changing. We have to pay attention to that. We also need to find more resources to ensure that our wildlife can be counted properly, ensure that it can be looked after as a resource the way it should be. It's going to take money and it's going to take time and effort, Mr. Speaker.

This motion is a step in the right direction. I would like to thank my colleagues who spent a great deal of time and effort developing this, especially my colleague Mr. Miltenberger. Again, I look forward to the rest of my colleagues standing up and supporting this motion. Mahsi.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, also I would like to convey my strong support for this motion in terms of what the GNWT can do to help with this issue that has some global interest, some global speakers such as Al Gore.

Mr. Speaker, again, I recall a time when some elders spoke in my region and the elders talked about how they have seen changes in our lifetime in terms of the land, the way we live, how we read the weather, how we use the water, the type of animals that we see and the types of things that come about. Mr. Speaker, through no fault of any, we are living in a changing society and changing lifestyle. Even the elders are saying that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this motion speaks to how the GNWT can do its part in terms of managing the greenhouse gas emissions. Again, the elders have talked about the things we need to do, how we are to be responsible for our lives here. The elders talked about how we say everything is in relation to us. In some of our prayers, we say all our relations. I asked the elders, what is it they mean by all our relations? They have talked about that we have a relationship with the land, with the people. We have a relationship with the water, the air and the sun, things that grow on this land that we have, especially a relationship to them and that we owe it to them as people. So when we have prayers and we give thanks to the animals and give thanks to the water that we drink or the air that we breathe and things that help us survive as a nation of people and all northern people. In our prayers, we say all our relationships, because we have relationships that are given to us through our own ceremonies and our own private rituals. They always tell us to respect and honour. Sometimes we forget these things. Some things that we forget, we don't think it's going to be a problem because we don't think it's that great. It's only by observation and noticing different things on the land and paying real close attention to the elders that they take notice and we have to speak on their behalf because they are asking us to support them.

Climate change is going to affect the land and the water. It will make life harder for our people and the animals. We

are going to be under a lot of pressure the next couple of years, Mr. Speaker, in terms of how we deal with this issue. This motion talks about the management of land and water and putting it right and getting it right by the people of the Northwest Territories. I am really concerned because of the recent development again by the government and the tar sands down in Alberta. There was little regard for us by our friends in Alberta, especially around Great Slave Lake. There are a lot of good people and this lake is really beneficial to a lot of people. We have to find a balance and I don't think we have a strong enough balance to find within this conditional agreement that is going to the Alberta tar sands project. I am scared because when we say enough is enough in terms of the quality and quantity of our water, I think sometimes we might be a little late on this issue here.

Mr. Speaker, this motion talks about the climate change and the warmer weather, the different types of snow we have this year and even the freezing up of different lakes that we have to be very careful. I would like to look at how this motion, more importantly how is the government going to help us deal with the issues in terms of forest fires, weather changes and how are they going to help us with some of our traditions along with our scientific knowledge and how we get things right for our people in the Northwest Territories. Will our children have a good life in the future once we are done here? Will they have a life they can depend on?

In closing, Mr. Speaker, we bought some bottled water and the bottled water was bottled in Chicago, California and the last bottle of water we bought was in B.C. We got to a point now where we are getting water from Chicago, California and B.C. I think it was in the newspaper saying the best water is tap water. Here in the Northwest Territories, it's mind boggling that when I was 10 or 12 years old in Tulita, they said we are going to buy bottled water in the future. At 10 or 12 years old, you go down to the Bear River, even the old dirty Mackenzie water makes really good coffee in the morning and great tea in the morning. I never ever thought that at this day and age in the Territories, we would buy bottled water in Chicago, California or B.C. Our tap water is really good. Yet are we not telling our people to drink tap water? We certainly encourage them to go to the stores and say it's okay to buy bottled water.

So climate change really means a lot. I really wanted to say that I hope this government does something with this motion in terms of helping our children. Thank you.

---Applause

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for the vast majority of Canadians and people of the world, the debate about whether climate change is happening is over. We are moving into the more constructive discussion of what do we do in the short term to anticipate and adapt to the changes that are coming in the longer term, mitigating how we do business and how we live to cut back on our emissions.

Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories, the North in general, has been identified as a barometer for climate change. The canary in the mineshaft is another characterization. We know that 77 percent of our

emissions now come from business, industry and commercial interests. We have an obligation to make sure that we do our share as citizens of the North, of Canada and of the world, to mitigate the impact we are having on the rising temperatures as a result of the greenhouse gas emissions.

At some point, there will be an Energy Strategy that will be put before this House that has been in the works for the last almost six years now and there we have to hope that we can speak aggressively on how we are going to do that.

Mr. Speaker, this forum is a forum where we pass laws and make public policy. The discussion in this House of late has been that we need better tools and to do a better job of how we balance resource development, environmental change and protection. This motion helps give us some direction as we look to the future and the setting of the public policy as to how we are going to move forward so we can have a healthy environment, healthy people, a sustainable economy and a sustainable society.

I would encourage all the Members to support this. I would like to thank everybody for their interest and I look forward to this motion being passed. Thank you.

---Applause

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, stand in support of the motion of the principle of this Assembly doing what we can and what we should and in fact reaching out to set the tone and show as much leadership as we can. Really, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of our children and the future generations of northerners, the decisions that we make today are more and more having such long-term impact that we really have to look at what we're doing through the eyes of the generations yet to come, and this is very much that kind of work, Mr. Speaker. There are so many, many aspects, as my colleagues have touched on and I know others will, but there are a couple of measures, you know, in terms of what can we do, what can this government do to make an impact on climate change, on greenhouse gas, which we are to some extent already engaged in, Mr. Speaker. The first one is the development of large-scale, or at least relevant to the Northwest Territories, Mr. Speaker, large-scale hydro as the alternative to diesel generation for electrical, for heating and for industrialization. Mr. Speaker, we are already well underway to expanding the Taltson hydro regime to the south of the lake to supplying diamond mines to the north, to potentially adding new sources of energy for heat, alternate sources of energy for heat in Fort Smith. Mr. Speaker, there's talk also of potentially another mine starting in that area. They also will need energy. So these things all come into play that make so much sense for us to engage in the Taltson project. We just this afternoon talked about the viability of the Great Bear project as a source of power for the proposed Mackenzie gas pipeline. All of these things, Mr. Speaker, are the things that will not only make good economic sense today, but will be the kind of legacy projects that I know our descendants will hopefully look back and thank us for doing what we're doing.

Mr. Speaker, I think another very, very accessible way that we have to make a big difference on greenhouse gas emissions from our communities is the capture of excess heat from the diesel, and in some communities the gas engines that make our electrical power. Mr. Speaker, when you burn a litre of diesel fuel to make electrical power, you're only getting about 35 to 40 percent efficiency. The rest of it largely goes up the stack in heat and gases in the environment and by tapping the cooling systems that these engines need and putting that heat in circulation in buildings and manufacturing facilities, water treatment plants, perhaps swimming pools -- swimming pools are kind of a popular thing around here these days - - we can save enormous amounts of fuel and, consequently, cost and, of course, the impact on the environment.

So those are two ready things, Mr. Speaker, that our governments are already engaged in. If anything, we should be more aggressive, more ready to take on the debt that we know we have to incur to get these things started. But, Mr. Speaker, we should be very confident and very secure in the knowledge that in the long run this is the right thing to do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. To the motion. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I also rise in full support of the climate change motion just for the various reasons that a lot of Members here have expressed. Also, because it is our most pressing domestic and global environmental challenge to date, I think, like my friend Mr. Miltenberger stated, that time for debate has long since gone and we have to deal with the actual climate change as it's occurring today. I have to commend this government with this greenhouse strategy that was just put together. I think it addresses a lot of the challenges here that we face in the North to address climate change.

Maybe to just put this into perspective from northerners, Mr. Speaker, our problems with greenhouse gas emissions and water treatment and everything are really pale in comparison to a lot of the countries in other parts of the world, and even in North America, with the challenges that they face with climate change and their sustainable water supply. So I think it really is a time for us to really sit back and think of how lucky we are that we actually do have some heads that are coming together and are actually putting together a plan that we can address this in a timely manner and we have resources at our disposal. I think half of the rest of the world would really want to be in our shoes in addressing this issue the way we do.

Just some quick notes on the global climate change now that we're facing today, they're not really that great because in some places like Inuvik I know earlier this year they really liked the warmer weather. So some people are really inviting the global changes and don't think it's such a bad thing, but on the flipside we really have to think of other places further down south that are drying up and the water is depleting and that's all due because of small rises in the global temperature. Pretty soon here, if we get all the balmy weather and the extended summer growing season, I'm sure we would welcome climate change. But it's that very point, Mr. Speaker, that we all have to take

note of the fact that because it is doing some people some good and some people not so good, that we have different challenges in front of us. I think we all have to embrace the fact that over the long term we're all going to suffer. That's why we're addressing it here today, because what we do here today is going to make changes 100 years from now, it's not going to make any difference tomorrow or next year.

I think the onus is pretty much on the GNWT and the Yukon territorial government, the Nunavut government to really champion a cause of this nature because we're comprised of 80 percent of the total circumpolar region, globally speaking. So we are really the barometer and the thermometer of the global change and we have to make sure that we always keep our eyes on that thermometer.

With that, again, I can't offer enough support for a motion like this and enough support for maybe our government and our people in this country to really embrace the fact that we do have resources and we have the know-how to work with global change and make it work for us.

With that I offer my full support of this motion and the other motions that are coming forward today. Thank you.

---Applause

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I also would like to speak in favour of the motion. I think that though we need to say that it is a call to action, it's not enough to be just a cliché that we're going to save the planet and do our part, we need to do something. We need some real activity on the part of this government, we need to lead by example, and, as I said in my Member's statement today, we're in a position to set policy and legislation. I've got to tell you, I drive around in a big gas-guzzling, exhaust-spewing vehicle, but if it was illegal to do so, I'd probably stop. I mean you can't spill a litre of oil on the ground, it's illegal. You can't smoke in public, it's illegal. But you can sure drive a vehicle that pumps the CO₂ out into the atmosphere. So I say we have an opportunity, as leaders, to set new standards.

In my lifetime, so many things have become politically incorrect and I think we should make it politically incorrect to be wasteful and to do things that are excessive and hard on our environment that we live in. I think it would be safe to say that the majority of people here, even in this room, and maybe across this country, are from the baby boomer generation, which will be remembered as the generation of excessive consumption of all things. Maybe as people in leadership now, we should be showing that we can have a different legacy by speaking out on this and doing something, as Mr. Yakeleya said, to improve the fortunes of future generations and to do concrete things to make a difference.

Alternate energy sources is a very important thing to invest money in up front. So I just ask today for this government to prove that there is a will to make a change and we need to do that in order to encourage other jurisdictions to do the same thing. Today when we were raising issues of climate change and preservation of our environment, I bet I heard 10 times from the other side of the House the Crown, the Crown, the Crown. So are we

in jurisdictional never land? Are we in like a twilight zone? We have no jurisdiction? Who has the jurisdiction to protect our environment here in the North if not us? So Ms. Lee said we should bow our collective heads today. I don't know exactly what that meant, but I think we should bow our collective heads and pray that somebody has jurisdictional authority and the Northwest Territories to stand up and be counted and say we need to protect our land and our water. Thank you.

---Applause

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to speak just briefly in support of this motion. I would like to thank the Members that are sponsoring and seconding the motion. I think it has the full support of the Members on this side. It's a very straightforward and well laid out motion, Mr. Speaker, and it has very specific recommendations in the end.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know, I guess the longer I'm in this business I think some people might think with all the problems and big picture items and small issues that you have to deal with, do you not ever get down about it, and I do not. I really believe in the possibility of leaders and possibility of politics to get things done. I think the climate change issue brings us fresh challenge and new challenge for one that we need to address and one that I think that we can get action on.

Mr. Speaker, as many Members have mentioned, we live in a very interesting place and interesting time. The NWT has unprecedented resource development potential, as well as a natural environment that's second to none. I think that we can be the leaders and we can show the way for the rest of the world on how we can balance resource development with environmental protection. I know it's bigger than probably what a small jurisdiction or small population that we have can address and we may feel like that sometimes, and we may feel like we don't have all the jurisdiction and power that we need, but I believe if we look hard enough and think hard enough, there's a lot we can do to be the leaders in this area. Reducing greenhouse gas is one of them, and making changes into little things is one of them, and making everybody who works and lives and creates jobs here and who have lived here forever, you know, we are all part of this and if we work together I believe we could find an action and make changes in this regard.

I think climate change overall is a global issue. I know it's a hot topic and I know sometimes it may seem overwhelming, but I really see this as a great challenge and great opportunity and, as the saying goes in the other side of the world, every crisis is an opportunity to do good work. I really believe in that in this regard and I look forward to seeing what this government could come up with in terms of the recommendations we're making here.

Another thing I want to add that I haven't heard mentioned here is that whatever we're doing on this strategy, we must involve all stakeholders and that must involve the industry sector as well. Today in the news, Mr. Speaker, the chairperson of Canadian Council of CEOs, Mr. Tom d'Aquino, spoke about the businesses getting involved in the climate change issue, and, of course, businesspeople

are always smart people and they like to always get in front of the issue rather than behind the issue and I think that's a good discussion to have. I know the resource industry sector in the NWT are not just the ones that may produce most greenhouse gas for the work that they do, but they are also impacted negatively by climate change and I'm sure they want to take a leadership role in how we address this. An important principle that we have to go with is the balance. We need resource development as well as protection of the environment. I think that if we put our collective heads together and sometimes we have to bow our collective heads together when we haven't done enough. In terms of protecting water and protecting environment, with all the discussions and focus and time and energy we have spent on developing resource projects, I think we could all agree that we have not gone far enough in coming up with principles and position on this side of the equation. Thanks to many Members in this House and what's being talked about outside of here, we're doing that and we're doing exactly what we have to do. I guess talking is not enough. We're looking for action and this motion is showing that. For that I'm happy to support this motion and I look forward to working with all the Members in this House and outside in making progress. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Member from Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

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

Mr. Speaker, I, too, have full support of this motion that's been brought forward. With the climate change, as Mr. Yakeleya indicated, our elders are watching us and how we proceed with this process. Also our elders are watching TV. Believe it or not, they're asking their grandchildren what's on the news, the climate change, international, the North, the communities. They're very curious because we've had a lot of changes lately with the winter road operation. There was a big question mark last year; for example, Gameti, we weren't sure if we were going to get a winter road, but gradually we did. This year we got a winter road way ahead of time. The weather is unpredictable. What's going to happen next year? So the elders are surely looking at us. They're probably watching us now waiting for us to make a decision on this. They're watching the government across from us to see what their approach would be on this particular issue, because it's a very important issue for the communities of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, with the greenhouse gas emission that was announced in 2001, the 52 percent came from industry. Mr. Speaker, there's been ongoing discussion with the industry representatives about potential hydro commitment from their perspective. So that's ongoing and we would like to see that further discussion with the industries as well. Also, the commercial industries, the pellet stove initiatives. We're also eyeing that. We've been questioning the department and the departments are fully aware that we want to go in that direction. Also, the 4 percent community electricity. You know, we talk about the pellet stove, the subsidy Mrs. Groenewegen brought up before, how can we subsidize the pellet stove, wood stove and so forth to cut down on the gas emission on the diesel or propane. So those are initiatives that we want

the government to pursue and we'd like those findings reported back to us as well.

There's also the Yukon government who is taking measures to reduce greenhouse emissions. There's been a report done on that. Let's do our part.

The diesel generations in the community. You know, the diesel generations in isolated communities, it's heavy in emissions, the fumes, the emissions drift off to on the lakes, on the land, on the snow. You know, we survive on water in the communities. That's our fresh intake for tea, coffee and regular drinking water. You know, Mr. Speaker, by golly, no one can have a BLT -- bannock, lard and tea -- without fresh water or snow. That's our tradition.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, we must involve the claimant groups, the claimant groups that we have signed off agreements with. We must respect their agreements, as well, and involve them in the decision-making process. Mahsi.

---Applause

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When you think about this problem, our climate and our environment has really changed in our lifetime. Now I'm not as old as many of the Members here...

---Laughter

MR. HAWKINS: ...but, Mr. Speaker, someday I hope to be that old. The fact is, I can tell you I'm only 35 and I've seen a lot of changes. I can remember being a young man who worked at The Bay cleaning up the front and back in the days when we had boardwalks instead of sidewalks. We'd clean up the front yard and in June and July, when there was no school, we'd move them around and stuff so we could clean up and there would be frost there and you could see that there was permafrost in the ground in July. I mean I can tell you right now, this doesn't happen any more. Things have changed in my lifetime. I've seen bugs in my yard that I've never seen before. I used to be a kid who'd collect critters and the things are not the same anymore. My office here at the Legislative Assembly, last summer I watched a magpie build a nest; I've never seen a magpie up until the last couple of years. Things have changed, Mr. Speaker. The vegetation is shifting and...It's our philosophy.

I think when people often say, you know, the sky is falling on this problem, it truly is. The world has changed. People accepted certain lifestyles and accepted that they didn't have any responsibility for the things they were doing. Again, I remember growing up and watching people burn their garbage and they didn't worry about tomorrow and now people are recycling it. It's all a bit of way we need to move forward and realize that sometimes we need to do good things before crisis gets here. Is this the signal we need before we get to a crisis? I certainly hope that we react before we're forced to, because who knows what we'll have to do.

I don't know if one of my honourable colleagues here had mentioned it, but we were reading a news clip not that long ago about Australia has reached a point where they

have to recycle water. I hope that never is the day here in Canada. I hope that is never the day here in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, this is no different than the little story about the starfish where the guy is picking up one and saving one and they say, well, geez, you can't save them all. But they're saying let's start saving some of them and do something. I think this motion speaks to the issue, which is we have to start doing something or nothing will get done. By the point that it becomes a crisis, as I talked about just earlier, it may be too late; we may be forced to make dramatic decisions. So what does it take? We are the action heroes of tomorrow, Mr. Speaker. We can bring forward the legislation and the plans and we can do something about these issues.

Mr. Speaker, if it takes the provinces and the territories to lead in order to catch the attention of the federal government, maybe that's what we need to do. Maybe we need to lead and maybe it's time that the federal government sees how important this issue is. I'm convinced that, yes, the precautionary principle is the right way to go because if we're wrong, our environment is a much healthier and safer place to be. As I said today in my Member's statement, I really think that industry needs to play a role. I mean industry and transportation, when you add their percentages up, they commit 70 percent of our greenhouse gas emissions. That's a phenomenal amount, Mr. Speaker, when you look at a household only contributes 5 percent, all our households in the Territories. Mr. Speaker, multinational corporation are afraid of one thing: our legislation. That's our one tool of getting their attention. You know, yes, there are great corporations out there that do their part and there are some fabulous ones that promote great commercials about how they take care of the environment, but the thing is it's up to us to make that decision and say, look, let's get some legislation in there and make sure if they're not doing it willingly on their own, they will.

Mr. Speaker, in closing here, science may be right on this that we're going into an area we don't want to and if we don't get on board to do something to protect our water, to protect our environment, who knows where we'll be? But then again, if it's just treated as a cycle and science just misunderstood the problem, what did we do? We cleaned up the environment a little more. I mean what's wrong with that?

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, I once read many years ago about Ben Franklin and he talked about...He said if we don't hang together, we'll certainly hang separately. So I think this is certainly our job and our point in time that we all hang in together because as a team we can do something. I think as a territory and as a government and as a Legislature, we need to take strides. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Because this motion is a recommendation for the government to take action, Cabinet will not be voting on the motion. Mr. Speaker, I want to assure all Members that, in our view, the issues, the challenges of climate change are real. That there isn't any alternative except to take actions to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels, particularly the more dirty fuels, the diesel and so on,

cleaner ways. Mr. Speaker, to reduce our greenhouse gases has to be an objective of all of us.

Mr. Speaker, I'm a young man, too...

---Laughter

...who has seen a lot over the years and I'm very proud that as a government we first put together a Greenhouse Gas Reduction Strategy in 1998, and then, over the years, have renewed it. That Greenhouse Gas Strategy will be tabled next week as part of our overall Energy Strategy.

Mr. Speaker, it is important that we take action on a lot of fronts. Mr. Speaker, the Energy Strategy that we'll be tabling next week will deal with recommendations and ideas for implementation that will range from advice to industry, to ourselves as government and, in fact, to individuals. Part of the Energy Strategy is the greenhouse strategy which will be updated.

