



# **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Session**

**Day 8**

**16<sup>th</sup> Assembly**

## **HANSARD**

**Tuesday, February 10, 2009**

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**The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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**Hon. Paul Delorey**  
(Hay River North)

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(Great Slave)

**Mr. Tom Beaulieu**  
(Tu Nedhe)

**Ms. Wendy Bisaro**  
(Frame Lake)

**Mr. Bob Bromley**  
(Weledeh)

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(Hay River South)

**Mr. Robert Hawkins**  
(Yellowknife Centre)

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**Mr. David Krutko**  
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**Mr. Norman Yakeleya**  
(Sahtu)

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**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Tuesday, February 10, 2009****Members Present**

Mr. Abernethy, Mr. Beaulieu, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Bromley, Hon. Paul Delorey, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Hawkins, Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Krutko, Hon. Jackson Lafferty, Hon. Sandy Lee, Hon. Bob McLeod, Hon. Michael McLeod, Hon. Robert McLeod, Mr. Menicoche, Hon. Michael Miltenberger, Mr. Ramsay, Hon. Floyd Roland, Mr. Yakeleya

The House met at 1:31 p.m.

**Prayer**

---Prayer

**SPEAKER'S RULING**

**SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey):** Good afternoon, colleagues. Welcome back to the Chamber. Colleagues, I will now provide my ruling on the point of privilege raised by the Member for Hay River South on Thursday, February 5, 2009. An unescorted visitor to the Legislative Assembly entered her office without permission and is alleged to have seen confidential documents about which that visitor allegedly spoke to the media. My role as Speaker is to determine whether a prima facie breach of privilege took place. I quote Mrs. Groenewegen from unedited Hansard from Thursday, February 5, 2009: "Unauthorized access to the private office space of any Member is a breach of that Member's parliamentary privilege. Mr. Speaker, this is particularly so when confidential and sensitive information acquired as a result of such unauthorized access is released to the public. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I view the release of this type of sensitive information to be contempt of this House."

Breaches of Members' privileges are very serious. Privileges of Members include freedom of speech and freedom of obstruction and intimidation in relation to their duties as elected representatives. The question here is whether the Member's ability to do her job was compromised by these events. I find that it was not, as these events did not prevent her from acting in the House as she had planned. A proven violation of the privacy of Members' documents could be seen as a breach of privilege. However, there is no evidence that the visitor viewed the confidential documents or released information thus obtained to the media. Yes, he entered Mrs. Groenewegen's office, but there is no proof that he saw any of her documents or spoke about them to anyone. In the absence of any evidence that the Member's private documents were viewed, I find there was no prima facie breach of privilege.

However, there has been a breach of the Legislative Assembly's security policies on visitors and on Members' offices. In reference to the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories Members' Handbook, point 135(2), Visitors: "Visitors, while in the Legislative Assembly Building, are required to display their visitor's pass on their person at all times and be accompanied by the person or staff of the person they are visiting at all times"

I will also reference 135(4), Access to Offices: "Other than an emergency situation, access to any office by anyone other than the occupant is only permitted by invitation or prior permission of the occupant."

This is a very serious matter and it is not to be dismissed lightly. I would like to remind all Members of the importance of adhering to the security policies of this Legislative Assembly. They are there for your own protection and for the protection of the workings of this House. This is a serious matter, but I rule there is not a prima facie breach of privilege. Thank you, colleagues.

Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

**Ministers' Statements**

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 14-16(3):  
DROP THE POP**

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mr. Speaker, February is Drop the Pop Month in the NWT. Drop the Pop is a partnership that includes Health and Social Services, Education, Culture and Employment and Environment and Natural Resources. We have strong community partners including Northern Stores, the Yellowknife Co-op, the Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative and the Food First Society.

This is the fourth year that schools in the Northwest Territories have participated. The event, which raises awareness about the importance of making nutritious and healthy choices, has expanded from one week to two and now is celebrated for the entire month.