Another part of that strategy will deal with hydro energy. We have a lot of hydro potential in the Northwest Territories and I hope to see that develop over the number of years. Mr. Speaker, we should soon have, if we haven't got it completed today, we will soon have the program description completed for the Taltson hydro, which will reduce the diesel fuel consumption at the mines by 125 million litres; a substantial difference.

Mr. Speaker, we have been working with the federal government, other governments, we will work closely with our colleagues in the Yukon and Northwest Territories on a Northern Strategy. We're also working with the federal government; we're working with industry. Mr. Speaker, in a lot of ways we have to look at a Northern Strategy on climate change, because we are the ones who are going to feel the impact of it first and also it will impact us in ways that are more extreme, probably, than we'll see in many other parts of the world, in the short term, at least. In the longer term we may see some parts of the world very much impacted as was shown in the Inconvenient Truth, the movie by Al Gore.

Mr. Speaker, there are practical ways that we can all take steps to reduce our energy consumption and I don't think any action taken is too small to be considered. Whether it's switching over from incandescent light bulbs to florescent light bulbs as some other jurisdictions, like Australia, has done and, I believe, New Brunswick is considering it, and I think we should be considering something like that. Mr. Speaker, I'd also say there are practical things we can do right in this House to show leadership and I challenge everybody to drive a smaller, more efficient vehicle than I do.

---Laughter

Mr. Speaker, we all have to take those little steps to make a difference. I support the need for us to take action, and our not voting today isn't because we don't agree with it in any way but simply because it is direction to government. However, this is probably the most serious issue we have to deal with and I trust that it's not just a passing fad across Canada or North America that people will talk about and then turn their attention to other things later on, but this is a real issue that we have to deal with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. To the motion. I'll go to the mover of the motion for some final remarks, Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank my colleagues again for their work on developing the motion that's before us today and the hard work that went into it over the past few weeks. I'd also like to thank the Premier for his comments in warming up to the motion.

Mr. Speaker, I think the main thing is that we do our part and we do what we can, but it's hard to do that when we don't have control, as some of my colleagues have mentioned on this side of the House. We continue to fight with Ottawa on resource revenue, a deal for northerners, a fair deal. How are we going to get the much needed capital infrastructure to get our projects off the ground, to get the hydro development that we need, to look at other alternative energy sources without a resource revenue deal? We also need to work at settling the two big outstanding claims with the Akaitcho and the Dehcho so we can move forward on devolution. We can get the jobs that are in Ottawa today in the Northwest Territories; we can really deal with our environment here on the ground in the Northwest Territories, not from some ivory tower in Ottawa, Mr. Speaker. Again, I want to thank my colleagues here. We have to work together. I know Mr. Lafferty spoke of working with aboriginal governments. We have to listen, as he mentioned, to the elders, the traditional knowledge that's out there, we must pay attention to this as we move forward with any plan. Again, I do want to thank Members and, Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to ask for a recorded vote on the motion. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question is being called. A request has been put in for a recorded vote. All those in favour please stand.

Recorded Vote

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Ramsay, Mr. Villeneuve, Mr. Lafferty, Mr. Miltenberger, Ms. Lee, Mr. Yakeleya, Mr. Braden, Mr. Hawkins, Mrs. Groenewegen.

MR. SPEAKER: All those opposed please stand. All those abstaining please stand.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Ohhh.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Menicoche; Mr. Krutko; Mr. Roland; Mr. Handley; Mr. Dent; Mr. McLeod, Deh Cho; Mr. Bell.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Results of the vote: nine for, zero against, seven abstaining. The motion is carried.

---Carried

---Applause

Motions. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to deal with the motion I gave notice of earlier today.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to deal with the motion he gave notice of earlier today. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You may deal with your motion, Mr. Miltenberger.

Motion 20-15(5): Right To Water, Carried

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS water is essential to life, and constitutes a fundamental human right;

AND WHEREAS this right includes access to water bodies for purposes of harvesting, travel and navigation, and mechanisms to prevent or seek redress for any action that may affect these rights;

AND WHEREAS this right extends to water as part of a healthy environment and recognizes spiritual and cultural values, taking into consideration the needs of the most disadvantaged and of future generations;

AND WHEREAS on September 7, 2006, in Fort Simpson, representatives of the peoples residing in the vast basin including Lake Athabasca, the Slave River, Great Slave Lake and the Mackenzie River issued the Keepers of the Water Declaration which asserts fundamental human rights with respect to water;

AND WHEREAS the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights adopted, on November 26, 2002, the General Comment on the Right to Water, which states that "Water is a limited natural resource and a public good fundamental for life and health. The human right to water is indispensable for leading a life in human dignity. It is a prerequisite for the realization of other human rights;"

AND WHEREAS climate change and the expansion of industrial activity are diminishing the quantity and quality of water in the Mackenzie Basin;

NOW THEREFORE I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, that this Legislative Assembly recognizes that all peoples have a fundamental human right to water that must be recognized nationally and internationally, including the development of appropriate institutional mechanisms to ensure that these rights are implemented;

AND FURTHER that this Legislative Assembly recognizes that this right includes access to water bodies for purposes of harvesting, travel and navigation, and mechanisms to prevent or seek redress for any action that may affect these rights;

AND FURTHERMORE that this Legislative Assembly recognizes that this right must take precedence over the use of water for industrial and commercial purposes;

AND FURTHERMORE that this Legislative Assembly endorses the application of the precautionary approach in all management decisions or actions that may affect the quality, quantity or natural rate of flow of water within the basin;

AND FURTHERMORE that this Legislative Assembly urges all parties to complete and implement comprehensive watershed management and land use plans as soon as possible in order to safeguard water sources and maintain ecosystem integrity across the basin.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, water is what sustains us and gives us life. Every one of our communities is situated on a body of water. People are drawn to water and there is a deep spiritual and mystical significance to water for most people, especially the aboriginal people. We know, across the world, that the water we take for granted is under tremendous stress. Mr. Speaker, the world itself comprises 70 percent water; however, 97 percent of that is salt water, 2 percent is tied up in the ice caps in the North and South Poles; that leaves 1 percent, and of that 1 percent that's left is fresh potable water around the world, and half is very badly polluted already, which leaves us half a percent that we talk about when we talk about fresh water.

Mr. Speaker, this is not just a feel good motion; this is a very fundamental statement of one of our core values. There is a debate going around the world about whether water is just a need or a fundamental right. We are asserting in this motion that it is a fundamental right for all people. If it is just a need it becomes a commodity, it becomes subject to export, privatization, it becomes subject to all these trade agreements we have and that, Mr. Speaker, is not what I think we want in the Northwest Territories. We want to state very clearly, on record, in this House where laws are made and public policy is decided, that one of our values is that water is a fundamental right. On the basis of that motion, as we did with the other motion, we are setting the stage for some very significant public policy discussion on where do we go with our natural resources in the coming years and how do we deal with the factors that are affecting us like climate change.

Mr. Speaker, it has been said the federal government has jurisdiction but I would submit that we have, as legislators, a political and moral obligation to act on this. We know we cannot count entirely on the federal government. They have legislation but they choose not to act on it in many, many cases. You can go across the country to areas where the federal government has jurisdiction and have not acted in the best interests of the people. Let me give you one example: Let's talk about the health indicators for aboriginal people across this country for which the federal government has direct fiduciary responsibility, as they go to the provinces and territories and tell us to straighten out our wait times, the health indicators for aboriginal people, especially on reserves, are the worst in the country. So let me state again, we have a moral and political obligation to act on this.

I'd like to thank my colleagues for their support on this motion and I understand that this is going to be a free vote

in the House and, if it is, I would encourage all the Members to find it in themselves to support this very fundamental motion that is a statement of one of our core basic principles as northerners. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. To the motion. The honourable Member or Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I also stand up and talk of my unconditional, full support of this motion and the fundamental right to water by all Canadians, all human beings.

Just getting to the water issue, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to the NWT and getting back to some of the...We could throw a lot of statistics out there to how much water we do get from the South. The Mackenzie River basin is one of the largest watershed basins in Canada, or it is the largest in Canada. It has a long history of supporting First Nations for many hundreds of years. At the Keepers of the Water Conference, the first of its kind that was held in Fort Simpson in 2006 by First Nations groups and organizations, they basically came up with a fundamental principle that water is a sacred gift and is an essential element that sustains and connects all life and is not a commodity bought or sold. I think that's all we need to know, Mr. Speaker. It's as simple as that. It just connects everything and it sustains everything and there is no argument about it.

I think where the argument lies is in the right to water and who has that fundamental right and who is going to regulate that right. The inter-jurisdictional boundaries, the agreements, have really no place when you are talking about something as fundamental as the right to clean and fresh water.

With that, we have to recognize what the indigenous people here have been telling us. They have already seen changes in the lands, the water levels and the flow rates, receding shorelines, depleting fish habitats and populations. They all share that common trait that they recognize it's due to the fact that we are not managing and not protecting our water in the basin. It's, most notably, due to oil and gas exploration and we know that. The demands for water and energy coincide with each other. There is a high demand for both. Unfortunately, you can't have both. You can have water or energy or use water to develop energy. I think here in the North, we are offering choices to the world that we can do both in one sustainable development model and use water as energy as opposed to depleting water to generate energy as what they are doing in the Athabasca region, Mr. Speaker.

I just wanted to make that point known and keep everybody aware that I hope gatherings or First Nations organizations and other world wildlife organizations that are geared towards conservation of water and water quality that it carries on and keeps moving forward just as many conferences as we see on oil and gas coming up every month, every week and everyday all over Canada. The importance of water here has to be right next to it on the priority list of this government and the federal government. I know it's on the First Nations priority list and always has been.

With that, I would just like to close by saying there is an open boat here today and I would be really disappointed and dismayed if I saw any Member here not fully endorse a motion as important as this one. With that, I hope we can all stand and really join hands on this one, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

---Applause

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am happy to stand and join hands together on this motion, Mr. Speaker. Seriously, this is a very important statement that we are making in this House and I believe a formal motion like this is not one to be taken lightly. It is a stand and a strong position that this Legislature is taking as a collective body and saying to the world what we believe in and what we stand for.

Mr. Speaker, I see this as a guiding principle that should give direction to the government in all that it does in future as it relates to protection and looking after the health of our water, Mr. Speaker.

I don't know why, but I think this topic is conjuring up a lot of memories for a lot of Members here because when we are looking at climate change or quality of water, we think about what our forefathers have told us, we remember what we went through when we were little in terms of climate change. I know I am not the oldest Member in this House and not the youngest Member in the House, but I lived in a part of the world where we didn't have running taps in the house. Part of my daily chore was to get water from places where we all had to go to get it. There are people around the world, especially women, whose job it is, whose main job it is everyday to travel for hours to collect water just for mere survival of her family. Water is such a precious resource.

When the Member of Thebacha said, in explaining this motion, that it's really important that we understand water as public good and there is a fundamental right attached to that, that we can't make a commodity out of something as important as that, it's an important principle that we are speaking to. I think we should spend all our time and thinking behind this to make sure we live up to the spirit and direction that comes out of this motion.

Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to mention that earlier today we had a theme day discussion on water. One of the things that keeps coming up is we need to have a collective think tank, collective position, collectively work together on how we go about living up to the principles of a motion like this. I think in all that we do, whether it be resource development projects or building projects, our energy policy, our power policy, everything that we do we need to make sure that we address our mind to the importance of protecting our water and understanding that the water is fundamental to life -- it's more essential than life itself -- and that we abide by the guiding principle that we present today. With that, I am happy to support this motion.

---Applause

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, I stand here 100 percent behind this motion, behind the intent, behind the spirit and, hopefully, the force of it.

An aspect of the world water management in North America, Mr. Speaker, is the way water has been commodified. It is now something that is very much in the realm of the world of commercialization. Mr. Speaker, at least one Member this afternoon has already talked about bottled water and how strange it is that we would forsake the fantastic water that we have in virtually all of our communities, Mr. Speaker, for something that comes out of a plastic receptacle.

Mr. Speaker, former Alberta Premier Peter Lougheed is one of the visionaries on this aspect of water management. He has foreseen the way, not just industrialization, but commercialization of water at the consumer level, at the household level, is very much part of what is happening with water these days. I don't know whether he can lay claim to it, but somebody out there has said that water is the world's next oil. That is very much the case.

In fact, the value that is put on it, people like Mr. Lougheed say is that water will become more valuable than oil. We can get along without a lot of things that oil provides. We can find substitutes for it, but, Mr. Speaker, there is no substitute at the end of the day for water.

It's interesting to look at the values. Today you can go just about anywhere here in Yellowknife. One survey that we took tells us that we can buy a litre of bottled water for \$1.29. But I can go to the gas pump out at the Co-op, Mr. Speaker, and I could buy a litre of gasoline for less, for \$1.09. What does that tell us about the value we are putting on water, at least in this rather weird and perverse way of being able to buy the stuff out of the bottle instead of trusting what we can get out of the tap, at least here in the Northwest Territories?

Mr. Speaker, 9 percent of the world's fresh water is in our jurisdiction. My colleague Ms. Lee has already asked about jurisdiction -- Mrs. Groenewegen -- and I talked about it in my Member's statement earlier today. The Minister, Mr. McLeod -- and I accept his candour -- wasn't really able to say where are the deciding or the defining lines and jurisdiction in the environment between us and DIAND. It's one of those murky questions that's out there. We had better get on that, Mr. Speaker. We had better get on that and figure that out really quickly if we are going to know where we can go and where we need to push the case. Mr. Speaker, 10 percent of the world's fresh water is here in the Northwest Territories. That's one out of every 10 litres here in the NWT. Yet our population base is so small that for every 150,000 people in the world, there is one of us. So if we look at it in that ratio, one to 10 versus one to 150,000, it gives me a sense of just how much responsibility we have as the stewards of this amazing resource to make sure that we do not just do our best but that we excel, we exceed, we go beyond what we just need to look after it for ourselves and then make sure we show that example for the world.

That also raises, Mr. Speaker, the spectre that if we have this much of the world's fresh water, that there are going to be people very, very interested in whether or not they can have some of it too. We have already talked about the appetite, the insatiable appetite for water resources for northern Alberta to tap its resources. We are also warned

by people like Mr. Lougheed and others who look at resources and commodities on not just a national but international basis and we know that the water we have north of the 49th parallel is going to become more and more attractive to our American neighbours. This is something, Mr. Speaker, that we in this Assembly and I hope our neighbours in the provinces and the federal government are looking at with every intensity, every seriousness, every aggressive action we can bring to the table, Mr. Speaker.

There are some people who would even say agreements that are already in place among provinces may not stand up to a Charter test under the NAFTA agreement. The North American Free Trade Agreement may not protect Canada's waters from the demands of other countries like the United States. I really don't want to think too much about the day when somebody comes and says thanks a lot for the water in Great Slave Lake and the mighty Deh Cho River, Great Bear Lake; we can take it because back in the '80s or '90s, somebody signed a deal that said we could. I don't want to think about that day. I think it's incumbent on all of us to do everything we can to make sure that it never, ever happens. That is where I think we, as legislators, Mr. Speaker, have a solemn and urgent duty on behalf of ourselves and our children to protect these waters that right now we are able to take almost for granted. This is one reason we should stop doing that and never again look at this as a gift that we don't have to worry too much about. It's time to start worrying. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to thank the Minister -- the Member for Thebacha; I apologize to the Member -- for this motion here. Mr. Speaker, this motion here has significant impacts on my thinking here and also on my people back in my region. Mr. Speaker, this motion speaks to the very soul and essence of the aboriginal people, the Dene and the Metis in the region, but also to many people down the Mackenzie Valley and the Northwest Territories' other regions. Water is the very blood of the people I represent. Actually, in our words, one of our elders was talking about the word "Dene" and one of the elders said if you say it properly, when we say Dene we say people, but one of the elders said it's not really the proper language. I couldn't really understand what he was saying. Mr. Speaker, the elder said we say "Dene" and it means land and water. That's who we are as people in our language, land and water.

It's so important that people down from the border right to the Beaufort Sea use this water and sometimes we take the water for granted. We have so much of it and we are a small population, but our land is so rich in water, land and resources that sometimes we take advantage of it and sometimes we take it for granted. When we look at other areas such as Australia and other areas across this world, we say look how pitiful they are. They have to fight for the water. They even have to recycle their water. We take it for granted that we have all this clean water and we take it for granted. I take it for granted that it's going to be there for my children and my children's children.

It goes back to that one time and place in Fort Norman -- now it's called Tulita -- when I went to the band hall and I listened and talked to some elders. Paul Wright was talking about the water. I didn't think it had much significance in what he was saying. Today, I am looking at it. Changes to the land and water are also changes to the people.

Mr. Speaker, the development that is happening in Alberta and other jurisdictions has an impact to us in the Sahtu region and also, as I said, in other regions. We can't wish and pretend it doesn't have an impact when it does have an impact.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say, by supporting this motion, we have to start paying attention to some of our decision-makers that are making decisions on our behalf. There are six parties involved in the Mackenzie River Basin Board. Some of these decisions are not in our best interest as they proclaim they are in our best interest. These boards are more almost, I hate to say, pro-development. You are looking at something that is more beneficial to industry than to the users of our land here and the impact on our water.

I want to say that I hope by making this motion and it being heard across the North, that we make enough noise to have these regulators look at the decisions that will be impacting our people in the future here. When it comes down to the right for water, it's part of our basic bloodline in who we are as people here.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to say on behalf of our people, Mr. Lafferty has indicated that elders are watching us as legislators and how we protect ourselves and what do we do to make sure that the very essence of water and this right to have water in our land be not tampered with. We know in the future it will always be here for us just like the air that we breathe. I look at it in terms of how we are going to leave this issue for our children. Our children are asking about this for the future. What have we done for them in terms of protecting this issue?

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I wanted to say that I hope in the future we have enough water that is forever and ever and not to rely so much on the bottled water that we can buy in the stores here. Thank you.

---Applause

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, am fully in support of the motion and its importance to the people who we represent. I would like to thank the mover and the seconder for their work and committee's work on bringing the motion forward to the House today.

Much has been said of the importance of water. I know history will tell us wars have actually been fought over water and it's not completely inconceivable that some day, someone who doesn't have water is going to come here looking to take our water from us. This is a very important matter, Mr. Speaker.

Also some of my colleagues have been talking about some of the developments in adjacent jurisdictions where the impact on water or the ecosystem, such as development in the Fort McMurray area with the tar

sands, maybe a hydro project on the Slave River, things like this that impact residents and people who live here in the Northwest Territories can't be taken lightly by this government. We have to get a seat at the table. We have to get a seat at the table. We have to demand a seat at the table and we have to be there to stand up for the people who we are here to represent. I think oftentimes we take a backseat to the federal government. Mr. Speaker, the federal government doesn't live in the Northwest Territories. We live here. We should be responsible for our environment. We should be responsible for our water. We should be able to look after our own affairs. Again, we take a backseat far too often to the federal government who try to take control of us from Ottawa. It's time again. The government is moving in the right direction, but we haven't gotten to where we need to get to. We aren't even close, Mr. Speaker.

Again, I just wanted to say I do fully support the motion that is before us and I echo the comments my colleagues made earlier. Mahsi.

---Applause

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I, too, fully support this motion that is in front of us today on the right to water. You know, we talk about the right to access water, lakes and rivers. Once it's all contaminated from industries, construction and whatnot, the activity that is happening in our backyard and God knows how many will come forward down the road, a decision is always being made from the feds onto us to say you guys have to accept it.

But one cannot hunt or trap in the impacted areas. We have always heard over the years from the elders, protect your land, protect your wildlife and protect water especially. We canoe down towards the Lac de Gras area, the Tlicho areas, towards the Sahtu and Gwich'in areas. Our ancestors have travelled on their journeys throughout the regions. We call it... (English not provided)... This means all those old birchbark canoes that were made traditionally by hand with spruce gum to patch it together.

Over the years, people have not feared drinking water from the lake until this day. At the same time, mining is happening in our backyard. (English not provided)... is the uranium mine back in the early '40s. That is in our backyard. People are afraid to go into that area. They are afraid to drink water, but the canoe journeys are along that area, whether it be Whati or Gameti. Whenever we cross the path, everybody is thinking that is contaminated; don't go near that area.

So when we talk about access to water, that's our precious water that we must protect. We sit around the table here as government Members. We must think of that as well when we are dealing with our livelihood. I call it our livelihood because that's our passage of water and we know for a fact that international, nationally, Canada-wide, people are desperate for clear, fresh clean water and we do have that in the North here. We have to protect it.

As I indicated, there has been a canoe journey for hundreds of years in our region going to different regions as well. This year, we are going to have a big assembly in Behchoko where our three outlying communities will be journeying with canoes again, a week-long journey. Along the way, we will certainly be drinking water, making tea, coffee and whatnot. We are hoping that... I shouldn't say hope, but this will be a direction where we will continue the journey. We will continue to drink fresh water from the lake.

When the industries or commercial activities come into play, we should be given the first priority to say this is our water and we have to protect our water. As Mr. Miltenberger indicated, a commodity. We have to keep in mind that water is the first priority. It's not only us that live off of it; animals in the wild do too.

We have to protect that and I am glad this motion was brought forward. Again, I support this motion. Mahsi.

---Applause

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think first I will compliment all of my colleagues. They have pretty well said most of what I was going to say. I wasn't going to say as much as they were, but everyone spoke quite eloquently about how important water is. The only area that really wasn't touched, although it was started, is what do we do without water and it's kind of a puzzling question. I don't know where we can go. Water is one of those amazing elements out there. You know, we need air and lights and stuff, but water is just one of the profound things that we are challenged to imagine for a moment what do we do without water. I guess it's something that we have to define today is how important and how critical it is. If we can define that, then we can say, well, water needs to be principally available for everyone in a fair way, we need to strive to bring those lessons forward.

One of my colleagues mentioned war, and it's true. People have gone to war over love, over hate, they've gone to war over power and land, for rocks that they don't even care about, but someday the challenge of the future really may be water. I mean the respect of our water may be a challenge. Today this Assembly is defining water needs to be an important role. We've heard people talk about how their elders have always said it's an essence of who they are, that can't be overstated in any way and it's the truth, it really is, it's who we are.

Mr. Speaker, today we talk about the basics of who we are. Water is a principle of life and I'm glad to see that we're at least talking about it, because someday this discussion will come where water will be a shortage and we're going to ask ourselves what did we do about it or how did we think about it at the time. It's days like today we at least get the discussion out there to set a course about relevant issues. This is a relevant issue. It may be even a defining issue eventually, but I'm glad this House is taking it into some type of a discussion, as well as a serious note. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Because the directions from the motion are to the Legislative Assembly, then this side of the House will have a free vote on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, let me just make a few comments. One is that, yes, we do often take water for granted in our environment because we have so much of it and we have such good quality water that we use it everyday and don't think about it. But, Mr. Speaker, water issues are, in many ways, very related to the issues we talked about earlier on climate change because the two go hand in hand. The number of forest fires or the changes in wildlife patterns or vegetation patterns are often more tied to water than it is to anything else.

Mr. Speaker, I think water issues, more than anything else, are going to challenge us as political leaders in how we manage the issues because water has to be dealt with regionally, it has to be dealt with nationally, it has to be dealt with globally. I don't think Alberta can control and have full decision-making over its water, nor can the Northwest Territories, nor can Saskatchewan or anybody else. It has to be broader than that because we must look at it at least as a basin. We know all the waters that flow into here come from as far away as the Yukon and British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan. So we have to work with other jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker, on the control of water. It's not something that we should want to have our own total control over the waters in the Northwest Territories, because if we do that then so will the other jurisdictions and none of us have control over where rain falls or where the water flows within the basins.

It's important for us to look at it regionally. I think that's the most urgent need for us, both in terms of quality and quantity. It's important for us not just to look at the water itself on the ground, but also to consider issues around airborne pollutants as well that cross many, many borders. Certainly it is an international issue.

Mr. Speaker, let me say that I appreciate the motion as brought forward today and I think it's one that we have to look at seriously ourselves as legislators and consider how we're going to deal with it because, in my mind, to repeat myself, it is not something that each jurisdiction should have unilateral control over, but rather it's a shared responsibility we all have. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. To the motion. The honourable Member from Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. All the discussion of water has made me thirsty. Can I have a sip?

AN HON. MEMBER: And now you want to have a bath.

---Laughter

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, the issue of water and the motion, it's hard not to support a motion such as this that is so vital to an individual, whether in this country, in this territory or in another country in the world, we are blessed with an abundance of it. You look in other countries and the fact is they're drilling in deserts to try to

find fresh water. We've become an inventive race because we're taking sea water, salt water, and trying to make it into drinkable water for our own use.

Mr. Speaker, back to the home front, I can recall as a child travelling with my parents on the Mackenzie River, on the Beaufort Sea when we hunted and we trapped. Whether it was the summer or the winter, it brings back a lot of memories, as I said earlier, about what value we place in this precious resource. I recall many times travelling with my father, with my parents and stopping on the shore and having shore lunch, and as we heard earlier, making that pot of coffee or that pot of tea and have to wait for the water to settle because you didn't want to get all of the sand and the mud with it. At least from my end of the country, we got everything that floated down river it seemed. So some places where the water is blue, that same water isn't quite as blue when you go further down, and it goes to the earlier comment about we can't control it all. So it's something that we have to take seriously.

As I recall not only from that, but my interest grew from there of being interested in tourism and it brought me a lot of joy when I took people out as part of our small family tourism outfit, brought them out on the water, showed them the land we travelled and told them stories about my father and the way he lived and hunted on this land and this great resource we had. So it was that interest that I got involved and shared those stories with those that would come to visit with us. So that interest in my own culture and my own history and that of my father's of how he lived. I'll have to go back and quote -- and God bless his soul -- a colleague of ours that has passed on, Mr. Vince Steen. He's been in the media in the past of something he said and it's so very true, the fact that no matter how much we try, we will never get back to how we lived 30 or 40 years ago. That's something that we have to take into consideration as we have this discussion, as we plan and as we make decisions as we talk about what kind of legislation we would bring in place. So it's with that in mind we must also think about our past and how our past has prepared us for our future. I got involved talking about my past, involved at a grassroots level, and that was with the Inuvik Hunters and Trappers Committee and, again, with my father's history and the history of our people in the North of looking at things as they were changing. Back when my father talked about when he went travelling on the east branch of the Mackenzie River and when he went muskrat hunting in the spring and as he travelled back to his camp he travelled with an 18-foot canoe with a one and a half horsepower motor. Well today, nowadays, Mr. Speaker, you'll see young people travelling with 150 horsepower outboard motors, truck engines, what they would have never thought be inside boats, jet boats, snowmobiles that will travel more than 100 miles an hour. Mr. Speaker, that shows how things have changed and how we even as our own people in our own backyards, never mind everybody else, but in our own backyards we make decisions that affect the very lives that our children will live.

So it was with that interest as a member of the hunters and trappers that got involved with the issues that were before us and when there was discussions about land use, how we used, how we hunted and how we operated and how we were as a people. Let's not forget, water brings us life, Mr. Speaker, but it also can bring death in a number of areas, not only from drinking it, but from travelling on it. That just showed us the standards of life

we had in the Northwest Territories and that we hold today. So it's even with that, it's not just the drinking of it, it's how we use it day to day and the respect we must have for our land and the water that we travel and live with.

Mr. Speaker, when we talk about managing it, it's something we have to know at this level, at this table, on this floor. We talk about managing, and that's why we, as a government, and past governments got involved in that decision-making, in land use plan and what we had to do as a government. So let's not forget about the changes that have occurred in our society and the laws that have been put in place, because today, Mr. Speaker, today we will not have another Giant Mine situation occurring in the Northwest Territories. Today we'll not have uranium mines built in the conditions they were.

Mr. Speaker, past decisions by other people have caused us to be burdened with some sad history in how we try to protect our future. I've heard Mr. Miltenberger on a number of occasions talk about the millions of tons of arsenic buried right under this fine city we call the capital of the Northwest Territories. So we must look at that and how those decisions are made and how we get involved in making those decisions. Also, as our Premier stated, we must be realistic in what we can accomplish as one jurisdiction, as one territory. We, in the North, have been impacted by people who have made decisions for us, by decisions made further south. Right from the earliest days, before the creation of the Northwest Territories, when the trappers or the hunters came forward to take our furs in a sense of not only using them for sustaining your life from day to day, but to make it a valuable resource. I recall my father telling me stories about when the first trappers and traders came up. It wasn't about no matter how many muskrat pelts or how many beaver pelts that you got and they said if you wanted that rifle you get to trade a few. As they brought some in and said well this is enough, the trader would turn his rifle up lengthwise and say no, you have to match the height of the barrel. That's how things started happening in the Northwest Territories.

So as we sit around this table and we begin to take more and more control of what we have in the Northwest Territories, we have take into consideration our past and how those decisions were made and how we're affected by that and how we will make the decisions moving forward. We've had others tell us how it can be done, and how it must be done and I've just given that example of how things were done in the past and how they can no longer be done in the Northwest Territories. But we must also be very aware we in the Northwest Territories are not an island unto ourselves and we don't live in a bubble. Everything that happens within Canada affects us. I remember as a young man when I first heard the discussion of acid rain I thought to myself living in the Northwest Territories blue skies, clear water, fresh air to breathe, how can that be happening? Not here in the Northwest Territories. But as I did more research and looking at it finding out the impacts of the rest of this country have on us in the Northwest Territories. So it's trying to sit back and say we can make it happen here in the Northwest Territories. We can have an impact and we can help make some decisions or help those that make decisions understand the situations we live in.

So we have our jobs cut out for us, Mr. Speaker, on how we move forward and what we need to do as a government, but we also have to realize we've come a

long way in a short time. The rest of Canada, the rest of the world has taken a long time, generations, to change the way they've done things and the decisions they've made. We can do it and we can have an impact this very day in how we do things, not only by making this motion, which is a good one, but it's how we move forward from there and how we influence the decision-makers in the rest of the country and how we hold them accountable. We can talk about holding ourselves accountable but, like I said, we don't live in a bubble and we don't control how the water flows in and out of the Northwest Territories. We can have a say, but it's how much of that say gets translated into decision-making by other jurisdictions. So we have to be realistic in what we set as examples, but the truth is, we have to start standing up and saying our piece and being heard at all levels, not only at the regional level and the territorial level, but letting the rest of Canada hear us and what we say and the directions we need to have set that will impact us on a daily basis. With that, I will be supporting the motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I just briefly want to speak in support of the motion. Something that crossed my mind today when we talked about the words of the elders -- and Mr. Yakeleya and Mr. Lafferty made reference to it -- in the treaties it talked about the rights that were being conveyed being in effect as long as the sun shone and as long as the rivers flowed and I guess they had the foresight to understand that if the rivers didn't flow anymore there was no need to talk about it because we won't be here when the rivers stop flowing, we'll be gone, we won't have anything to sustain life if the rivers stop flowing. I think that's an interesting phrase and probably showed a lot of foresight on their part when they said that.

When we talk about water as a human right, I think we need to then take the next step and think about water and how we share, it may not be actually sharing our water as a resource, it may be sharing the technology, which is out there and very much modern technology about wells, about catching water, about water treatment and this can be done on a very small scale and can help communities and I think we need to think of Canadians and as northerners about sharing that kind of technology that can help people access clean water in different parts of the world. It's also been noted in our recent discussions that water is a resource for which there is no price tag. We don't assess the value. If you give someone a water permit, there's no economic value attached to the use of that water; a very strange phenomenon when you think about it. When we talk about water costs we talk about the costs of water treatment or water delivery, we talk about warming water to a certain temperature to go into our municipal distribution systems, but we don't ever think about there being an actual economic value to that water. We are so blessed with so much water in this country that we consider water to be free. In fact it's interesting that the folks that are working on the boreal initiative have assessed what our ecosystem around this part of the country is actually worth in terms of dollars. We don't think like that. We think that nature is out there, it's free for the taking and we don't value it in terms of economic

sense and I believe we should because it's a sobering thought.

Anyway, we're here on this planet. I think if we were all to walk softly and leave as minimal an imprint as possible and to protect the resources. I think this is a good motion and I've already spoken to the issue of how we need, as a government, to make other governments aware and join in, really, the chorus of people that are emerging with a message about clean air, clean water and a good environment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Member from Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi cho...(English not provided)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to say that the MLA from Thebacha raised a very important motion supported by all his colleagues here today and that's the issue of water. Without water it's just basic understanding that our land can die. I will be supporting the motion and will work with this Legislature in developing the appropriate public policy to make life, water quality and quantity a certainty for ourselves and for our future.

Once again, I would like to thank the Member for that motion and the House for their support of this. I stand in support as well. Mahsi.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. To the motion. The honourable Member from Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'll be brief on this issue. I certainly appreciate the level of concern around this issue. It's really timely given that we've been able to make some headway with some of our transboundary agreements.

Mr. Speaker, I represent the riding called the Deh Cho, which means big river and we really pride ourselves on being able to live off the river and have lived with the river and it has been the lifeline of our communities and many communities around the lake and all the way down the Mackenzie. There's a serious concern out there by members of the North that water is being affected in the quantity and the quality and the number of projects that are out there are really bringing this to the forefront. I think, Mr. Speaker, we have to look back historically that there has been an effect. I think the Member from Boot Lake raised the issue that acid rain has been an issue. I remember 20 years ago, as a band manager, seeing reports that showed that in the Mackenzie River, the community where I grew up in, that there was traces of acid rain, which showed that there was a certain level of insecticide that was used in the cotton fields in Alabama that were showing up in the water already. So it's been there for awhile. It's something that we need to take concern about. There are a number of issues, the oil sands, the Bennett dam, hydro dams are all coming to the forefront. Communities, especially in the South, have really been coming forward with concerns.

We certainly take this seriously and we, as a department, are expressing that this is a public resource that needs to be protected. Other aboriginal governments have come forward and also done a lot of initiatives on their own, held conferences, brought in people to talk about issues that are around water. A big one is contamination from the southern provinces. I spoke a little bit about how we need to have agreements.

Mr. Speaker, we also have to look internally. Not all the water flows from the south. We have water that comes from some of the mountains. This past fall, we had the opportunity to visit the community of Deline and look at the Bear River. That's probably the cleanest water in the world. The water is so clear you can see the bottom of the river and see the fish swimming. How do we protect those things? Those kinds of things we also have to look at. There are a number of things we have to do before we can even start finalizing our agreements. We have to be able to demonstrate what is there in terms of baseline. Are all the studies that are required in place? How long is that going to take? What streams cross the different jurisdictions? What kind of monitoring stations have to be in place? There is a lot of work that has to be done. It's time we got in front of this issue and I think all the Members here have demonstrated that this is one of the bigger issues that are facing us as a government and as a people in the North. I certainly want to say that I support that.

We've seen three new projects get approved this past year. All expansion projects that affect water and water quality in the Northwest Territories. There are many things to do.

The state of the aquatic ecosystem report shows our water is still very good. It still has good quality. We have to maintain that. We have to be able to follow up on some of the actions that give us direction that we have to work with the harvesters, we have to work with our residents to make sure they understand what the health of the ecosystem means. It will take everybody to work towards it. Blaming one government or another is just not acceptable. We need the Government of the Northwest Territories, we need the Government of Canada and the other provincial governments to work hand in hand with agreements that will protect us and give us comfort that we will be able to have good quality water and good quantity.

Mr. Speaker, those are my comments on this issue. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. To the motion. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I, too, will be supporting the motion. With regard to the whole area of water management and ensuring we have a say in the process, I think we do have a tool. We have to continue to build on the Mackenzie basin agreement, which was signed by five jurisdictions which includes Saskatchewan, Alberta, BC, Northwest Territories and Yukon. I think it's important that we do more to monitor the quality of the water that flows in this basin. More importantly, ensuring that industrial development that does take place in the basin is

monitored in such a way that any heavy metals or contaminants are avoided from spilling into a water basin.

I think the Mackenzie River basin is unique in the context that it's one of the larger basins in the world, but, more importantly, development in most basins have originated from the mouth of the river going up to the headwaters of those river systems around the world. In our case, it's the other way around. The developments are happening in the headwaters and flowing downstream through the Northwest Territories and back out to the Arctic Ocean. With those developments happening upstream, that's the concern we have to be aware of.

I think, more importantly, the Minister touched on the whole area of monitoring and the quality and quantity of water that is out there. I had an opportunity to serve on the Gwich'in Management Water Board and I found it very alarming that the federal government cut back a number of years ago on all these water monitoring stations throughout the Territories. The only one that we are aware of that affected the Mackenzie Delta area was a water station that was up at Snake River which is in the Peel River watershed. Again, through these monitoring systems, we have to do a better job of monitoring, realizing that we are seeing more heavy metals in our fish, in the whales in the Arctic Ocean, which feed at the mouth of the Mackenzie River. Yet, these things are becoming more... (inaudible)... development out there.

Mr. Speaker, we also have to realize that we have to take advantage of the agreements that we do have. I did mention the Mackenzie River basin agreement. We have land claim agreements which clearly spell out aboriginal water rights, which talk about the quality and quantity, rate of flow, compensation. Those things are already in legislation. We have to vote on those. We have to implement those agreements, but, more importantly, continue to build on those types of agreements.

Mr. Speaker, we also have to ensure there our co-management systems work in conjunction with whatever we do in whatever. Whatever we do in water, we have to ensure that the land use plans conform to the water management agreements and vice versa. Also, we have to keep in mind that the land use plans that are being developed ensure that we have protected areas in certain water bodies or water bodies that flow into water bodies, that we have a system that co-exists with other agencies, boards, and also ensuring that the general public is involved in this.

Again, like I mentioned earlier, we have seen the affects by industrial development over the last 30 years in the Mackenzie basin by way of the Bennett dam. We talk about industrial development such as what is going on in Fort McMurray. There is major concern around the Norman Wells development with regard to the Mackenzie River years ago and that development still exists.

More importantly, there is a lot of heavy metals being explored with regard to gold, silver, uranium and these things also used water with regard to those developments and again what happens to the water once it's processed through the mills and also where they end up. Again, we do have to ensure that we have an arrangement with all stakeholders. I know it's important that we do involve industry, the general public, aboriginal groups, more importantly ensuring that our governments work closer together to sign off these agreements. There have been

only two agreements signed off between the Yukon and Northwest Territories. There have been drafts done up between Alberta, Saskatchewan and B.C. Again, they did not commit themselves to signing any authority away. I think we have to realize it's more than authority; it's a mechanism to ensure that we have to safeguard the water sources that affect not only our jurisdiction but five other jurisdictions in Canada.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting this motion. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. To the motion. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to start by commending the Members opposite for bringing this motion forward. I think not only this motion but the one prior, the motion on climate change. The two motions, Mr. Speaker, really can be looked at collectively because they are one in the same. We need to make strides and take steps to protect our environment and if we are able to do so, we are going to ensure that we have drinking water for generations to come; the water that, as Members have pointed out, we rely on for everyday life.

Mr. Speaker, I had the chance last week in Ottawa to represent our government at the launch of the International Polar Year. Many northerners in attendance, researchers, scientists from around the world, talking about climate change and the impact it will have on Arctic and Antarctic jurisdictions, talking about not only the affects of climate change but about the vast amount of fresh water that was locked up in the North and the need to protect it. They had a number of questions for me, for our government, and we are very interested because they know, Mr. Speaker, that northerners are at the forefront of the decisions that are taken today and will feel the impacts first, of course, of climate change. We will feel the ramifications if we are not active in protecting our water, our fresh water. We have seen what can happen around the world when we don't get it right, Mr. Speaker, not only in foreign countries but right here at home. We can see in our port cities, we can see in the Great Lakes, the mistakes that are made if we allow industrial development, if we allow human activity to go unchecked. I think it's incumbent on us to put in place, Mr. Speaker, the number of safeguards and checks and balances that we need to see to protect our environment.

We talked today about the need for devolution, for us to get more control from the federal government over our lands, our water and our resources. Mr. Speaker, I think none of us will rest until that's the case. But it isn't enough for us to throw up our hands in frustration and suggest we don't have the jurisdiction. We can all do our part to lobby this country, to make sure we are on the consciousness of Canada and ensure that people recognize that we are not going to stand by idly, Mr. Speaker, and allow the degradation and erosion of our environment and that includes our water, Mr. Speaker.

So let me thank the Members of this House for bringing forward the two motions. Of course, the one that we weren't able to speak to, Mr. Speaker, and vote on, but I want to say that it's critical that we look at these two motions in tandem, we support them collectively, we continue to send the sentiments to the rest of the country

and continue to send the message that it is critical for our survival here in the North. It is critical that we demand industry start to take the steps to reduce emissions, Mr. Speaker, and I think northerners can lead that charge. I think we are showing that here today and I know that the rest of the country is watching. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. To the motion. I will go to the honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, will be voting in favour of this motion and I would like to also thank the Members for bringing forward the two motions this afternoon.