Drop the Pop raises awareness amongst students about the alternatives to sugary drinks. Sugary beverages provide no nutrition. A can of pop contains between 9 and 12 teaspoons of sugar. Drinking two cans of pop a day for one week provides about a pound of sugar a week. That's nearly 60 pounds of sugar from pop alone in a year. Drop the Pop is about a lot more than not drinking pop. It's about helping our students figure out the best, healthiest foods to choose.

Last year, 35 schools participated, using Drop the Pop funding to host a range of fun and informative projects from healthy cooking classes to awareness videos done by the students themselves. Drop the Pop is a lot of fun, and for good reason. Students that receive proper nutrition have an easier time concentrating in school, and are better equipped to get through the day. Even further, if children and young adults can feel good about healthy eating, they aren't just set for the day, they are set for a lifetime of healthy behaviour.

The reasons for making "real" food choices are provided directly on the Drop the Pop advertising. Good nutrition not only helps with concentration, as I have mentioned, but lowers the risk of diabetes, helps with bone and muscular development, is less wasteful for the environment, and keeps teeth healthy. Healthy food choices are also closer to a traditional lifestyle instead of processed foods.

This year Drop the Pop happens to fall during this session, and I invite other Members to join me in celebrating the spirit of the event, through making our own healthy choices while we work long hours through February. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

### Members' Statements

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ATCO PROPOSAL TO MERGE WITH NWT POWER CORPORATION

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to speak today about the government's move to entertain a proposal from ATCO to merge in some fashion with the NWT Power Corporation. Yesterday I had some questions for the Minister responsible for the Power Corporation about the high power rates residents are paying.

The fact is that because consumption is down as a result of residents implementing energy efficiency in their homes and businesses, and what were sky-high oil prices of \$140 a barrel, that is why the rates

went up. Now oil is at \$40 a barrel and residents want some answers.

According to the Premier yesterday, these rates will not be reviewed again for three years. This is too long to wait. People can't afford these rates, even here in Yellowknife. That is why it is timely that the GNWT is at least exploring possibilities on the distribution and development of electricity here in the Northwest Territories. I believe we owe it to our residents to not just take the first proposal that comes through the door. We need to have an open and up-front process.

My fear is that in reviewing this one proposal, the GNWT's working team is comprised solely of senior bureaucrats. I have a great deal of respect for those involved, but the reality is that ATCO will be putting forth their 'A' team, make no mistake about this, on this merger proposal.

We shouldn't fool ourselves. We will be swimming in a pool full of sharks in these discussions. In order for the government to protect our residents, the corporation itself, and our interests, we should have at least two individuals assigned to our review team that have a background in power distribution, generation, and/or the sale of power, and are able to speak the same language as ATCO.

We also need to find out if there are other companies out there that may be able to put forward a proposal. Let's throw the doors wide open and go to an open, transparent call for proposals. Let's see what we can get back.

As for now, we need to protect our residents from high power rates, and we cannot afford to lose more of our residents and population to the South due strictly to the high cost of living. I agree that we should, at the very least, examine this proposal, but do so armed with some knowledgeable people who have a background in this very complex and specialized area. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MILK SUBSIDY PROGRAM

**MR. BROMLEY:** Today on CBC I listened to our chief medical officer talking about the toll being taken amongst northern Canadians by the exorbitant cost of food as profiled in a National Heart and Stroke Foundation report.

Dr. Corriveau has been working on a project in the Beaufort-Delta called Healthy Foods North, which has found that in our isolated northern communities there are significant deficiencies and intake of basic nutrients of calcium, vitamin D, and other essential

nutrients. He mentioned that with the move away from traditional diets, we have turned to milk as the source of calcium and vitamin D for people.

Because of the prohibitive cost of milk in many communities, parents often provide their babies and young children with sugar water, like Tang and Kool-Aid, in place of milk. This occurs even using baby bottles, contributing to baby bottle mouth and other serious and expensive health problems. Ensuring that young children are provided with sufficient quantities of milk prevents large costs later in life in areas like health and education. Milk contributes to healthy brain development and physical activity.

At the risk of being repetitive, milk or equivalent substitutes in the case of allergies is known to be the single most important nutrient for children, essential for healthy and normal growth and development.

The Standing Committee on Social Programs, the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning, and the people have spoken out clearly in support of a milk subsidy where it's needed. This Assembly has passed a motion in support of this program. The absence of a milk subsidy in this budget is a hole that gapes widely in our small communities where, as my colleague from Nunakput says, people must decide whether to buy fuel or food this day.

Calcium is important for growing and keeping strong bones. Vitamin D has recently been found to play a key role in preventing cancer. While this government looks at it and considers how to improve the food basket, the nutrient deficit to children and all that this means to their health and our mutual long-term costs continues.

For a year I have tried to get this government to support a new subsidy for milk in those communities where the price is 10 percent or greater than in the city of Yellowknife. Subsidizing milk is actually an investment in the health of children and seniors will pay large dividends on modest costs.

For the sake of goodness, let's get this done. Drop the Pop, yes, but where's the milk?

---Laughter

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
CABINET COMMUNICATION WITH  
REGULAR MEMBERS

**MS. BISARO:** In responding to oral questions from Mr. Hawkins last Thursday the Minister of Health

and Social Services stated, and I quote from page 25 of unedited Hansard for February 5, 2009, she said, "It is a regular practice in this Legislature that any policy changes go to the standing committee for review and consultation." I was very pleased to hear that, but I was also very surprised. Because up to now, that's not been my experience as a Member of the 16<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly. My experience has been that policy changes, meaning government positions, changes affecting GNWT operations are discussed, debated, and decided by Cabinet or FMB in isolation without consulting or communicating with Regular Members. An example: The assets of the now famous, infamous perhaps, Opportunities Fund were until recently invested in low-risk accounts. Some time before the end of 2008, Cabinet sitting as FMB decided that the funds could be invested in high-risk ventures; ventures that are fully guaranteed by GNWT public funds; your tax dollars and mine. The only time this change was presented to standing committee was after the decision had been made. No chance for input then.

A second example: the Supplementary Health Benefits Program policy change that would go from full coverage to seniors to partial or no coverage. This change didn't even make it through a 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly standing committee. Cabinet put into force a policy change decision made by the previous Assembly without ever discussing it with Regular Members.

I recognize that this Assembly has put Cabinet in place to manage our government departments and to carry out direction set by Caucus during our strategic planning sessions. I have no desire to micromanage and I'd agree that the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning, consisting of Regular Members, can't be consulted on every contemplated policy change. But substantial changes to policy, such as the Opportunities Fund policy change, which has the potential for a large, negative financial impact on this Territory's finances, must be presented to Regular Members for their input before the decision is made, not after.

Members stated last week that there are communication problems between the two sides of this House. I trust advance communication of policy change is one of those problems that we can visit and correct.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
CHIPSEALING AND DUST CONTROL  
IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

**MR. KRUTKO:** Today I'd like to speak about a project that was worked on a couple of years ago in 2003 coming forward to 2008-2009. It was the Main Street Chipseal Program which was requested by the Special Committee on Rural and Remote Communities back in the 14<sup>th</sup> Assembly. Out of that, one of the recommendations was to deal with dust control in all of our smaller communities and improve the quality of life, the health of our residents and, more importantly, finding a way to deal with an ongoing problem such as drainage, road conditions, and doing an overall assessment of those communities.

Part of that process included some 12 communities including Kakisa, Hay River Reserve, Fort Providence, Enterprise, Tsiigehtchic, Aklavik, Fort McPherson, Wrigley, Fort Liard, Rae-Edzo, Tuktoyaktuk, Tulita, Fort Good Hope, Fort Resolution, and Dettah. Yet today we still have communities asking for this government's help with regard to this program.

I was totally alarmed to find out that there is \$6 million going to be spent in regard to one of the larger centres to chipseal that community's roads under the Building Canada Fund. Yet there's no mention of community dust control to deal with chipseal programs for our rural and remote communities. I think it's essential that this government seriously looks at reinstating this program for the benefit of all the smaller communities in the Northwest Territories and enhancing the program so that all communities can have a quality of life by way of improving the infrastructure in our communities, including moving the dust from our streets in the summer months and ensuring the health and well-being of our elders and people with chronic disease.