I think it shows the importance of this motion and the one before it in that all Members of this House have spoken in favour of the motion. So that tells you that everybody here sees it as being very important. I won't repeat the many good reasons that have already been articulated by my colleagues. I will just note that water is extremely important to all of us, both for our human health and for transportation. In the North here, we are blessed with lots and lots of good water. It is a very fragile resource. As many have noted, we can't protect it on our own. We need to seek the assistance and cooperation of other jurisdictions who are upstream from us.

This motion is an important statement for this Assembly and it says that we have the responsibility as legislators to lead the way. Mr. Speaker, I see this motion and us passing it as an important first step. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. To the motion. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I stand today in support of the motion. I would like to thank Mr. Miltenberger and Mr. Villeneuve for coming out and putting forward this motion. I think water is very important and essential to the basic things of life. I am looking forward to voting on this motion in support of it. It's important because we have the Mackenzie River, the Athabasca River and the whole Beaufort Sea out there.

Mr. Speaker, water flows and it can still affect all the Beaufort Sea, so it's vital for us. Also, Mr. Speaker, although in Tuk we get our water from Kudluk Lake that is piped across into our reservoir, with all the chemicals that are put into the reservoir, why would people still go out into the lakes and get fresh ice? I know how important water is to everybody. I just want to stand today in support of the motion and say thank you to my colleagues. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. I will recognize the mover of the motion to close debate on the motion. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for Tu Nedhe for seconding this motion and I would like to thank all Members of this House for their comments and the good

discussion we've had today. This motion is clearly linked to the one we just passed.

I have been in this Legislature for eleven and a half years and this is the first time we've ever had this kind of debate about something as fundamental as the issue of water and the things that are happening with climate change. Clearly this forum can do the work that it has to. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that this motion, along with the one we just passed, will give us a foundation as we go forward to work with the aboriginal governments, the other northern stakeholders as well as all our neighbouring jurisdictions to sort out the many issues that are before us when it comes to water and climate change. I would like to thank everybody and I would like to ask, Mr. Speaker, if we could have a recorded vote. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. The Member has asked for a recorded vote. All those in favour, please stand.

Recorded Vote

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Miltenberger; Ms. Lee; Mr. Yakeleya; Mr. Braden; Mr. Hawkins; Mr. Menicoche; Mr. Krutko; Mr. Roland; Mr. Handley; Mr. Dent; Mr. McLeod, Deh Cho; Mr. Bell; Mr. Ramsay; Mr. Pokiak; Mr. Villeneuve; Mr. Lafferty.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: All those opposed, please stand. All those abstaining, please stand. The results of the recorded vote: 16 in favour; zero opposed, zero abstaining. The motion is carried.

---Carried

MR. SPEAKER: Motions. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to deal with the motion I gave notice of earlier today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to deal with the motion she gave notice of earlier today. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You may proceed with your motion, Ms. Lee.

Motion 21-15(5): Tabled Document 104-15(5): "Workers' Compensation Board Comprehensive Response To Committee Report 5-15(5)" Moved Into Committee Of The Whole, Carried

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight presented its Report on the Review of the Report of the Auditor General on the Workers' Compensation Board of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut on October 26, 2006;

AND WHEREAS the committee recommended that a comprehensive response to its report be provided within 120 days;

AND WHEREAS the Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board has tabled the comprehensive response;

AND WHEREAS a public discussion on the response would provide important context for Members, stakeholders and the public prior to the consideration of proposed amendments to workers' compensation legislation;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Sahtu, that Tabled Document 104-15(5), Workers' Compensation Board Comprehensive Response to Committee Report 5-15(5), be moved into Committee of the Whole for discussion.

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

---Carried

Motion 104-15(5) will be moved into Committee of the Whole.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Motions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to deal with the motion I gave notice of earlier today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The Member is seeking unanimous consent to deal with the motion he gave notice of earlier today. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You may proceed with your motion, Mr. Yakeleya.

Motion 22-15(5): Setting Of Sitting Hours By Speaker, Carried

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Frame Lake, that the Speaker be authorized to set such sitting days and hours as the Speaker, after consultation, deems fit to assist with the business before the House.

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

---Carried

Motions. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 18, Bill 19, Bill 21, Committee Report 7-15(5), 8-15(5), 9-15(5) and 10-15(5), with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair. By the authority given the Speaker by Motion 22-15(5), Committee of the Whole may sit beyond the hour of adjournment until it is prepared to report.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I would like to call Committee of the Whole to order and ask the committee, what is the wish of the committee? Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Madam Chair. The wish of the committee is to review Bill 21, Appropriation Act, 2007-2008, dealing specifically with Industry, Tourism and Investment and the Justice department. Mahsi.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Okay, we will do that after a break.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Good afternoon. I'll call Committee of the Whole back to order. We are dealing with ITI this afternoon. I'd like to ask the Minister if he has any opening comments.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: I do. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to present the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment proposed main estimates for the fiscal year 2007-2008.

The main estimates propose total operational expenses of approximately \$39 million for the coming fiscal year; and overall net increase of less than \$2 million, approximately 2.5 percent over last year's budget.

Economic Climate

To set the context for our deliberations today, let me first provide you with an overview of our economic climate.

As Members are aware, the rate of economic development in the Northwest Territories has outpaced the rest of Canada for a number of years. Overall employment and income have grown substantially since 1999 thanks largely to our territory's non-renewable resource sector.

However, in 2005 we experienced a slowdown in this growth, measured in GDP, resulting almost entirely from declining diamond sales totals. This slowdown was not unexpected and will likely reverse again with the commencement of production at De Beers' Snap Lake project this fall. While economic growth has been slowing, overall investment has remained at record levels. Investment has been increasing significantly over the past five years, and for 2006 is expected to exceed \$1.7 billion.

Retail sales in the NWT are linked to population and incomes. Since creation of the NWT in 1999, retail sales have been increasing by over \$250,000 per month, despite relatively slow population growth. In 2005, annual sales approximated \$280 million.

Wholesale trade, with annual sales of \$208 million, is an important part of the NWT economy.

With significant new mining investment, both retail and wholesale sales are expected to increase over 2007-08.

Department's Mandate

Since its creation two years ago, the mandate of the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment has been to promote economic self-sufficiency: to create a prosperous, diverse and sustainable economy for the benefit of all NWT residents.

The NWT is a huge area where resources, potential and opportunities vary significantly between regions and communities. To realize our full potential, and to ensure equitable opportunities and benefits for all NWT residents, ITI's work is wide-ranging across many different sectors and all regions.

The department took steps this year to more closely define its role with the NWT's vibrant and wide-ranging economic environment, and to balance its work for energy, mines and petroleum resources with development of the traditional economy. At the same time, we have promoted increases in trade and services through socio-economic agreements and the department's support programs for businesses.

ITI is committed to building a diversified, sustainable economy in the Northwest Territories, beginning at the community level. Our regional delivery model reflects our objective to ensure support and assistance is available in every community in the Northwest Territories.

We are working with our many partners to improve the overall effectiveness of our plans and services: providing greater support to small businesses, traditional economies and industry; developing an energy mandate; and continuing our priority on tourism and resource development.

Staff are working in each region to strengthen relations and expand communication with communities, businesses, partner organizations and all regional stakeholders.

Regular community visits, together with enhanced communication initiatives, will ensure clients have access to reliable information, assistance and planning advice.

Key Initiatives

I would like to comment briefly on some key areas of investment that demonstrate our continued commitment to best serve the Northwest Territories on target, on time, and on budget, meeting our primary challenge: to foster a prosperous and diversified economy for the Northwest Territories.

There is no question that our economy is currently driven by the non-renewable resource sector. Over 80 percent of all NWT exports are dependent upon diamond production. Most mineral investment, and the vast bulk of mineral sales, is directly related to diamond mine production, although exploration efforts continue to find and develop other minerals. The remaining 20 percent of our exports is largely made up of oil and gas produced in Norman Wells and in Fort Liard.

We recognize the risks of being dependent to this degree on a single resource. Diversifying our economy is key to avoiding the boom/bust cycles associated with non-renewable resource development.

As I have stated on many occasions, tourism represents an opportunity to expand our economic base.

With the introduction of Tourism 2010 last year, we, as a government, made an unprecedented commitment to the development of tourism in the Northwest Territories; one designed to drive economic diversity and the development

of viable and sustainable small business ventures in almost every NWT community.

To date, our \$1 million investment in this strategy has leveraged an additional \$1.2 million for this sector, increasing opportunities for tourism training and supporting new opportunities for tourism infrastructure and product development.

Our tourism industry is facing some challenges which will require our continued attention. We are working with the sport hunting industry in light of proposed changes to harvesting quotas. As well, we are looking at how we can maintain our important aurora viewing and sports fishing visitations in the face of aggressive competition.

We are renewing our ongoing commitment to the tourism sector and will continue to encourage the expansion and development of this important contributor to the NWT economy.

Traditional Economies

The significant expansion of tourism also offers a ready market for the production of arts and fine crafts that will generate some income opportunities particularly suited for smaller communities where other employment options are limited.

In the coming weeks, we will be introducing a new arts branding logo in support of the NWT's vibrant arts sector. This brand will be a key element in a national and international marketing campaign targeted to increasing global recognition and promoting NWT artists and their products.

We continue to support the NWT's traditional way of life. For participants in this sector, the traditional economy provides a secure, stable source of food, fuel, shelter and clothing, and also helps to reduce the economic gap between large and small communities in our territory.

As part of this budget, additional funds will be provided to the Community Harvesters Assistance Program and to expand the Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur Price Program.

Mackenzie Gas Project

We continue to support the development of a sustainable oil and gas sector in the NWT, specifically through the proposed Mackenzie gas project. Beyond any other benefits that a pipeline project will bring to our territory, the certainty of its eventual construction will facilitate the discovery and the opening of new natural gas basins in the Canadian North.

The proposed natural gas pipeline associated with this project will open the Mackenzie Delta and valley to exploration and development of the NWT's natural gas resources. It is the next stage in the development of the NWT's economy and will open the door to a new era for our northern economy.

The advancement of this project will significantly benefit the Beaufort-Delta, Sahtu and Deh Cho regions and expand our mineral sector.

ITI will continue to deliver focused government-wide coordination, planning and strategy formulation to maximize the benefits, and to address the many challenges resulting from the Mackenzie gas project.

We will spend an estimated \$1.7 million this year to support this planning and to ensure that our communities and businesses are adequately prepared to meet the demands and maximize the benefits that this project will bring to our territory.

JRP/NEB Hearings

We have also extended the funds and resources required for our department's full participation in both the NEB and JRP hearings. These regulatory processes are a primary focus in ensuring the MGP will be sustainable, responsible and beneficial as demanded by the people of the NWT.

To that end, Mr. Chairman, we have an important dual role: to better understand how the project will affect NWT residents and to advance the public interest of residents of the NWT, and to provide information and expertise to allow regulators to make the best decisions possible in the interest of our territory, our communities and our residents.

Energy

The Department of ITI will also continue its work to identify and steer a course towards developing our energy potential, and reducing our reliance on imported fossil fuels. The 2007 energy plan will be an important first step in our work to guide future government decisions with respect to energy development.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank Members of this Assembly for your ongoing guidance and insight in the development of this budget. I am confident that together we have established the foundation and investment necessary to seize the opportunities we have available to secure our future. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Bell. At this time, I'd like to call upon the chairperson of the Standing Committee on GED for comments regarding the review of the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment. Mrs. Groenewegen.

General Comments

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the committee met with the Minister and his officials on September 26, 2006, to review the draft business plan of the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

The committee considered the department's draft main estimates on January 16 and 17, 2007.

Committee members made note that the department is proposing to spend \$38.9 million in operations expense and \$1.8 million on capital projects in fiscal year 2007-2008.

Committee members offer the following comments on issues arising out of the review of the 2007-2008 Draft Main Estimates and budget planning cycle:

Tourism

The committee commends the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment for their work on the Tourism 2010 Plan. The committee further commends them for acknowledging tourism requires a greater investment from this government. The 2010 plan endeavours to increase

investment in tourism from \$104 million to \$140 million by the year 2010.

This goal is very admirable but it does not go far enough when compared to the millions of dollars the government has invested in resource development.

For example, including last year's increase of \$400,000, \$2.7 million is available for tourism marketing. By comparison, the Yukon spends upwards of \$7 million, and Las Vegas alone spends \$150 million. The Canadian Tourism Commission only spends \$100 million for all of Canada. A recent article in the Globe and Mail stated that more people visit Banff in a summer week than visit all three territories in a year.

Further, there is only \$300,000 budgeted for tourism infrastructure. With fierce competition for infrastructure dollars, this number is unlikely to change any time soon. There has also been insufficient funding for transportation projects, such as chipsealing the highway to Fort Smith and the extension of the runway at the Yellowknife Airport, which are also keys to tourism growth.

The tourism industry is under duress. Aurora Tourism is struggling because of increased competition from Alaska and the Yukon, and limits on non-residential hunting of caribou will have a detrimental effect on outfitters. The tourism industry as a whole is affected by the new requirement for American tourists to have passports, the federal government's cancellation of the GST rebate, increasing insurance premiums and labour shortages.

Since the beginning of this Assembly, the Governance and Economic Development committee has been a strong advocate for a diversified and sustainable economy. The committee supports hunting and trapping not only because they are hallmarks of aboriginal culture, but also because they are activities that identify this territory as unique and distinct from other places. Renewable resources such as agriculture and commercial fishing can take place outside the larger centres in the Territories and, therefore, contribute to smaller local economies. Tourism is also a key element in a diversified economy that supports local economies and can be environmentally friendly.

Product Development

During their pre-budget consultations, the committee heard from members of the public who suggested the GNWT should provide more resources for product and infrastructure development and marketing. The Minister of ITI has echoed these sentiments.

The committee discussed the possibility of creating an interpretive bison centre with the Minister. This project would not only be a great tourist attraction, but also a practical solution to some of the issues on a problematic section of Highway No. 3. For instance, the highway between Fort Providence and Yellowknife has some long stretches without any services.

The Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development would like to thank the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment for their commitment to performing a feasibility study on this project.

Socio-Economic Agreements

The committee was concerned about the lack of support for northern businesses. For instance, over \$240 million leaves this territory annually with migrant workers who live in the South and work in the North. The NWT loses revenue in real estate, in municipal and territorial taxes, in goods and services and transfer payments. This hurts northern residents and businesses.

The committee met with the representatives of BHP Billiton, Diavik Diamond Mines and De Beers to discuss these concerns and was impressed by the lengths to which these companies go to meet the requirements of their socio-economic agreements and to attract workers to the Northwest Territories to work and to raise their families. The mines say they are working very hard to meet the targets of their socio-economic agreements because of growing competition for the limited NWT labour force.

Components of their northern hire policies include retention bonuses, priority training opportunities with northern preferences, scholarship programs and housing assistance for senior employees.

The mines also say they offer assistance to aboriginal suppliers to attain joint venture partnerships and break down large contracts in order to allow smaller northern businesses to compete. They even encourage suppliers to move to the North.

The socio-economic agreements are required of the mines by the GNWT. They stipulate conditions such as targets for training, employment and business opportunities.

That concludes the committee's overview of the Department of ITI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. BRENDAN BELL: I would. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): At this time, I'd like to ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to bring in the witnesses, please.

Thank you. Mr. Bell, can you introduce your witnesses, please.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Chairman, thank you. With me today: Peter Vician, who is the deputy minister of the department; and Nancy Magrum, director of finance and administration for our shared services centre. Thank you.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to thank the Minister and his staff for being here this evening with us to go over the main estimates for ITI. I've got a few general comments that I'd like to make, Mr. Chairman. The first one I guess I'll try to be a little bit funny. The Minister must have got the memo from the Minister of

ENR in regard to not mentioning outfitting or caribou in his opening comments to the committee, so I'd like to just start off with that, Mr. Chairman. I didn't notice the word "outfitting" at all in the opening comments. In fact, his department has been somewhat I don't want to say invisible, but not around, I guess. We've had a number of meetings with outfitters back in December. December 16th, I believe it was, at the Northern Frontier Visitors Centre. We had another meeting on Friday with departmental staff from ENR and a number of outfitters, and a number of MLAs were also in attendance at that meeting as was the chief of Yellowknives, Mr. Fred Sangris, but there wasn't anybody from ITI at the meeting. So I just wanted to make a comment to that effect.

I've got a couple of other things I wanted to mention, the Minister, in his opening comments, talks about making sure that communities and businesses are adequately prepared to meet the demands and maximize benefits that the project will bring, this is the Mackenzie gas project. I couldn't agree with them more. I think we have an obligation to all of our residents in the Northwest Territories to ensure that we are ready and we can meet the demands. There is also going to be a number of socio-economic demands on communities that aren't part of the \$500 million socio-economic impact fund that the feds announced last year. This is causing a number of communities and aboriginal groups that aren't part of the funding to stand up and question why it is that the government could stand by and get the funding for the affected communities when, if you go off...Every community in the Northwest Territories is going to be impacted one way or another by a \$9 billion pipeline down the valley, whether we want to admit that or not. There will be impacts here in Yellowknife; there will be impacts in Fort Smith and in Hay River, communities who aren't part of this funding. So I'd certainly like to see, and I know the Yellowknives Dene First Nation, the Akaitcho, have written a letter to MLAs questioning why they haven't been included in any consultation, negotiation, you know; and they feel they are going to be impacted, as well, by the Mackenzie gas project.

I think it's important. We should take the message to the federal government that, you know, we're a territory of 43,000 people. Every last person is going to be impacted one way or another by this pipeline development and we need to get funding for each and every community. I think if we don't do that, we're not serving everybody here and we're not taking the opportunity to help our people get ready for this development and the impacts that it is going to bring to our communities. I should also mention the community of Behchoko in that, as well. We need to really seriously sit down with the federal government and iron out if there's another fund that can be set up for maybe communities that, according to the federal government, aren't as impacted as the ones up and down the valley then that's something I believe we should explore.

Let's see. The other thing, while I've got the floor, Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to touch on just a little bit is the program review, the BDIC. It's been in the works for a little while now and I'm just wondering -- when we get to that section I can ask questions specific to that -- but, you know, it just hasn't grown legs or seem to have developed into much and we still have, and my estimation would be areas of our operation that, you know, is there duplication. Just by looking at it from the outside I would suggest that

there is. Is there a way to do things better? I would suggest there is. What are we doing? I think we can do more in that regard, but, again, I'll have specific questions when we get to that page in the detail, Mr. Chairman.

Again, the department has done some very good things and before I...I know I've mentioned a few things it could work on, but I also wanted to mention the Tourism 2010 Strategy, the much needed funding that's gone into tourism and tourism marketing. The goals in that Tourism 2010 plan are a little bit lofty. Whether we can hit the targets on outside investment I hope we can, but they are quite lofty. We need to spend, as Madam Groenewegen mentioned in the committee's report, there's competition out there in the aurora tourism industry and we certainly need to pay attention to that and come up with ways to get some more money, especially into aurora tourism. We can't afford, if we're looking at diversifying our economy and growing a tourism sector, we can't stand by and watch this industry take a nose dive. We can't do that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Chairman, I'll take your guidance on this. I didn't hear direct questions there. Do you want me to wait for the detail?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Yes. I think that's what we all agreed to previously, that we'll hear general comments and then when we go to detail we'll ask questions. Next I have Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I want to say also to the Minister in terms of his opening comments and in terms of the economic climate in the Northwest Territories and preparing our people for the various economic infusion, I guess I could say, in terms of how we're going to be impacted in our region and different areas that are being looked at and where we are working with the various groups. I guess, for myself, Mr. Chair, the smaller regions such as the Sahtu you have a very different playing field in terms of the users of the land. You have the mineral and mining people, you have the harvesters and you have the traditional trappers and hunters that use it, you have oil and gas and you have tourism. So it's very complex. How do you put together almost a season, because of the complexity of the people who use our land in our area and the department's working hard to, on the one hand, promote economic self-sufficiency but also being responsible land users, responsible land owners. Diversity...the diversification program that says...It's true what the Minister says; we can't always rely on one economic base here. It's a tough challenge for the Minister because we don't have the economic opportunities as other regions because of our situation. So during our winter road season we have a lot of activity going on and not so much in the summertime because of the situation we're in where we have to haul equipment on the barges and they only stage them in certain areas, so that poses a lot of issues for us. However, that's the lay of the land there and that's the way it is, but I think the process of getting to how do you, I don't know if you could stabilize or just to look at what is it that we need to do to look at other areas that could enhance our economy in the Northwest Territories, especially in our area at least.