I think it's important that this government reinstate this program. We do have the resources through the Building Canada Fund and there's no reason that work has to take any time. The Department of Transportation has done a lot of the legwork. They've done a lot of the assessments. They've looked at the drainage systems in our communities. I'd like to ask the Minister of Transportation at the appropriate time, or even the Premier, if it is possible for this government to seriously look at implementing that program to benefit our small communities.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
CHIPSEALING AND DUST CONTROL  
IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

**MR. BEAULIEU:** [English translation not provided.]

Over the past year I've talked about problems the Tu Nedhe communities are having with dust. I realize that dust is not an issue today, however, spring will soon be here and the snow will melt and there will be mud. The mud will dry and dust problems will take over.

In Fort Resolution dust will continue to be a big concern for residents until a permanent solution is found. There is about 10 kilometres of roads in the community and if we use the synergies and the reconstruction and chipsealing of Highway No. 6 we can have chipseal roads for the entire community of Fort Resolution for \$2 million to \$3 million.

For \$2 million or \$3 million, this government has an opportunity to see restored confidence in the government by the residents of Fort Resolution. In addition, chipseal roads have many benefits to the community, including better health for our children, adults, elders, and those with respiratory problems.

For various use activities, roads that are chipsealed have many advantages for things like skateboarding and rollerblading. All things go towards the betterment or self-esteem of our youth. I think we all know the huge benefits of youth with good self-esteem.

By expanding the Highway No. 6 project we can chipseal the community's roads, which will benefit all residents of Lutselk'e, including immediate economic benefits by creating new jobs and long-term benefits for a permanent dust control solution. It's an opportunity for the Department of Transportation and the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs to work with the community for building good relationships between communities and government.

Later I will have questions for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs on this project.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
PRIMARY HEALTH CARE SERVICES  
IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** One long-standing issue facing the community of Wrigley has been the absence of RCMP officers and nurses who live in the community and provide regular daily services. After years of pushing the government to provide these services, the community has succeeded in

acquiring an RCMP station from the Minister of Justice. Community residents continue to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services to provide primary health care services to the community.

Wrigley has been without resident nursing services for many years. Community residents deserve some reassurance that they can access primary health care services in their community.

At the beginning of this Assembly we identified a commitment to help foster vibrant and healthy communities and their individuals. How can we possibly meet that goal if our smallest communities are denied reasonable access to primary health care services?

Small NWT communities like Wrigley have a higher percentage of elders than other communities. These people have chosen to live in their community for their entire lives. They deserve a community-based health care service.

The Minister knows that elders often approach me with their concerns about health care. Elders do not want to travel to Fort Simpson and wait in a line at the airport or at the regional health centre. They don't want sporadic visits of non-resident health care providers. When elders come and talk to me about these problems, they are in pain and discomfort and I get frustrated at the current situation of primary health care services. Health care is the highest priority of this government. That priority needs to be reflected at the front line of the smallest communities. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CHIPSEALING AND DUST CONTROL IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Speaker, I, too, would like to join the discussions on the dust control in the Sahtu region. Several years ago, the community of Fort Good Hope, along with government, worked in partnership on how to put together a chipseal program in their community. At that time the government worked very closely with the communities in terms of what is the best, most efficient, economic way to put a chipseal program in our communities in the Sahtu. Once the Fort Good Hope project was underway and they were developing their programs, I understood from the then-Minister that the community of Tulita was going to be next in line in terms of the chipseal program. People there were very happy in terms of this initiative being led by the Government of the Northwest Territories. Later on, it was noted that this chipseal program will no longer be on the

books in terms of support to the communities. As a matter of fact, the government turned over the responsibilities to the communities in terms of if they want to chipseal or if they want to have another infrastructure in their communities, knowing from the small communities, there is so much need in terms of infrastructure in their communities. They had to make some big decisions. Because of the high cost of the various methods of how we control dust, it became apparent that there wasn't going to be enough money in the pot to even do a proper job in terms of chipsealing the whole community.

Mr. Speaker, throughout my visits in the communities, I have been approached by a number of elders in terms of the chipsealing program and that it should be something the government should take a real serious look at and work with the various departments to see how creative they can be in terms of putting a program like this back into the system. That requires sitting down with the hamlets, the bands and the Metis organizations to come up with some solutions that would be beneficial to all.

Dust control continues to be an issue for my people, especially the older people who have to go out and buy filters to have clean air in their houses there. So, Mr. Speaker, I, too, will be joining my colleagues in terms of asking the Minister in terms of how something like this, the chipseal program, can be implemented back into the system where all the communities can work on a good solution to have chipseal in their communities. Thank you.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON IMPACT OF GLOBAL RECESSION ON THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Mr. Speaker, one only has to turn on any news channel these days and much of the coverage is devoted to the fallout from the current global recession. While the statistics and employment figures and job losses speak for themselves, we also hear of what other jurisdictions, national and international, are doing to address this recession.

The numbers in terms of financial assistance and stimulus that countries and jurisdictions are committing to is a sign of the magnitude of this problem. Here in the North we will not be insulated from the repercussions of this recession and the effects are already beginning to be felt. I am concerned about what our government is doing in response. We constantly hear that small business is the backbone of the Canadian and our northern economy. Many of these businesses may find

themselves resorting to laying off staff, cancelling plans of expansion and experiencing credit challenges as mortgage payments come due and loans come up for renewals.

Although interest rates have fallen, the reluctance of the usual sources of loans and credit have, at the same time, tightened their lending criteria and policies. I realize that many jurisdictions are looking to capital infrastructure as a means of stimulating the economy during these difficult times. The good thing about this is that we have something tangible to show for the dollars invested, and in the process create jobs and economy.

I am aware of the various sources of infrastructure dollars to our government through federal programs, both for municipalities, housing and transportation infrastructure. This is welcome news and we look forward to the rollout of these projects and initiatives. But is there more that we can do with our own resources, programs and policies?

I want to ask the Minister for Industry, Tourism and Investment later today what our government is doing to be proactive, to collect feedback from businesses about their needs and challenges at this time. We have a government lending policy through the Business Development Investment Corporation; business support through the SEED program; Community Futures lending program; but the GNWT has the latitude, the same as other jurisdictions, to consider things like interest only or interest deferred loans. If we lack the capital to create a larger pool of funds for lending, as I've already suggested, can the government borrow from the Opportunities Fund to distribute loans to a broad number of small businesses?

It's time to think outside of the box on our business support policies, but first of all we need a forum to collect feedback from our businesses that may be struggling at this time, and I would suggest our regional ITI offices are that point of contact. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON WELCOME CENTRE FOR IMMIGRANTS

**MR. ABERNETHY:** In recent years the government has seen an increased immigrant population. Over 100 cultural groups are represented in Yellowknife, but only three of these visible minorities have registered cultural organizations in the city.

Mr. Speaker, although the people from different ethnic communities may organize themselves

informally, they have common needs and areas of concern. The Centre for Northern Families has offered the services of a welcome centre for immigrants for two years, in an effort to help immigrants transition to a new country and community, and to ensure immigrants have access to services and the opportunity to achieve and maintain social and economic independence.

Mr. Speaker, in the short life of this program the centre has helped 157 individuals from 29 countries. The services available in the welcome centre focus on providing information, immigrant consultation, workplace orientation and job coaching, English language classes, computer classes and social networking programs to help new Canadians become part of their new community and the Northwest Territories.

The centre's activity help people adjust to life in the North. The director herself is an immigrant, giving the program a distinct advantage of being supported by someone with firsthand experience of the needs and challenges experienced by new Canadians.

The centre is open from Monday to Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. to accommodate varied work and family schedules and strives to be as accessible as possible. The centre is open to all immigrants, with specific programs for youth and adults, both men and women.