One of the things that I'd really like to look at, and I'll ask the Minister more questions about the traditional economy aspect of it, of the beads, the sewing. There are some pretty good sewers up there and I know the arts and crafts, like any region, is we all have our unique and valuable sense of the work that we do in our region, especially by our older people. You know the wage economy has really taken over our lifestyle and I want to ask the Minister later on in terms of percentage of harvesters that we have in our region and how we will support them. It's a way of life and I know it's sometimes hard to categorize that as a business, but that's something that I want to ask him later on.

I just wanted to say that in terms of what we're doing in terms of ITI is, it seems to me, and just taking this from looking from this point of view into industry and tourism investment is that it seems to me that this department here is certainly -- I want to commend the Minister on this -- giving a lot of this stuff back to the region in terms of giving them some direction in terms of how we go about carving out our own economic areas. I think it's working in that sense. I wanted to say that. I hadn't seen this before in my three years so it seems to me that we have a lot of strong staff members working in our region, working for our communities, and I know there are areas we would certainly like to see improved but it seems that we're moving in the right direction. I wanted to say that on behalf of our region, Mr. Chair, that there are some areas that we certainly can work on and some areas that are going to require more of the department's, more of the government's support.

One point, I guess, I really want to follow up is on the Member from Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen, mentioned about the wood pellet initiative. I think that's a really good idea for our region. I'd like to know how this wood pellet initiative is being used within other areas of the government on a larger scale. I think it will be a really good area, because in our region it is isolated and we seem to have more difficulty with some of the programs. Again, it's no fault of anybody's, it's just because we're in that situation. Sometimes we lose out on the opportunities. I really like the idea that Mrs. Groenewegen proposed sometime in terms of wood pellet stoves and put wood pellets in some of our bigger departments within our government in the Sahtu region and also in some of our private business operations. I think that's a good enough issue to create our own wood pellet industry here in the Northwest Territories. I'm not too sure; I haven't seen any type of report in front of me that says this is what it costs for an industry or this is what it costs to have it. I don't know. I think it's a good idea but, again, I haven't seen enough reports, I haven't read enough in terms of if it's a viable and stable industry. I'm just thinking right here in terms of how to cut costs down in my communities in terms of the isolated situation we're in by having diesel fuel for our costs. Just some of these points I want to raise, Mr. Chair, and want to say that before we start on the budgets here, on the details. Thank you.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just picking up on the Minister's opening comments, there's been numerous references in there to the importance and the significance of ensuring that we have a diversified economy in the Northwest Territories and, admittedly, a lot of the attention has turned towards the non-renewable

resource sector. They're kind of nice ones to deal with because pretty much someone else is driving the agenda; someone else has got a big incentive to make sure it works and make sure there's a profitable bottom line that they can report to their shareholders. Some of the ones that I want to focus on when we talk about a diversified economy are the renewable resource sectors. I think it's difficult...I don't think there's any easy magic answers to the support that needs to be provided to some of these industries, but they still are potentially viable sectors and there are sectors that, I think, have had a lot more play and have produced a lot more towards our economy in the past than what they are now. I think that in some of the renewable resource areas we've actually gone backwards rather than gone forwards and I think that that's unfortunate but they do require more support, and not just financial support, but just more support in general from this government. So I want to talk about the support that's needed for what could be a viable commercial timber harvest in the Northwest Territories. It seems like we've run into lots of roadblocks. I speak of that only because it's particularly relevant in the South Slave and in the area that I represent. It is a land-based activity and it is something that does have its political aspects to it, but in the past this is a particular activity which created a lot of jobs -- not relatively speaking to some of the big industry -- but it created jobs, it created economy, and it is part of that diversified economy we're talking about.

The commercial fishery is another one. Commercial fishing was, at one time, hugely significant to the economy of Hay River. Now, I think we're down to a closed fish plant in Hay River, and maybe two or three fishermen out on the lake this winter, probably the lowest the fishery has ever been on Great Slave Lake for commercial fishing. Fishermen are basically fishing for domestic use and the little bit that they can sell. They are faced with all kinds of challenges to do with the cost of operating and making sure that their equipment is adequate and efficient. But there is a sector that was very vibrant at one time and no longer is. I think that our government has not done enough in terms of trying to figure out what we need to do. There is a resource under that water; it's sustainable to harvest it; there's a quota; the fish can be taken; it is readily marketable; it is a quality product; it has the potential of creating jobs and economy for people in the Northwest Territories and we just can't figure it out, either because of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation and that monopoly that's federally imposed or...Anyway, I won't go on about some of the challenges, but that is another viable sector that requires some intervention on the part of this government, but it's one that's just going to waste right now.

Then there is the issue of agriculture and the opportunity for this sector, again, has a lot of potential. The weather patterns and zones for growing crops is moving north. What used to be viable to produce in the U.S. mid-west has moved up into Canada and is now moving up into central Alberta and many things could be done in terms of livestock, in terms of crops, that could be done in our area but we lack a framework, we lack an agricultural policy and again we just seem to lack the will as a government to address things like the Property Assessment and Taxation Act, which would allow people to own enough land of significant enough quantity to actually do something in the agricultural sector. Again, an untapped economic sector with relatively little support.

Mr. Yakeleya mentioned the arts and craft area. We've seen good examples of where this does provide jobs and economy in communities. I would say that the model that we saw in Fort Liard was a good one and I think the key to that model was the cooperation, the cooperative... It's hard for people to do these activities on a stand-alone basis. They need a central agency where they can get materials, through which they can market their products, and where they can just get the kind of encouragement that they need to continue at it and create some economy for themselves in doing it. Again, I think that most times when you go into our communities, with a few exceptions, if you can come across the artisans, if you can come across the products, it's like finding a needle in a haystack and it's a happy, lucky day when you find somebody that has something that's for sale, because it's a very disorganized particular sector of our economy in the Northwest Territories. I know that, through the Dev Corp, efforts were made to try and organize things and the art of trading company, but sometimes we need to just provide the support at the community level and let the folks there figure out the best way to work together cooperatively.

Things like the muskox harvest have contributed to our economy in the past. When we talk about the caribou, somebody needs to just be more creative. I think there are a lot of caribou hunted in the Northwest Territories, but maybe somebody needs to think about how we could maximize the benefit from that particular harvest, whether it be aboriginal harvesters or whomever. You can buy commercially tanned deer hide. Why can't you buy commercially tanned caribou hide? Why is it just better to leave the hide sitting at the place where you shot the animal after you've skinned it, than it is to bring it to someplace where it could potentially be processed, which would create a job or two and could be sold which would create more money for the person that's actually investing and going out there hunting the caribou? Everybody seems to want antlers that's in the outfitters business. Maybe we should be selling the antlers, too. I don't know; there just has to be a way of being more creative and responding to how we might be taking a more businesslike approach to some of these things.

On the area of tourism, I just want to say another very important sector, potentially very little environmental impact. It's just quite an industry when people will come here by the thousands to use all our services and do aurora viewing and things like that. But I think there's also a huge potential for cultural tourism. Again it's a matter of getting people organized and realizing that there's money to be made in doing it. I think studies in southern Canada have shown there's a tremendous interest in cultural tourism. Again, it's very low impact but it could employ a lot of people and create a lot of economy.

One of the other things that has been talked about in the past and I don't know if it's ever been explored very far, but all kinds of different people have different interests. Some people might not be so interested in the aurora viewing; they might be interested in...Diamond tourism is one thing that was considered at one time. There are people who have hobbies and interests in geology, that have all kinds of different interests that are perhaps reflected in some of the things we have to offer here in the Northwest Territories. So I think we need to not get in a rut in the way we think about what visitors would like to do here and how we can attract visitors to the Northwest Territories through tourism, and we need to continue to

listen to people's ideas, to encourage people to brainstorm, and continue to provide support to some of these renewable resource sectors because they have contributed to our economy and hopefully will continue to do so. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. General comments. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are a few aspects of the department that some of my colleagues have highlighted. I'd like to endorse a couple things and maybe bring a couple other things to the floor.

The aspect of outfitting has been mentioned. A tremendous amount of attention has been paid to the recent skirmish involving caribou outfitting in this part of the territory. But something that I don't want to lose sight of, Mr. Chairman, is that outfitting is quite a diverse economic activity in just about all parts of the NWT and takes advantage of many of the species that live here: polar bear, bison, muskox, sheep in the great Sahtu, right?

AN HON. MEMBER: You betcha.

AN HON. MEMBER: The mighty Sahtu.

MR. BRADEN: The mighty Sahtu. Thank you. I stand corrected; the mighty Sahtu. So the comment that I would like to leave with committee, Mr. Chair, is that, as I say while there may be a lot of attention focused on one sector of the outfitting industry right now, and indeed there are major hurdles that the department has accountability for, there are many other regions of the NWT and many other people who have invested in this industry on the strength of our government's mandate and stewardship of wildlife resources. We are saying that these species can be harvested for sports hunting for revenue. We have invested a tremendous amount of money, Mr. Chairman, and human resources in designing the regulatory framework and the monitoring, as well, Mr. Chairman, as the investment that's gone into overall tourism marketing, and I'm including in here the money that is specifically earmarked for outfitters and for the sports hunting industry. So my plea here is to not lose sight of the broader and the bigger and the longer-term context of sports hunting and outfitting as a very genuine and, I advocate very strongly, a sustainable and responsible part of our overall wildlife regime and our economies.

Mr. Chairman, this department shares responsibility with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment in the NWT Arts Strategy. Roughly speaking, the ECE department has a responsibility for what is largely called art for arts sake, while my understanding is that this Department of ITI has more of a commercial, marketing and an economic accent. However, in going over the detail that's provided in the budget, and for that matter in the business plan -- perhaps I've missed it, Mr. Chairman, and we can get to it at the appropriate point in the papers here -- I see no reference, no accent, no highlight whatsoever to this department's mandate for doing its part through the Arts Strategy to enhance the corporate and the commercial and the economic side of the arts.

Mr. Chairman, in the department's business plan documents, and I don't think I'm taking liberty here when I say that our evaluation tonight is indeed on the appropriation from 2007-08, but it is also a three-year

business plan that we're looking at for all the departments of the government. It's noted here that the NWT is experiencing an out-migration in population. In other words, fewer people are choosing to stay here in the NWT. It's quite a contrast when we have Canada's sort of biggest GDP by population, the most activity going on of virtually any region in Canada relative to our size, and yet people are leaving. We go over this on a very routine basis, Mr. Chairman. What are the causes of this? Cost of living, isolation, hot economy in our neighbouring provinces that attracts them away. But I think we should really be taking much more of an in-depth look at this, Mr. Chairman. If we are to sustain the growth that we're seeing here, the needs of our population, then this is something that I think we should be ramping up on the radar screen for something that deserves our attention really because, as I've said, Mr. Chairman, sustaining and expecting growth in the areas that we've become used to really won't be possible.

Mr. Chairman, another aspect of planning and taking a look at the landscape, the environment that we're operating is even though resources are key and the reason for the success and the optimism that we have, the major project, the proposed Mackenzie Valley gas pipeline is not a certainty. We are still waiting for the agencies and the decision-makers well outside our jurisdiction to make up their mind about whether or not this is indeed a viable project. While this government has firmly staked its ground as wanting this project to happen, we've invested heavily again in the preparatory actions to get ready for it, in the event, the unfortunate and hopefully unlikely event that it does not happen, or does not happen within the time frame or the scale or the scope that we want it to, what then do we have to come and fill in the gaps and provide some long-term sustainability to our economy and to the communities, especially down the Mackenzie Valley and the delta, who will be probably drastically affected by a decision not to build this pipeline? So if we're going to be strategic about this, I think we have to, as well, cover off the potential that things just may not go as we want.

Mr. Chair, I'll stop there and see if anybody else wants to speak to general comments.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Braden. General comments.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Detail.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Does committee wish to proceed with the detail?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Can we go to 10-10? Information item, revenue summary.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 10-13, activity summary, corporate management, operations expenditure summary, \$6.564 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Go to page 10-16 and 10-17, activity summary, energy, mines and petroleum resources, operations expenditure summary, \$7.221 million. Mr. Miltenberger.

Committee Motion 46-15(5): Future Socio-Economic Agreements, Carried

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that this committee recommends that future resource development companies sign socio-economic agreements similar to those of the diamond mines. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): The motion is being handed out.

The motion is in order.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

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

---Carried

Page 10-17, activity summary, energy, mines and petroleum resources, operations expenditure summary, \$7.221 million. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have a question under contract services for \$1.3 million next year. Could I just get a breakdown on that, please?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Minister.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Chairman, if you'd just bear with me, we'll get that breakdown. Mr. Chairman, effectively what we've done is moved some of the money out of materials and supplies and purchased services and put it in the contracted services. It was for the production of our certificates related to diamonds. So not a large growth; more a moving of budgets, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you. That might speak to the increase between 1.1 to 1.3, but what I wanted to know is the breakdown of \$1.3 million in terms of where that contract services will be disbursed to. What kind of contract services does the department obtain under this program?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Chairman, generally the bulk I think of the contracted money goes to the geoscience area, our work with the Geoscience Centre. We also have contracts related to diamonds; we have contracts related to pipelines. So if you want specific breakdown by dollars, we can provide that for you, but I can't do it here tonight. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Perhaps not the exact dollar figure, but could I get more information from the Minister as to what kind of work is being contracted? Is this all consulting working, or is it training, or what is the objective under this program for \$1.3 million?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Chairman, as an example, if you look in the geoscience area we would spend a lot of

that contract money on helicopter time as people go out to do some of the survey work that we conduct primarily in the summer, Mr. Chairman. So that would be a contracted service that we would go out for.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: So would that geoscience work, for example, makes up 50 percent of the budget, 60 percent of the budget? Could I just get a breakdown on what we're looking at in terms of how that money is spent?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Chairman, of the 1.3, over one goes to geoscience, so it would be contracts related to the science. We have a joint office with the federal government, as Members know, and we conduct a lot of research which provides the public information necessary to incent future exploration and development. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you. That's fine.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Chair, the geoscience office has these contractors that work in the different regions. Could I ask the Minister if he would consider looking with his federal counterpart in terms of the amount of employment that could be available to beneficiaries from that region in terms of the work that could be done by some of our post-graduate students from the universities, or the high school grade students, kids, young adults who are finishing Grade 12 and may want to be introduced the world of geoscience when these agreements are taking place and that has an impact in our region? Thank you.

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

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Chairman, it's always our aim and our goal to try to maximize local participation when we're going out to contract this work. I know that we work very much with our regional people and I think the Member referred earlier, in his opening comments, to the strength we have and the strength of our people at the region. I appreciate the comment, and I think that's something we've invested a lot of time in, is working with this department to develop that local capacity, that regional capacity. We go out for these contracts. Local participation is important, but we are looking for, oftentimes, geologists, geoscientists, sometimes it's very specialized, sometimes it's expertise we have to go south for. But we're looking to use local contractors as much as possible. We're talking about helicopters, we're talking about fixed-wing charters, Mr. Chairman, so there is other work related to that. We are trying to pull in, as much as possible, northern intern students, where possible, and we will continue to try to maximize that. I appreciate the Member's support. I know that he's been very active in this and in trying to make the case that in the Sahtu we need to do whatever we can to make sure we're using Sahtu companies and then looking to involving Sahtu students in this work for the summer. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the point I'm hoping I could convey to the Minister is that some of these interns that do come in, even for northern interns, I think we looked at some of these interns that some of these students from the Northwest Territories I believe that some of them from the South last year from some of the universities and schools who are specializing in geology, specializing in picking up different kinds of rocks and identifying them, and they're in our area. I'm not too sure what type of arrangements the geoscience centres have with the GNWT and the federal government work with post-secondary institutions to promote these students through their degrees of geology or geophysics. I guess what I'm asking is that enough concentrated effort be given to some of our students who are in Grade 12 who are finishing school who may have an interest in the whole world of geoscience. It could be mapping, it could be rock collection, it could be analyzing the rock collection or a whole variety of work that could be looked at. That's what I'm asking, Mr. Chair, in terms of this work being done in the North. It's very important work, even traditional knowledge in this area here in the geoscience. It needs to be happening in terms of traditional knowledge into the mountains or the areas they work on. So I would appreciate it if the Minister would look at this and give it some thought and see how they could work out something that would involve people in the Northwest Territories, and from my example, my region involved in this work. I appreciate that, because the companies certainly look forward to this type of work by local companies that have either 100 percent or 51 percent ownership on joint ventures with fixed-wing or heliport or camping. I know that's an issue that at least our land claim organizations really work hard to ensure when they come into our regions. So I want to ask the Minister on this one here. Thank you.

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

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me say I certainly agree with the Member both in the area of mining and in oil and gas. We need to do more to interest young people in getting into these fields. When I say "we," I think the burden, the responsibility, is shared both by government and properly should be shared by industry, as well. We try to work closely with the industry associations, whether mining or oil and gas. We do have some community outreach in our department. We have a person who travels around talking to young people. We put on prospecting courses and we deliver those throughout the various regions, and we have had some northerners who have become success stories and young people who have been interested in prospecting. But when we go out for the work, at the advance stage of this exploration typically we're looking to universities to supply students for the fieldwork. So I think what we need to do...and let me say where we find northerners who are available, of course we jump at the chance to get them to come back home. I think we need to be able to do more pre-university in getting our young people interested in these very rewarding and often lucrative careers. So I take the Member's point. But I would say that I have been satisfied with some of our community outreach work. I know we have people in the department who are very interested in working with young people to try to infect them with an interest in this field, and I think they're doing a good job. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I understand that certain levels of advancement need to be looked at by different levels of university students. I guess my point is to look at a strong entry point where students from the Northwest Territories, students who are in the Sahtu region that could help out. I'm not too sure that requires additional dollars from industry, or requires extra dollars from the federal government or from other agencies. I guess what I'm asking is that because we wouldn't have much of a chance to get our students involved in this program. I know in our region I didn't see very many students -- and I could be wrong on this one here -- from the Northwest Territories who had post-secondary education experience or are working towards a degree from the Northwest Territories working in the Sahtu. I know the rock in the mountains, some of my young people was saying, well, we could climb those mountains. We've been on them for the last four or five days. We could pick the rocks. You know, how come these guys are so special?

They're willing to learn. I guess that's what I'm getting on to the Minister, stressing the strong point that some of our students can certainly spark their interest. I know education is something that geoscientists, they don't really have much of an opportunity as the smaller schools don't allow certain programs in our communities because of the way the system is set up. I know Diamex does that. They hire a couple students out of the Sahtu that worked in the region. They went to the school, they opened up two positions for schools to go out with experienced surveyors and people who worked in that area and they taught the students for at least two weeks. So I make it a plea, I guess, to the department to have a strong push for our own people in the North to work in this area here.

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

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think some very good points. One of the things that we can probably do a better job of is encouraging our...We've said it a number of times in the House and a number of Members point to this, but to get into these kinds of careers, obviously our students need a strong foundation in math and science. There's really no way around that. So an interest in climbing hills and finding rocks is good, but if you're going to get into this at university and get the credentials you need, we've got to encourage our young people to stick to the books, work hard and make sure they have top marks in math and science.

Now having said that, I think we can also work with companies. I've seen, and I think the Member knows and has been pointed out to me on past occasions, some companies do a very good of involving local young people, and other companies don't put as much of an effort into that. I think as a government we can encourage companies to try to work with our young people, to go into our schools and talk about what they do and try to create some interest. That really is just a matter of...You asked about whether it was more money. I don't think it's a matter of more money; I think it's a matter of more coordinated effort at the regional level, more working with the companies as they come to do work in our communities and in our regions, to talk about the interest that might be out there. But, Mr. Chairman, I think that's

part of it; is drumming up interest, talking about what these companies do. The second part of it is making sure our kids have a strong foundation in math and science, because without that they really can't get into the field. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Page 10-17, activity summary, energy, mines and petroleum resources, operations expenditure summary, \$7.221 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Pages 10-18, 10-19, activity summary, energy, mines and petroleum resources, grants and contributions, contributions, \$1.210 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, on 10-19, if the Minister could explain the drop off on the Taltson hydro matter. Last year, we have almost \$1.4 million invested. I can see where it's going to the feasibility study, et cetera. Can the Minister tell me today that all the work has been completed, or is there any more ongoing work? Let's start with that, please. Thank you.

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

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Chairman, the work for last year in that stage has been completed and I believe we have expended the \$1.395 million. There is more work that we need to do this year. Of course, Mr. Chairman, there is more pre-engineering work. We've got to get to a stage now where we can make the final case for this project and put the business deal together. I think we need to talk about an appeal to the federal government for some equity injection here. I think we have some future announcements to come in the coming weeks as we get into going through our energy plan. We will have more discussion around hydro projects and I think that will inform what we are proposing to do this year. So that discussion isn't in front of us now, but let me just say that there is more work to be done. We think this has the potential of this project to offset a huge amount of GHG emissions and it is one of the projects we are most bullish on, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I may capture the Minister's words, it's a bullish situation here. I think it's a good project with lots of potential. Why isn't there any money listed under this as a budget item? Are we waiting for Minister Flaherty to fly over with money? Where is the money to move forward on this initiative? There isn't any listed here. Is it listed somewhere else or are we sitting hoping that more money comes?

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

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Chairman, there are a number of core energy projects or objectives that we are proposing to fund. I won't get into that detail here. This is a part of that, Mr. Chairman. It will be part of the discussion in the coming weeks. In fact, next week we will have this

discussion around this. Yes, we would like to see some federal investment. We think we can make a good case under some of the eco funds that are currently available. I know the Premier, the Minister of ENR and myself have both talked, all three of us have spoken with Minister Baird to talk about how those funds might be accessed. I have also spoken with the Minister of ENRCAN about that. We know they are going to be application based. We think this project is a prime candidate offsetting the diesel fuel at the mines. The expansion of that hydroelectric in the South Slave we think is going to pay huge dividends, Mr. Chairman. We are hoping to be able to make the sales pitch successful. We will see. Let me just say that we will discuss funding for this project next week and in the coming weeks. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just make the point that seems as if, to one degree or other, we have underpinned a lot of hope and aspiration on the Taltson project, yet we don't have anything underlining it with dollar money. So I take the Minister's comments at this time on this particular subject. I just thought you would think if it's such an important project, it would be funded through its process in advance. I look forward to these excellent announcements waving in front of us like a carrot. Thank you.

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

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Chairman, I don't hear another question. Let me say that we are proposing, and will propose, to put GNWT money towards this project and we would like to do it in a manner that makes it a candidate to lever additional federal resources. So how we cash flow this project we think is important. Yes, we have pinned a lot on this project because it may be more important than any other project we have in front of us that is at a stage where it's viable. It has the potential to probably offset the most GHG emissions that that is what we will underpin our energy plan. Members talked earlier about adaptation and mitigation. Those two elements, those two prongs of a strategy. We agree that those are the critical components. What we want to do is see GHGs offset and see a reduction. So we are proposing that this project can do a lot of that. Again, I look forward to more discussion with Members on this in the coming weeks.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Page 10-19, activity summary, energy, mines and petroleum resources, grants and contributions, contributions, \$1.210 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Turn to page 10-22 and 10-23, activity summary, economic development, operations expenditure summary, \$25.084 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Mr. Ramsay.

Committee Motion 47-15(5): Increased Investment In Tourism, Carried

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that this committee recommends that investment in tourism be increased in order to ensure a diversified economy for the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): There is a motion on the floor. The motion is being distributed. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

---Applause

Thank you. Page 10-23, activity summary, economic development, operation expenditure summary, \$25.084 million. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In this area is a description of the Northwest Territories Business Development and Investment Corporation for which this department has oversight responsibility. We are just coming up to two years now, Mr. Chairman, since the legislation was passed to basically rejig the agencies responsible for business investment and development in the NWT. I wanted to ask the Minister if he would give us a snapshot of how business is. Is the BDIC meeting targets, expectations, with its new mandate after two years of operation now, Mr. Chairman? It's almost \$3.8 million that the department puts into the corporation for its operations, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Member is correct; it's been about two years now that we passed this legislation to create this new entity. I am very happy with the board, the board chairman, Darrell Beaulieu I think is doing a great job in leading this organization and has a strong board around him. We have undertaken a number of proposed changes to some of the programming and it's been some time we have been working through those. A lot are related to lending vehicles. The BDIC is interested in becoming more of a full service lender. Some of it requires regular change and some of it doesn't. But we are putting together a presentation for committee, which I believe is scheduled to present to committee next week. There are a number of changes that are making as a department for some of the grants and contributions that we are responsible for and a number of other changes proposed that the BDIC currently has control over in terms of their programming.

Also undertaken was a review of the subsidiaries. We are working on some additional businesses that we would like to see reinvigorated and stimulated and point to the Arts and Crafts Co-op in Ulukhaktok. I think there is a long, proud tradition of printmaking in that community and arts and crafts. We are trying to stimulate and restart the effort there because it is something the community and the artisans miss. We spent some money upgrading that facility over the winter because there were some structural

concerns, but we are working as an organization to stimulate businesses, new businesses. We are tracking the value of loans. Last year to December 2006, the value of loans that were put out there by the BDIC was \$5.2 million and most of those were in level three communities or our smallest communities, almost double what we have in our market-based communities.

So the focus is shifting somewhat. Philosophically, I think I have spoken with Members in the past about my desire to see the loans eligible in all communities, but the grants, the contributions primarily targeted at our smaller, non-market communities and you will see that reflected in the revised programming that we are proposing to come to committee with. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Chairman, as I mentioned in some general comments, I was looking for some level of detail on the department's role vis-à-vis the NWT Arts Strategy. Perhaps this is a page where I will ask about it. I don't see anything referring to it directly. I would like to see what level of responsibility and investment is the department making in light of its mandate here with the NWT Arts Strategy, Mr. Chairman?

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

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Chairman, we have a number of initiatives that fall under our responsibility in the NWT Arts Strategy. Our complement in the department is about two positions, with expenses. It's a couple hundred thousand dollar range plus for the investment on staff. The first initiative we have undertaken is the first one is to develop an e-commerce networking database system. We did launch the NWT arts and fine crafts database supporting web pages. We have somebody in the department responsible for monitoring that. We undertook a number of consultations. We conducted a number of e-commerce workshops in each of the regions and that has been fairly successful. The idea is to have a point of contact for our artisans. Specifically, Member Groenewegen in fact has pointed out how difficult it is to buy arts and crafts in the Northwest Territories and you really have to know where to look. We are trying to change that. We are trying to make it easier for people to buy arts and crafts.

The next thing we have been working on is the NWT arts branding logo. The first phase is completed. The deputy minister steering committee, through our Visual Identity Program, approved the branding logo last fall. Cabinet looked at that about a month later and approved the logo. So that will be rolling out.

We are looking forward to having that tag go with our arts and crafts that we can brand NWT arts and crafts and people will recognize that that was made in the NWT. So those were two of the key initiatives, Mr. Chairman, that we have undertaken. Of course, we are also, as Members are aware, involved in working with the Canada Winter Games artist participation and developing the program there, which we hope can carry on from the Canada Winter Games. Members have made the point that we need to build towards the Olympics. We would agree. We think there is a lot of work that can be done with the other jurisdictions that go beyond just the Canada Winter

games, but that was certainly a good start. I have scheduled to have further meetings with my respective colleagues and tourism counterparts to talk about how we can jointly market the North and promote our arts and craft sector. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Chairman, thank you for that description. In looking over the report that was filed as of March 31st last year on the progress report of the Arts Strategy, there is indeed some information here on the kind of activities that the Minister has outlined.

You know, Mr. Chairman, and I find this a weakness across many government departments, when we hear outlines of these kinds of programs and the dollars and PYs that are attached to them, the information that comes back to us is very thin, very sketchy, and it's not at all what I would call results and performance related. One example, for instance, maybe the Minister could provide a little more specific on this area here, the exercise towards e-commerce solutions where we could help individual artisans or manufacturers get their product to buyers and to market quicker. The Minister said it's quite successful. How successful is that? How many NWT artisans and manufacturers are actually online now? Do we have some sense of the volume of traffic that's been generated that way?

Mr. Chairman, there is some frustration here in terms of a lot of narrative and superlative descriptions of what goes on, but chronically lacking in results in the performance and things that will help me gauge, as an MLA, whether or not it's worth voting the quarter of a million dollars that the department says it spent last year.

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

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Chairman, the Member's point that we need to be able to account for results is a good one. I don't have the exact number of artisans who have gone online and are a part of this database. I am thinking it's in the neighbourhood of 30 to 40. Members will remember, though, that we made the conscious decision some years back to no longer sell these goods on behalf of artisans. So we don't go out in communities and pay for these goods, bring them in and warehouse them and try to sell them anymore. What we do hope to do is set up this database so people who are interested in purchasing these goods can go online and find the contact information for the artisans. Anecdotally, the department tells me that most of the artists are very happy with the way this is working. It's generating interest, generating calls and generating orders. How much, I am not sure we have that exact information, but I can ask. The one thing they have pointed to as a shortcoming or weakness is the fact that we haven't had this branding program, this logo and the associated labelling and tags that would go with that. That's going to be important for this to be more successful on store shelves and to be able to differentiate it from the other arts and crafts from other regions. I think we need that branding, that promotion. So the website is a good start. It's a good piece, but we need to do more. I think the more focus on the brand in the future should stand us in good stead. Again, I take the Member's point that we need to ensure that we are measuring for results

and know what kind of an impact this is having. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess the first thing I will start off with is I wrote the Minister a couple of months ago with regard to a number of questions as far as the details and breakdown of the business development bank. Will the Minister be able to respond to some of those questions tonight, or is the information still forthcoming? Thank you.

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

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I think most of the matters I could speak to here tonight. There is still some analysis on some of his request underway, but I can provide him with as much information as I can and whatever I can't, we will get back to him with. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let's start with the economic development perspective. The aurora industry has taken quite a beating this year. It looks as if it's taken a beating over the last couple of years, but what is the Minister doing to help with the problem with the aurora industry? Can the Minister tell me how much is outstanding on our business development loans as a whole for the aurora sector? Thank you.

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

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Chairman, I don't have that number in front of me here, but we can get it very quickly for the Member. Let me say that I recognize the pressure that the sector is under. There are some things that have befallen Japanese tourism across the country. It is down across the country. It has been down for some time. I think somewhat we were insulated from that for awhile but that has caught up to us. There are a number of factors: the strength of our dollar; Mr. Chairman, certainly competition from Alaska; competition from the Yukon; somewhat Alberta, Scandinavian countries; our lack of competitive infrastructure as it relates to being able to land charters. We can't handle international flights, as Members know. There are some things that we need to do as a government. We have commissioned a study with the Department of Transportation to talk about what upgrades required to our airport would be to accommodate larger aircraft. We are looking into that.

Mr. Chairman, I have also met with the Commissioner of industry in Alaska and with the industry association for tourism in Alaska to talk about potential partnerships in the aurora viewing business. They are amenable to future discussions. Of course, I am sure that all jurisdictions would consider certain things proprietary. There is some competitive nature to this obviously, but I think there is some merit in cooperation in trying to grow the entire pie and we are going to focus on that in our planning future discussion with Alaska as the key other jurisdiction that has had the biggest impact over the last year as they have reasserted themselves and refocused on this industry in

which they used to be quite active in in Fairbanks. It lapsed for some time, but they are back in a big way. So I think there is a real need to sit down with them and understand what they are doing and understand how we might cooperate. The exact number of dollars for loans, we will provide that, but we can't give that to the Member here tonight. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. A couple of years ago, I proposed a concept about establishing an office in Japan so we could be on the offensive with this type of problem and the forefront of solutions such as promoting the quality of the aurora here in the Territories. We even have the Japanese experts citing that aurora is the best in the world found in the Northwest Territories. That being said, Mr. Chairman, what type of work has been done by the Minister, vis-à-vis with partners such as Canadian Tourism or some type of market establishment process in Japan, consulate, who knows what? What type of work has been done to dig in a presence of the Northwest Territories on this matter? Thank you.

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

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Chairman, we looked at and analyzed a number of different options for having a presence on the ground in Japan that would help us promote our aurora tourism sector; some of them more expensive than others. To have a permanent presence, a trade office, if you will, the way Alberta and some of the other jurisdictions do in Japan is very expensive. So what we looked at was something a little more conservative and we have had discussions with the NWT Tourism Group. They are interested in pursuing the option as they currently have with an agent responsible for Europe, finding an agent responsible for Japan. It's likely that that organization, NWT, would be responsible for finding an agent, although we want to ensure that they and the department, that we are collectively able to work with the local operators here to find somebody that the operators can agree on. That's not always the easiest piece. We want to find somebody who the operators believe will have an impact and can work with the main organizations in Japan to drive traffic here. So that is something we are talking about. This is something the NWT is interested in. They feel it's been successful in Europe and they would like to duplicate the approach as it relates to Japan. Now it may not be exactly in the same manner, but we are looking at a number of options or solutions. It's more in this area as compared to a permanent trade office. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Maybe I will just change gears for a moment to the hunting industry. Can the Minister tell me today what is outstanding in our outfitter industry as far as our business loans? Thank you.

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

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Chairman, this is part of the analysis that we are still doing. It goes back some time. Of course, it predates BDIC, Mr. Chairman. So we are

compiling that information. We will have that for the Member shortly, but we are not there yet in terms of the specific ask. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can I expect that information by the end of this week, or before the end of session? Thank you.

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

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Chairman, I will make the commitment to get it for the Member before the end of session.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just continuing in a similar vein as I did with the aurora sector, about a week and a half ago, I had asked the Minister for some details. They said they were working on some strategies because if we have to start shifting the hunters away from tags and find a different way of promoting the outfitting industry, trying to convince people to put down their guns and pick up their cameras, the Minister alluded to the fact that they were working on something. Of course, the Speaker ruled it out of order because he decided it was too hypothetical. I would like to hear if the Minister has any further information. Even though he said they were working on stuff, I would like to hear what he's been working on. Thank you.

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

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Chairman, I am not going to get into the discussion of the tags and the allocation for 2007-2008, where ENR sits and what is going on. That's a matter of record on the floor of the House and I am concerned about sub judice. Let me say we are working with the outfitting organization. This is an industry that is under pressure. I have met with the Barren-Ground Caribou Outfitters Association. We have talked about and I have agreed that we would provide support to help them put together a presentation for the Wekeezhii board. We are doing that. They have hired the consultant. I think it's in the neighbourhood of about \$30,000 worth of support. We are also analyzing future options for the industry, discussing with that organization how we can best provide aid. This is important that this is something that is not departmentally driven but worked through and with the outfitters to best understand how we can help them. Much of it does depend on what happens for and with future numbers of tags. At this point, we don't have that information. I will assure the Members that we continue to work with this organization. We were in contact with the Barren-Ground Caribou Outfitters Association and the president prior to the recent meeting conducted by ENR. We had lots of discussion about how we could best provide resources and so we continue to do that. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's actually in the future options in the aid section that I am looking into and it's the area that those types of scenarios are being developed. Thank you.

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

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Chairman, we are considering all possible scenarios. Again, we don't know what the 2008 numbers are going to look like. There is a public consultation process that Wekeezhii will go through. They will have public hearings. Let me specifically say, though, for individual businesses, because even prior to this, this is an industry that has been under some pressure and we have been working with some of the individual businesses. We do have and provide support and programming for individual businesses the way we do with all of our businesses, Mr. Chairman, in the areas of business planning, business relief. We talk about product development, we help with marketing. So there is assistance we provide more broadly to the organization. The Members have spoken to some of the tourism dollars we have related to the sector in Tourism 2010. We also work with specific businesses to help them develop marketing and product. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Next on the list is Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a couple of questions. I wasn't going to mention anything about the caribou issue, knowing that the application was filed last Friday, but the Minister just mentioned that he didn't want to speak about the tag issue due to the sub judice rule but he did go on to explain at length on all that he's working on on behalf of the association. Mr. Chairman, I am sympathetic to the light they are under especially for the small mom and pop operations and those who have been trying to work in a sustainable way. If the government is being sued and it is a defendant, how can he be working on supporting them in other ways? Isn't government as a whole part of the defendant? I mean the Minister started that discussion so I just want the Minister to clarify that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Minister.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Chairman, the programming and support was in place prior to any lawsuit; it will be in place post any lawsuit. We continue on with Tourism 2010; the marketing dollars and Tourism 2010 have not dried up. This has not come to a screeching halt because of this pending court action, Mr. Chairman. So we continue to work with this association, continue to meet with them, continue to support them, and I'm not proposing that we stop. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: So I don't understand how a body is suing a government, and I'm sure it's the government as a whole, not just the ENR section, and another section of the government is working to support them in presentations to the Wekeezhii board. I don't understand that. I thought, for example, in self-government negotiations situations if you litigate, the work stops until that litigation matter comes to resolution. Does he see any contradiction in the government being sued and at the same time part of the

government wing, or is he saying in general terms he said pre-litigation and post-litigation that they would be continuing work under Tourism 2010? Could he be more specific on exactly what he is able to do or what he is working on, or just clarify? I don't want him to violate the sub judice rule but, seeing as he brought it up, I just don't understand why he can't see the contradiction.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Minister

HON. BRENDAN BELL: I don't see the contradiction because it's not the Caribou Outfitters Association that is requesting the judicial review, it's some individual parties. I'm not going to get into it, Mr. Chairman, but clearly we don't have to grind all industry support to a halt, and we're not.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Okay. So then let me just give the Minister an opportunity to explain exactly what is he doing for those who are not suing the government.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Minister.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Chairman, as I just indicated to one question a minute ago, we are working with the Barren-Ground Caribou Outfitters Association to help them and assist them in putting together a presentation that they will take to the Wekeezhii Board. We're also working with the association to talk about some potential scenarios for aid and assistance for the industry generally. Then, individually, as we always have in the past and will continue in future, we work with individual businesses in the areas of business planning, business relief, marketing, Mr. Chairman. We continue to do that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you. On that, I had asked questions in the House about the interest I had in learning more about what the involvement of the Minister was in preparing for the ENR's changes to tags and such, but I realize that I don't want to go there because I don't want to jeopardize the government's position, understanding that they are in litigation and we have to stay out of that process. However, outside of that, would the Minister be coming to us with information on exactly what he will be providing to those who are not in litigation and those that the Minister, in the outfitter's industry, who is...You know, the Minister keeps mentioning compensation package or assistance or some kind of assistance and I don't think it's fair to raise expectations out there and to make it look as though the government can do a lot in terms of compensation but not be able to. So I think that the Minister should be more clear about the extent of assistance we're giving out, especially in light of...I'd like to ask, I don't know if he can clarify at the moment and I'd like to ask the Minister for a commitment to come to the Members about what plans he has for that industry.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Minister.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Sure, Mr. Chairman. To be very, very clear, I haven't talked about compensation and won't talk about compensation; we're talking about assistance to the industry, individual assistance. We're talking about marketing assistance, not compensation, Mr. Chairman. So I'm prepared to come before committee and talk about the work that we're doing with the Barren-Ground Caribou Outfitters Association. As I've indicated earlier, I'm sure that organization would be happy to share a copy of the presentation to go to Wekeezhii. Members will see it as it goes to Wekeezhii, and we can talk about the other assistance and programming that we currently have on offer and are providing to the outfitters. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: I've already stated my position on how, I mean, you know, helping with the presentation, that's fine, but I don't think that could be flogged as a proactive or substantial involvement in assisting the industry. Now the Minister stated that the department is interested in helping with marketing. Now, I don't know how to pose this question without talking about the tag issue but if we have an industry that's suffering, what exactly does he mean by marketing assistance? Does that involve any money? What is that exactly that the Minister is doing with this industry that's in a little bit of an uproar over, you know, litigation and reduction in tags? Could he be more specific about what exactly marketing assistance is?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Minister.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Chairman, of course, it depends. The work that we do with individual business, it depends on their business plan, where they propose to market, the show that they intend to go to, where they want to sell their hunts. So the nature of the marketing support can differ by businesses. We do have core marketing support through the Tourism 2010 Strategy for the industry and certainly I'd be prepared to come to committee and we could bring the president, I'm sure, who'd be interested in talking about the marketing that the organization, that the industry has done as a whole, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you. I've had regular discussions with the president of the association before this issue and during and I'd certainly be interested in hearing how we do marketing assistance for a business that has to substantially reduce their operation. But anyway, I'll leave it at that because, you know, we've been going back and forth on that.

I just want to spend a last minute talking about the arts and crafts issue and under traditional economies I looked for a Minister's statement on how we could better improve the arts and crafts industry of the North. The Minister mentioned earlier about Member Groenewegen talking about how difficult it is to buy arts and crafts in communities and I was part of that discussion, too. We talked about that a year ago, but to this day you can't go to Aklavik and go down to Aklavik fur shop. In Fort Providence you go to the inn and you could ask to have access there. In Fort Simpson you have to chase around

the guy to open the shop there; I've never been able to go in there. I think maybe the best crafts you can get are in Enterprise at Winnie's shop, but, you know, traffic, regular highway traffic. Over the last two or three weeks I've been watching the marketing campaign we have, Look Up North -- it's very impressive -- and I'm just wondering if the people who did decide to come up, why is it that with all the money we spend we can't, even those of us who can go to communities and want to buy things, can't. Yet, the paradoxical part of it is when we were in Simpson for the NWT Games, we had ladies coming up to us with their goods wanting to sell them to us. Everywhere we go, people want to sell them to us. Diamonds are good, oil and gas is good, great. Diversification of industry is so important. Website is not the biggest issue. I mean, we could sell things on e-Bay. What is the government doing? Where is the government going to make sure that in every community people could go and buy these crafts? Right now, we're getting into such exclusive markets that unless you get somebody custom making for you, we can't get jackets made or buy jackets or, I don't know. I'd like to ask the Minister about, in all of his work with the computer database and the people working in Yellowknife, PYs under the arts and crafts section, all the promotional campaigns, what improvement have we made as a government since last year, that we had the same discussion, about how we could support the arts and crafts makers to make their things and be able to sell them? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Minister.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Chairman, I think we now have the successful arts and fine crafts database and although the Member makes the point about e-Bay and any of us could go on e-Bay, I think many of these artisans need the help in developing this sort of an online resource which we've provided. I think the other point I would make is that it's not solely targeted at individuals going on who would purchase goods. The idea is to have retailers go and look and see our list of artisans, see the product that they can provide and then provide them the conduit to talk to those people and to talk about the level of supply that they could provide. If you're a retailer, you're going to want to know that there's going to be a consistent supply; you're going to want to know how many jackets or pairs of slippers can be produced in a month. If you're going to make commitments and decide that you're going to sell this in your retail outfit, you're going to need to know that there's a consistent supply. So it will take some time for retailers to get familiar with this and decide that they want to carry more of these arts and crafts in their shops, but we're hopeful that that can continue to build.

As I mentioned, we decided some time ago, as a government, to get out of the business of directly selling and competing with some of the retailers, some of the art galleries, so this is what we are doing to support individually those artisans. We don't think that everybody has the technical capability to set up a similar operation online and/or use e-Bay effectively, so this is something that we think we can do.

In addition to that, I would point out, Mr. Chairman, we're much closer to having this branding and promotional program rolled out which will help brand our goods and help differentiate them from some of the other goods for sale out there. That can be successful in ensuring people

recognize and know that this is genuine NWT handicrafts. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. I don't have anybody else on the list for...Okay, I've got Mrs. Groenewegen, then Mr. Yakeleya, then I'll go back to Ms. Lee. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to sort of jump in here where Ms. Lee left off with respect to the arts and crafts sector. I think we have to talk to the artisans themselves and find some creative ways to market this stuff. It is true, it varies by community. On a day when somebody comes up to you and actually has a nice quality article to sell, it's just a happy lucky day for you, you know, if you can afford it. I have to tell you, these folks need some mentoring, and they need some support, too, because a lot of them are great artists and not such great businesspeople. I can tell you some examples of where sometimes people need money for something and they end up selling their stuff, they don't have a venue to sell it, they're selling it on their own, and they end up selling it for far less than what it's actually worth. There are all kinds of scenarios that evolve. The reason why I say I think we should talk to the artisans themselves...I have to tell you something else, buying something in a store or an art gallery isn't nearly as interesting as buying it from the person who made it. I know we have this little thing in Hay River on Saturdays in the summertime -- it's called the Fisherman's Wharf -- but anybody can show up there and go into a little kiosk and sell anything that they've made. Maybe we need to create venues like that where if you go to assemblies, inevitably somebody's got a table set up and people can bring their stuff, but it's all very informal and it's all very just kind of spontaneous; it's not something that we planned for. I think there are activities that take place in the Northwest Territories where there would be people around that would be in the market to buy things and people who could supply them and I think we need to look for more opportunities to match that up.

I'll give you an example. There was a lady from Deline who made a beautiful beaver skin coat and she brought it down to Hay River the other day, all the way from Deline on the winter road, and wanted to go back with supplies, but she needed to sell this coat in order to do this. Well, it's kind of hard to walk around Hay River and find the person that should buy this coat. I tried to help her out, but inevitably I think she might have practically given the thing away just to get some money to buy groceries to put in the truck to go back to Deline with. There's not always a lot of planning and maybe the concept of operating it like a business in the sense that you put some money away for another day, it's very...It's set up in such a way that I feel that sometimes the people who are in the arts and crafts business actually don't realize what they should do for their product. I just think the government needs to spend more time talking to the folks that make these things and try to find venues...and they don't always feel really happy either about putting them in a store where the price gets marked up double. I mean I'm not saying anything against people who try to retail this stuff, but it doesn't make people feel really good either.

So I have a lot of ideas about the arts and crafts business in the Northwest Territories and I really support these people, that they have a very unique gift and unique products and, like I said, I think it would mean so much more to people who are buying them if they bought them

directly from them. I'll probably get e-mails now from people in the retail sector. But even a venue set up where people could work on their product in a place people could come, would come on a certain day, even if it was only one day a month or one day a week, where people could come and they'd have a place to work; like a sewing centre in the community, like they have in Nunavut, they have the print shops. If you go to the community for something, you can go there, people are working there, they're making them but at the same time you can buy one. If you go to Dene Fur Clouds in Fort Providence, the people are working there, they're creating product, but you can buy it. Maybe some funding for sewing centres in the communities where people have a place where they could get together, they could socialize, they could make things and then there would be an opportunity for marketing, as well, but some kind of support so that they don't end up kind of getting less than what the real market value for their product should be.

Those are just a few of my ideas on supporting the arts and crafts. I have ideas, but I think we need to hear from the folks that are in the business. I think you would find if you did survey and consult with them, that sometimes they just feel that it's discouraging that they aren't able to get more and have avenues to market their product through. Thank you.

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

HON. BRENDAN BELL: I certainly agree with the Member. I think there's huge potential here and it is going to be about being creative. I think it's also going to be driven by communities, in my opinion. I look to the work that Mr. Pokiak has done, the Ulukhaktok print shop and the work to try to get that off the ground, there's consideration of that underway right now. I agree that we need to do more in the area of mentoring and coaching some of the people who produce these crafts and are not necessarily that skilled at business and understanding how to retail these goods. That's why I disagree with the point that these people could find their way to e-Bay to sell the goods. I think this database was set up, we have our staff in the department working with the artisans to coach and mentor them to understand where the markets might be, to help make the contacts between themselves and those who might be interested in selling. I agree that there is something to that personal sales approach. We want to try to foster that and support that. We're also helping these members with the e-commerce transactions which maybe seem a little overwhelming for some people. We are producing, every three months we're producing a newsletter that features various artisans. So there are a number of things underway.

I think the branding work, I'll come back to that, is critical. We have raw materials programs to help people get set up with moose, caribou, seal hides, with quills, with birch bark basket making materials, sewing materials, painting supplies. There's a schedule in the BDF that people can apply for to get money to get them the raw materials they need so that they can turn around and produce the goods and sell them. Without that, we know some people have a hard time finding the money to get started in the business. So there are a number of things we're doing, but I certainly agree with the Member that we can do more. This is an exciting area that could really see some additional support, some additional expansion, and government can play a key role here. We want to work

with communities to make more of this happen. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. I've got next on the list, Mr. Yakeleya and then Ms. Lee. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to ask the Minister has this department anytime considered looking at each region as a unique product to sell? I know our region is known for, of course Mrs. Groenewegen talked about this lady doing a lot of work on a jacket that she has and she might have given at a discount price. I know our region in the Sahtu is also known for some of its moose skin boats and drum making, such as the area around Fort Providence is the rabbit fur products, and McPherson is in the canvas bag making department. Tlicho is, of course, beadwork and that. I know we're asking these specific regions to market a unique product in the Northwest Territories that's I think the best in the world. With the amount of work that's going into it and the quality of the work, we have to maintain the quality of the work that's going into our products and not slip on that level of quality.

I know Mrs. Groenewegen talked about that jacket. I know the type of quality that has gone into that type of jacket, and having a product like that be shown around the world, I think that says a lot about our people, our talents and our skills. The amount of work that goes into producing these types of products is very unique. It's our way of life. A long time ago, these jackets that were made were made for us. Somewhere down the line, we started to sell for other people and people would say, well, how much is your jacket? How much are your moccasins? How much are your gloves? It's priceless. It's priceless. But a jacket like, you know what you could buy it for, these jackets.

AN HON. MEMBER: No deal. Alright.

MR. YAKELEYA: So I want to say that the challenge in how you put this to a market.

I agree with Mrs. Groenewegen in terms of having a place, having available supplies there for the people. Nice beads, like a co-op system where the ladies can come, the men can come. I really encourage what you're saying about the wild products, about having moose and caribou hides available and men can come and make small drums and moose skin mitts. I think that's our claim to fame in the Northwest Territories, about our good, quality products second to none.

As I heard from a friend, I heard that this is the second-best jacket I've seen, because I haven't seen the best yet. So I think that's what we have to do, Mr. Minister. I agree with the Members here. That's all I want to say. We really need to protect our people, and our most valuable resources in the North are in the communities right across the valley. There's lots of good talent, artists and that, so we really have to protect them and put some value to the work, but also have some control because if we let it slide, these people, they know how to get the money from us. If they want money, they'll sew a quick slipper. I've seen it in my community, and I know the quality isn't there all the time, so we have to be very careful, Mr. Minister. We could have some good things there.

Like McPherson; we should be celebrating that they make good canvas bags. I went to that shop and saw those hard-working people there making good canvas bags. I went to school with some of those students there in the school. Even Fort Providence. Norman Wells has a good museum there. Here in Yellowknife they have some good stores here. I think all over, even in Smith, the museum there. There's lots of good talent here, so I guess how we collect all that. Mr. Chairman, that's all I want to say. It's just a comment to the Minister and I want to leave it at that. We have some good raw talent in the Northwest Territories. Let's protect them. Mahsi.

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

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Very quickly, if I could. I agree that the concept where it's essentially a factory with retail space has worked successfully in a number of our communities, and the Members have pointed out the Tent and Canvas Shop in McPherson. That's a subsidiary of BDIC. Acho Dene Crafts in Liard, again same idea; goods produced on site, retail in the front. Dene Fur Clouds in Providence, same model, Mr. Chairman. Again the model we're trying to replicate, Ulukhaktok, will have space in the back for the production of goods, retail in the front.

The one other approach that has been successful and we look to the Inuvialuit and their joint venture, their partnership with Jacques Cartier Furs with the qiviuq. That's successful but a different model. There are a number of different ways to handle this I guess. We would accept any proposal coming forward from regions and communities. If they want to sit down and talk about how something like could work, we're willing to listen.

I would say that I think we have to come back to branding here. The Members make the point that to differentiate six hide jackets on a shelf and make sure that the high quality stuff really gets what it's worth and that the artisans are fairly remunerated, we have to do a job in branding and making sure people understand who that artist is, what their history and background is, what they're famous for, talk about the quality of the work they do. If we think about anything; diamonds, for example, you have to move beyond diamonds as a commodity into branding. It's a feeling there's some quality, but it's how you promote and market that. I think we need to do the same with our arts and crafts, and so I think we've lacked, for some time, a real approach to branding that made sense and would add value, and that's what we're trying to do here. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Anything further, Mr. Yakeleya? Next on the list I've got Ms. Lee, then Mrs. Groenewegen. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you. I want to revisit this arts and crafts issue. The last time around I had about a minute and a half left to talk about it, so I didn't explain my e-Bay issue probably properly and the Minister misunderstood that and he was disagreeing with his own misinterpretation of what I was to try to say. I wasn't trying to say that anybody could go on e-Bay and sell things. What I was trying to say is, from my limited knowledge of marketing, I see government doing a lot of work to promote branding, setting up websites, setting up a database for arts and crafts makers. There's a national/international campaign going on. But what are we doing at the ground level? What I see when I go to all these places, I can't afford everything that I buy, but we make a point of looking at

local artisans. I'm telling you, even places as big as Fort Simpson, you can't go there on any given day and look at what local people have produced. Is there any place in the NWT where you can go and get them? What I'm saying is to put a website program and database, that's at the out end. Where is the front end? Where is the production end?

Mr. Yakeleya talks about his jacket. I tell you I have a very old beaten up Dene jacket and I have a very old beaten up Aklavik parka, and I cannot go outside my house without somebody saying how nice they are. What I'm saying is there is a reservoir of people wanting to buy those just in Yellowknife, and you cannot go to the shops and buy these unless you know somebody to order them from. So what I'm saying is when I go to communities and then we see these community people who come to these gatherings trying to sell their stuff, so there's a gap there somewhere. What are we doing to accommodate and foster these markets?

I appreciate the big-ticket item industries, but we, in my opinion, are not doing enough to help these arts and crafts industries. There was a sewing class, there's a beading class in Yellowknife at Bows and Arrows. There were 20 people sitting there learning how to do beads and none of them were aboriginal. There is such pent-up demand and desire for even NWT people, Yellowknife people, to buy these, and I'm sure there are community people who would sew moccasins and jackets if they knew they could get a regular income from that. I just think that government has a role to play in linking these people up. I'm not familiar with all that is going on in terms of what the Minister is working on to do this. I hear branding, I hear the setting up of a website, I hear the database, I see the international marketing. That's all good in terms of branding and selling.

Years ago I talked to the retailers in Yellowknife -- not years and years ago -- they said they could sell anything they could get. They talked about the government being a big competitor when there was the Credit Corporation forwarding all this stuff, but there is no connection between people who want to sell and government promoting and marketing, branding, come and see us, come and buy our stuff. But where is, at the ground level, support for the people? The Minister is saying we're willing to entertain any proposals from regional government. Is it not about time that the government goes to the regional people, community people or something, and say, look, how do we revive this industry? We are constantly working with other governments and regional governments on diamonds and oil and gas, and there's nothing wrong with that, we need to do all that. We had this exact same conversation a year ago, and Mrs. Groenewegen and I talked about how difficult it is to go anywhere. An Aklavik fur parka, I got it as a gift, a wolf parka, over Christmas that I couldn't wear. I put in on YK Traders, it was gone. People want to buy these and they can't even find them right here, and I'm sure there are people in communities who would be happy to make those if they knew that they could get the money for them. So I want to know, in that very narrow way, what does the department do to accommodate that? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Minister.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To marry up the suppliers and the artisans with potential

customers, we have the staff in the department who work very much with the artisans, contact them, discuss what they're producing, and talk about potential sales outlets and avenues for that. Of course, the website is a big tool in helping us do that and helping us promote these artisans so that the people that are out there, this demand -- this pent-up demand that I would agree with the Member that I think is out there -- the demand knows where to go in terms of finding access, a one point that it can contact to get access to all these artisans and understand what they produce, how much they can produce, the phone numbers so that they can call these people and get access to them.

Over and above that, we have these retail operations that, obviously, as a government, we subsidize. It's difficult to break even in many of these operations and we don't expect initially that the operations will break even, but we've worked and subsidized Dene Fur Clouds and Acho Dene Crafts and Tent and Canvas McPherson, and I expect that the model will be the same in Ulukhaktok. We have to be prepared to make an investment of public money if we want to see these operations get off the ground. Eventually they will be sustainable; I believe that. But in order to make them sustainable, we have to work to brand the goods to build up the value, to add the value, so people recognize the inherent value in these products and are prepared to pay premium dollar for that. Otherwise we'll forever go on having people pay bottom dollar for these crafts and the artisans not understanding how to best market their product, not getting the money that they could for them. So we want to work to brand and build up the interest in these products, and are working to marry artisans with potential customers.

Again, I would admit that we can continue to do more, and if Members have suggestions as to how we can be creative -- and I appreciate the input and the help -- but how we can do a better job in marrying these two, then thank you and we'll take that input and we're certainly willing to work in that respect. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: In terms of suggestion, I could see the output side on TV and such, but in terms of on the ground, I'm not seeing the government doing enough to protect and foster our traditional arts and crafts industry. So is the Minister saying, then, for those artists to be in the branding world and the marketing world and to be in the main network of the government support, they have to be connected? Are they going to be certified if they're going to be branded? Is that the only way you could hook up into the marketing network? In this scenario, then, is the Minister saying that we are not ever going to get involved? The government is not going to get involved that we could work with other regional governments or community governments or other partners to see that there is at least one arts and crafts or some kind of retail store. Is that idea not feasible at all?

I think sewing centres were tried before and that was not successful in too many places. So, suggestion; I have a vision, I have an idea about what I'd like to see. I'd like to see, at least in major centres, in Simpson, I don't know, not in every community, but somewhere where if the visitors ever went there that they could go in and see who are the artisans and how do they gather and how do they make things. Or under his work that he's talking about

here, it's really you're out there on your own and the help that you could get from the government is that you connect with these guys in Yellowknife and they'll put you up on the databank and they'll put you up on the web page and somebody hopefully will get hold of you and order from you. Is that the vision we're looking at?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Minister.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Specific to the first question that Ms. Lee asked about whether or not our branding, those who are branded and using the NWT brand would be certified. Yes, we would want to ensure that they are in fact NWT artisans. So we'll have a mechanism to ensure that that's the case. That's all part of building the brand. We want to ensure that people have a positive experience with it.

Yes, I think we can, in many of our communities, work to develop retail operations, but much of this -- and we have our regional staff working on this -- is going to be community driven. There's no boilerplate model. I don't think government can impose solutions. I think we have to be willing to work with the communities to develop retail outlets. We are working with individual artisans. I know just recently we put \$35,000 out to 10 NWT artists; we put \$70,000 out for Canada Winter Games funding. So we are doling out some grants and contributions, albeit modest, with artisans to help them get started and promote their crafts. But, yes, we're prepared to talk about retail operations as we have in Providence, Liard, McPherson, Holman now. We have agreed, I think it makes sense, Members probably agreed, to stay out of the larger market communities where government is seen as interfering with private businesses. So Inuvik and Smith and Hay River and Yellowknife and Norman Wells, we probably aren't looking at developing operations there. In Simpson is probably a good example. We had a past effort there that we were supporting as a government that, for a couple of reasons, didn't pan out. That doesn't mean that there won't be a future investment and initiative there, and I would like to see that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Next on the list I have Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know we're sort of camped on this whole arts and crafts thing here, but one of the models we did not talk about -- and I'm sure Northern Images is not going to like to hear me say this -- but when you go to Inuvik, when you go into the IRC office, just outside of Nellie's office, the IRC, good for them, an aboriginal government that will buy the stuff from the artists and resell it at no mark-up. They make sure the artisans in their region get all of the money from those arts and crafts, because they've got the space and they've got the traffic going through their office. So that's how they've married up purchasers with their producers.

Mr. Braden says that's a false economy, but it's another model, it's another way of band governments and band councils and people who already have heat and light on in that facility bringing stuff in and marketing the stuff. I don't have an issue with that; I think it's great. Anyway, there are challenges to it.

I probably have the largest private collection of northern garments and northern artefacts of anybody in the Northwest Territories. I will tell you I could write a book on

how I came across every one of them, because it's not an easy process and there are lots of challenges to the relationships you have to build and people you have to meet and be at the right place at the right time. So it's not an easy thing and I don't think there's a one word answer to solve this problem, so I'll just leave it at that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. I didn't hear a question there, so I'll move now to our next speaker, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Earlier I had very good questions and he came back with some very interesting responses. I wrote a couple of them down and I was just wondering if we could explore them just a little further.

I was highlighting my concerns in the beating our Japanese tourism industry was taking this year, and the Minister pointed out that he did recognize the concern. Actually, he did one better. He pointed out some things he was working on. He pointed out a commission to study. Let's start with that one. Maybe he could give me some details on what study he commissioned and what can he provide me? Thank you.

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

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Chairman, I asked my deputy minister to meet with the Department of Transportation to get a better handle and update the costs. We've done some past work on what an airport infrastructure upgrade would be and what would be required to accommodate these transcontinental flights. So I've asked my deputy minister to meet with DOT, upgrade that information and get a better handle on what kind of investment we'd be talking about. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. Just in a round about way, about two weeks ago I had asked the Minister of Transportation about that and he didn't seem interested in that issue. There wasn't a study and he sent me three copies of the feasibility study that basically sounded like there was a business case for it, but nobody seemed to be doing anything with it. So is this new, this commission? Thank you.

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

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Chairman, I'm going to guess that we kicked it off two months ago here. I'm just going by memory, but I had asked the department to look at the market. This really has to be done more by our department than by DOT, in fairness, to understand the tourism market opportunities, a bit of a swat analysis, the strength and weaknesses, opportunities, threats, compare ourselves to other jurisdictions. I think we needed to have a good handle on this. Before we go head long into proposing an investment, we need to understand if that will in fact make the difference. There's also the infrastructure piece, and that's why DOT comes in. They're the ones with the best handle on what it would cost and how they would be able to upgrade an airport to accommodate physically the infrastructure. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I won't get into the fact that there seems to be two sort of variations that lie before the House. The Minister didn't seem to have any idea, or at least any inclination -- the Minister of Transportation that is -- didn't seem to allude to this work being done. Basically it seemed pretty clear that nothing was being done. I would think that after hearing the Minister of ITI, he seems very clear on potential infrastructure work that may be coming forward...that's being examined, I should say it that way, that's being examined at this time; useful infrastructure. I would have thought that they may have kept him in the loop a little more.

The Minister also talked about talking with industry over in Alaska, and I'm trying to get some more details on that. Can the Minister sort of reply on who he's been talking to in Alaska and who he's been talking to here in the Northwest Territories about finding some way to build a program? Thank you.

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

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Chairman, just for clarity, as I pointed out, much of the work related to market and the opportunities and the competition really has to be done in house with my department. So there's a very good reason why the Minister of Transportation wouldn't be aware of that. We have pulled the ministry of transport in to get an updated cost figure on the infrastructure and the investment that would be required. So if you asked the Minister of Transportation whether a business case could be made, I suspect that he wouldn't be able to answer that. He could tell you, and their department is working on what it would cost. It would be up to us to put together a business case, and that's what we're doing, Mr. Chairman.

In Alaska, I met with Commissioner Notti to talk about the opportunity and the experience that they have in the work that they're doing in Fairbanks. They have ramped up efforts in Fairbanks to try to promote aurora tourism. We think, among other things, that this has taken a big bite out of our tourism here, and so he has agreed to provide me the contact information with their industry association people who I could link up with NWTT, and we look forward to doing that so we can kick off some discussions and comparisons. But many of the people involved in the industry, as Members will know, are into their very busy tourism season, and so we're hoping that at the end of this typical aurora viewing season we can do a bit of a debrief and have our two jurisdictions compare notes and talk about areas for future cooperation. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That was very interesting, that information there. Just to continue a little further, who is the Minister working with here on a local level? As far as I'm concerned, I'd like to see that this is moving forward, that all of our aurora industry partners here will benefit. So who is he working with on the ground here in the Northwest Territories on this matter? If he's talking to Alaska, he must be talking to somebody here.

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

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Chairman, I've had discussions with my departmental officials, my deputy minister, the NWTT, and at least I think all but one of the tourism operators at this point are aware of the discussions I had in Alaska. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Okay. Just taking it aside now, I'm just trying to understand this concept, Mr. Chairman. Japanese people are going to fly all the way to Fairbanks at a certain amount of value, and then we're going to convince them, for maybe 500 bucks, to fly all the way to Yellowknife after they've already seen the aurora. I'm just trying to understand the principle of it. I'm not saying discussions are bad or something, I'm just trying to understand how do we entice them now to get on another plane to fly further east just to look at aurora, and then get back on that plane, fly back to maybe Fairbanks or Anchorage, and then get back on their plane to fly to Japan. So I'm just trying to understand how that works. If I was, which I am going to, if I was to suggest an idea, I would say why don't we consider concepts about trying to open up a corridor? You know, the old build it and they will come? Well, why don't we try to open up a corridor from Vancouver where we help take some of the JTB middlemen out of the equation? It's really cutting into the profits of all three of our major operators, and that's really playing a big role because if we can get some of this tourism industry into Vancouver, all three of our major operators can benefit as a whole. Personally, I'd like to see them all benefit because what's good for one is good for them all. I mean it would probably run around \$40,000 to get a plane in the air to go there and back and if we could find some ways to work these things out, because we're going to spend a lot of money...or I fear that we'll spend a lot of money and focus trying to get the leftovers in Fairbanks as opposed to somebody fresh in Vancouver who hasn't seen them, and going back to the substantial difference the Japanese people say about the quality of the aurora in the Northwest Territories versus elsewhere. My fear is we're going to spend a lot of focus on trying to get leftover people in Fairbanks to come the rest of the way when they've already seen it, and they'd be, well, why would we bother if we've already seen it. So what about the focus about trying to create a bit of an aurora connector sort of flight between Vancouver and Yellowknife? Thank you.

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

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Chairman, I'm talking about coordination and collaboration between our two jurisdictions. First of all, let me say that I would rely on our industry people and their industry people to sit down and talk about what best makes sense. There may be some ideas that I have that wouldn't be feasible, and so, Mr. Chairman, I would rely on the experts to drive much of this discussion. But just let me say my initial thoughts that if we used, just for example some ballpark figures, maybe it's a \$50 million a year industry worldwide and maybe we have 25 percent of it and Alaska has 20 percent of the industry. I'm thinking if we can collectively brand northern North America and recognize Scandinavia as a competitor, maybe we can grow the pie from a \$50 million

industry, through joint efforts, to a \$75 million industry. Maybe we can grow our collective North American share from 45 percent to 55 percent. You can imagine the impact that that could have on our industry. Instead of pitting ourselves against Alaska, trying to compete with them on cost or distance, working together with that jurisdiction, and maybe there can be joint marketing efforts on the ground in Japan so that we don't have to both duplicate the fully burdened cost of such efforts. So there are a number of collaborative efforts one might imagine, Mr. Chairman. I'm not going to profess to be an expert in understanding this industry. I would simply try to marry up our industry with theirs and see if we could come to some agreement on how to move forward. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The only last thing I will add, and I thought that was a very interesting sort of take on it that he had suggested about taking on the world as opposed to taking on each other. That's a good philosophy: stop dividing and conquering, and work together. I like that philosophy. The only fear I have in this is timing. I am not sure how much longer our three aurora operators will have here. They are all on life support in their own sort of way saying the numbers are very low and it will be challenging because if they owe money, they have to pay the Business Development Corp back and if they aren't getting the warm bodies in here buying those packages, they may not be able to hold out until this sort of polar transportation or polar visit perspective comes onboard. I am not opposed to it by any means. My only fear in this regard is the fact of how long it may take to get some discussions out to even turn it into a real initiative. Thank you.

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

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Chairman, on a go-forward basis, we think there is a lot of potential in this industry and we want to work with our industry partners. Some of the things that we are proposing to do, a potential investment in infrastructure to allow for transcontinental flights, for instance, is not going to happen in the following few weeks or months even, Mr. Chairman. This is a few year plan, so a number of things that we are doing are looking out further down the time horizon. We think we need to make these infrastructure investments. We think we can make a business case for it, but that doesn't preclude us from sitting down and working individually with each one of these businesses and we do, whether it's through some help with their loans, whether it's through some help with some of their programming or business planning that we do, Mr. Chairman.

So, yes, we recognize that this industry is under pressure and we are prepared to work with them here locally on the ground and will continue to talk with NWTT about their programming and marketing support. We need to have a handle and need to better understand that that is the best and most effective way we can market these products. The question here about results earlier, we need to know whether our marketing efforts are having an affect in Japan. We sense the urgency, Mr. Chairman. Let me say that we know that we can't correct all of these problems overnight. We are hopeful that these businesses we have now currently running can make it through this rough patch, but they may have to slightly change their business

model to do that. We will be there to work through that with them. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Thanks, committee. I don't have anybody else on the list for this page. So we will now move to page 10-23, activity summary, economic development, operations expenditure summary, \$25.084 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. Page 10-25, activity summary, economic development, grants and contributions, grants, total grants, \$847,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Contributions and it's continued on page 10-26 and 10-27, economic development, grants and contributions, total contributions, \$11.616 million. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am wondering if the Minister can give us a breakdown on the tourism industry marketing contribution that's listed as roughly \$2.4 million. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. BRENDAN BELL: That contribution goes to the NWTT. I can get a breakdown in terms of how the \$2.4 million is divided. The marketing budget for NWTT is about \$1.6 million of that, Mr. Chairman. The rest goes into core funding for the organization. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I wanted to ask the Minister, support for the fur industry is \$15,000. Has it always been this type of money in terms of this item here for the fur industry? What is this about anyway, supporting the fur industry? What is this money going for?

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

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Chairman, this is one aspect of support and this is just the Fur Institute. It seems to me, and I stand to be corrected by my deputy minister, but there has been some research into humane trapping methods and these kinds of things. So this is very much a contribution to that institute to continue this work. We have a number of international treaties we have to comply with. Mr. Chairman, this is not all of the contribution to harvesters. That falls under another area. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Yakeleya, anything further? Mahsi, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Minister mentioned the harvesting and it was getting me to think are any of our furs being targeted in the international market as problem furs or anything they are focussing in on as inhumane? I see that there is a lot of...

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. Mr. Hawkins has the floor, please. Thank you. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The reason I am raising that is there has been a lot of exposure lately on Nunavut's seal fur industry and they have been raising international perspective on the German boar industry. Are any of our furs targeted that the Minister is aware of? Thank you.

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

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Chairman, not that I am aware of. I think our brand is doing very well. It's very well thought of. Of course, we use humane trapping methods in the Northwest Territories and I would also add that none of this is farmed fur. I think there's been some consternation internationally but it's been mostly around farmed furs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Thank you, committee. We are on page 10-27, economic developments, grants and contributions, total contributions. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Sorry, another one, Mr. Chairman. Under Community Futures, we have roughly \$1.1 million there. Is that money that can be spent in Yellowknife? Thank you.

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

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Chairman, some of it goes to the Akaitcho Business Development Corporation. I can get a breakdown of the contributions. It's about \$105,000 to that organization. I will provide more of an accounting for that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Thank you, committee. We are on page 10-27, activity summary, economic development, grants and contributions, total contributions, \$11.616 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. Total grants and contributions, \$12.463 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. Page 10-30 and 10-31, lease commitments infrastructure on 10-30. Any questions? Page 10-31, fur marketing service revolving fund, information item. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. Page 10-32, page 10-33 and page 10-34, work performed on behalf of others for a total of \$702,000. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. I will now ask you to please turn back to the operations expenditure summary located on page 10-7, Industry, Tourism and Investment, operations expenditure summary, the department summary, \$38.869 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. I will now ask you to please draw your attention to the infrastructure acquisition plan. We will start Industry, Tourism and Investment on page 9-5, so if Members could open that up. Page 9-5, activity summary, corporate management, tangible capital assets, total tangible capital assets, \$12,000, total activity, \$12,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. Onto page 9-8 and 9-9, infrastructure acquisition plan, economic development, tangible capital assets is continued onto page 9-9, total tangible capital assets, \$1.798 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. Total activity, \$1.798 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Total department, \$1.810 million. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. An issue that's come up a few times is an RV park in the North Slave region. Where is that in this and what can we expect to be done this year?

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

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Chairman, it's a current year project that we are working on. Some of the money if not spent will be carried over, but we are sitting down to meet with the Folk on the Rocks organization, working with the Department of Transportation and the City of Yellowknife. We think obviously that we have a viable project there and we will continue to work on that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Just one more time for the record, total department, infrastructure acquisition plan, \$1.810 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. Does the committee agree that the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment main estimates have been concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. I'd like to thank you, Minister Bell, Mr. Vician and Ms. Magrum, for being with us late into this evening. Thank you.

What is the wish of committee? Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: I move to report progress, please.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. What is the wish of committee? Mr. Lafferty.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi. The motion is in order. The motion is not debatable. All those in favour? Those opposed? Thank you. The motion is carried.

---Carried

I'll now rise and report progress.

---Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. The motion is in order. The motion is not debatable. I'll take another tally on the number of votes. Those in favour of reporting progress, please raise your hand. Those opposed? The motion is defeated.

---Defeated

---Laughter

What is the wish of committee? Thank you, committee. We'll now proceed with Justice. Thank you, committee. I'd now like to ask the Minister of Justice, Mr. Bell, if he'd like to provide the opening comments on the departmental estimates. Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to present to the Department of Justice' main estimates for the fiscal year 2007-2008.

The main estimates propose a department operations and maintenance budget for 2007-08 of \$88441 million and capital funding of \$618,000. The O and M budget is in an increase of 5.5 percent over the '06-07 main estimates. Mr. Chairman, this consists primarily of additional costs of policing in communities, community justice and the Collective Agreement.

The department has six main areas of activity:

- **Services to government:** The department provides a range of legal services to the government. Staff lawyers draft legislation and provide legal advice to all Ministers, departments and many public agencies. Legal translators prepare the French versions of bills and regulations, as well as public materials with legal considerations. Also included in the \$8.8 million budgeted for services to government are functions such as planning for the effects of resource development, improving supports to families in conflict and providing public information.
- **Law enforcement:** Policing services are contracted to the RCMP, and one of the government's major priorities is to enhance policing in smaller communities. This summer, a new detachment will be created in Sachs Harbour...

---Applause

- and the GNWT's share of the cost is \$428,000. The department and RCMP work closely to develop new ways to address community needs. In total, Mr. Chairman, \$27 million has been budgeted for law enforcement activities.
- **Legal aid services:** The Legal Services Board is responsible for providing legal services to those NWT residents who cannot afford a lawyer, primarily for those facing criminal charges or experiencing family break-ups. There are three legal aid clinics in

Yellowknife and Inuvik. The Legal Services Board also delivers the public legal education and court worker programs. All together, Mr. Chairman, the department has budgeted \$4.6 million for legal aid services. This includes estimated federal contributions that will not be certain until the federal budget is released on March 19. It also includes \$223,000 to pay for an increase to the tariff paid to lawyers in the private bar who take on legal aid cases.

- **Courts:** The department provides funding and administrative support to the NWT courts. The total budget of \$8.7 million is for the Justice of the Peace Court Program, Territorial Court, the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeal, court libraries, court reporters, and the three court registries. This budget includes more money to cover justice of the peace training and the increase in circuit travel to hold court in communities.
- **Community justice and corrections:** The department has budgeted \$35 million for adult and young offender facilities, probation, wilderness camps, and cultural programs to support the rehabilitation of offenders. During the coming year, priority will be placed on reintegration, wilderness camps and programs within facilities. This money also funds programs aimed at preventing crime within communities through increased community participation that support victims' initiatives and that support community justice needs. Most of the department's collective bargaining increase related to this core function. There has also been a forced growth increase of \$475,000 to cover rising operational costs. The budget, Mr. Chairman, also includes an increase of \$680,000 to enhance community justice activities. This will provide additional support for community justice committees and victim services organizations, which provide direct services at the community level.
- **Services to the public:** Just over \$4 million budgeted for services to the public includes funding for the coroner's office, the public trustee, the rental office, legal registries, and the Maintenance Enforcement Program.

Mr. Chairman, the infrastructure acquisition plan includes \$280,000 in capital costs related to electronic system upgrades at legal registries to improve service to the public.

Those are the key points and highlights of the 2007-2008 Department of Justice main estimates. I look forward to answering any questions you may have. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you very much, Minister Bell. I'd like to now ask the Standing Committee on Social Programs for their report on the Department of Justice main estimates, Ms. Lee.

Introduction

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the committee met with the Minister and his officials on Tuesday, September 26, 2006, to review the draft business plan of the Department of Justice.

Members considered the draft main estimates, including the changes to the budget of the Department of Justice since the committee reviewed the business plan in September, on January 16, 2007.

The committee noted expenditures of \$88.441 million for operations expense and \$618,000 to be spent on capital projects for the fiscal year 2007-2008.

Committee members offer the following comments on issues arising out of the review of the 2007-2008 budget-planning cycle.

Pre-Budget Consultations

This year's pre-budget consultation focused on the cost of living and consequently there were not as many comments received as last year on the state of justice programs in the NWT. Many residents and NGOs did comment on the inadequacy of funding for community justice programs. This issue will be discussed later in the committee's report.

Mr. Chair, I would now ask Mr. Yakeleya to continue. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Please continue, Mr. Yakeleya.

Policing In Smaller Communities

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The standing committee was very pleased to see that the department has secured funding for a full-time RCMP detachment in Sachs Harbour. The sheer distance and frequent adverse weather conditions make it imperative to have RCMP stationed in Sachs Harbour on a permanent basis.

However, there are other communities in the NWT that can only be reached by air during most of the year that require a full-time RCMP presence. Gameti and Colville Lake are two of the most isolated communities without a permanent detachment.

The committee encourages the department to work with the RCMP to come up with a timetable to introduce full-time detachments to the communities of Colville Lake and Gameti.

Mahsi, Mr. Chair.

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

Community Justice Committees

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi. Mr. Chair, during the last two pre-budget consultations, we heard that more funding should be directed to the local justice committees. Over the last couple of business planning cycles, the Standing Committee on Social Programs has made recommendations calling for increased funding for the operation of community justice committees and for paying the community justice coordinators.

Committee members are pleased the department has finally come through with additional funding for the Community Justice Program. Ten thousand dollars for each community justice committee will be phased in over the next three years to increase pay for community justice

coordinators. Per-capita funding for each community justice committee will also be increased by 10 percent. Finally, an NWT programs/project coordinator position will be established to provide administrative support and advice to the community agencies who wish to develop goals, objectives, accountability frameworks and program evaluation.

Funding will also be increased for victim services, with a \$25,000 increase for each of the existing five programs to \$75,000 per year, and \$75,000 will also be available for new victim services in one community each in the Tlicho and Deh Cho. A regional victim services assistant position will be established to assist community-based agencies in delivering victim service levels equivalent to those of community justice and police services in the NWT.

Members of the committee were pleased with the department's focus on increasing funding and support for victim services and community justice committees at a local level.

Members will be consulting with constituents on the adequacy of this new focus and may include it in the transition document to the next Assembly.

Mr. Chair, at this time I'd like to turn it over to Mr. Braden. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Braden.

Legal Aid In The NWT

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. During the life of this Assembly, there have been several initiatives to improve the delivery of legal aid in the NWT. The addition of several staff lawyers and the opening of a new Family Law Clinic in Yellowknife are two examples.

However, it is clear that without the support of private practice lawyers in shouldering a share of the caseload, the legal aid system in the NWT cannot be sustained through the use of staff lawyers.

Committee members regularly hear from constituents eligible for legal aid of delays in obtaining legal representation, especially in civil matters relating to family law.

The department has incorporated a 15 percent increase for the legal aid tariff rates that should hopefully encourage private practice lawyers to take on more legal aid cases.

This issue will be mentioned in the transition document, so that the next Assembly can track this initiative's success or failure.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes the committee's report on the Department of Justice.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Lafferty.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

---Carried

Thank you, committee. I will now rise and report progress. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Can I get the report of Committee of the Whole, please, Mr. Ramsay.

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Committee has been considering Bill 21, Appropriation Act, 2007-2008; Committee Report 8-15(5) and Committee Report 9-15(5), and would like to report progress with two motions being adopted. Mr. Speaker, I move that report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Do we have a seconder? Honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins. Motion is on the floor. Motion is in order. 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 Tuesday, March 6, 2007, at 11:00 a.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 Question
9. Petitions
10. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
11. Tabling of Documents
12. Notices of Motion
13. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
14. Motions
15. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 9, Write-Off of Assets Act, 2006-2007
 - Bill 22, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2006-2007
16. Second Reading of Bills

17. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

- Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Education Act
- Bill 19, An Act to Amend the Archives Act
- Bill 21, Appropriation Act, 2007-2008
- Committee Report 7-15(5), Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight Report on the 2007-2008 Pre-Budget Review Process
- Committee Report 8-15(5), Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development Report on the 2007-2008 Pre-Budget Review Process
- Committee Report 9-15(5), Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the 2007-2008 Pre-Budget Review Process
- Committee Report 10-15(5), Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight Report on the Review of the 2005-2006 Annual Report of the Languages Commissioner
- Tabled Document 104-15(5), WCB Comprehensive Response to Committee Report 5 -15(5)

18. Report of Committee of the Whole

19. Third Reading of Bills

20. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Tuesday, March 6, 2007, at 11:00 a.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 21:26.