The Centre for Northern Families is interested in providing outreach to regional hubs of Hay River and Inuvik to help those regions support immigrants there. Mr. Speaker, the Centre for Northern Families wants to work with the GNWT to build effective programs and services to welcome newcomers, and help them transition into life in the NWT and Canada and expand upon the services they currently provide. Unfortunately, the lease of the existing multicultural facility ends this month. If it's not renewed, the centre will be forced to close its doors. They need government support. If they shut down, it will be a loss to our community, to the Northwest Territories and to the immigrants themselves.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time, I will have some questions for the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment. Thank you.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON TALTSON HYDRO EXPANSION PROJECT

**MR. HAWKINS:** Mr. Speaker, plans were moving forward with the Taltson Hydro expansion. The

investment of this project has been significant and the government has even identified a further \$2.5 million in this upcoming budget.

For the most part, Northerners support the expansion of the hydro because of the environmental benefits of a cleaner source of power that will hopefully reduce our electric bills and, of course, Mr. Speaker, I fully support the advancement of the North's hydro potential over diesel.

Mr. Speaker, the benefits of cheaper, cleaner electricity for residents in the NWT all depends on the route chosen for the Taltson expansion. The route favoured by the proponents of the project is constructed over land, power lines, around the East Arm of Great Slave Lake. This route supports the commercial sale of power to the diamond mines only, but does not move it closer to building a grid here in the North to help the other communities get off diesel-generated power.

Are we working for the corporations, Mr. Speaker, or the people? I question where the public interest is being sought after. Mr. Speaker, there are some good reasons to re-evaluate the route being chosen here. We need to start focussing in on the residents as opposed to just the diamond mines.

The two diamond mines have less than 20 years of production left before them and, of course, what isn't known yet is the power purchasing agreements have yet to be signed. So without those energy corporation agreements signed, we don't have a customer. So who is carrying the cost and the risk of this development so far? The northern taxpayer.

Mr. Speaker, we also have to keep in mind that the proposed route also crosses land set aside for a new national park. The construction of those power lines in that pristine wilderness will have some environmental consequences, and I certainly have no doubt there will be opposition.

Mr. Speaker, given all of these issues, it seems that the proposed route is very risky and perhaps even shortsighted. If the government is making this kind of investment, we need to ensure that the long-term needs are for northern residents first. Surely we can find a route that allows us to sell the power to our people as well as mines.

Mr. Speaker, we have all heard about the road to nowhere. We've all heard about the bridge to nowhere. But my fear is we may end up having a power line to nowhere, certainly if the economic climate continues the way it is.

Mr. Speaker, I urge this Cabinet to think carefully that if there are extra costs associated with putting a new power grid into play, that they should think

about the benefits associated with it and that alone will make it better for our Northerners altogether. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Jacobson.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON COMMUNITY TOURS OF SACHS HARBOUR, ULUKHAKTOK AND PAULATUK

**MR. JACOBSON:** Today I would like to thank Minister Lee in regards to my last community tour I had in my riding of Nunakput. The first day we travelled to Sachs Harbour, we met with community leaders and some of the staff and we had a really good visit. I saw the new hall that's been constructed in the community and we are still waiting for an answer on the funding from the government. We had a really good visit in Sachs.

Ulukhaktok, we spent the night in the community. We had a really good time. We had a community feast and I'd like to thank Joseph and Elsie Haloosit, Robert and Agnes Kuptana, Gary Bristow, and my good friend Patrick Joss. We had a really good visit. I played hockey that night in Ulukhaktok, Mr. Speaker, and they don't have a Zamboni; they have shovels that go around the rink. I tell you they do a really good job in that community for that. It was a really eye-opening experience I had there in regard to that. What little they have, they make do with.

I had Minister Lee go to the community singalong, so hopefully when she was at the sing-along, she had a good "I Saw the Light" experience.

---Laughter

I'd like to thank the community as a whole and everybody that came out to the meetings and brought up the concerns, thank you again.

The next day we travelled into Paulatuk with the community, met with some of the community leaders and constituents and it was good to see my elders, Eduard Ivik and my little sister Mabel Ruben.

Any concerns to my riding, any concerns brought up in my community tour will be brought up in this session that we are having now. So thank you, and hello to Nunakput. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

### Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to welcome to this House Mr. Paul McAdams, a resident of Fort Smith and works at Aurora College. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** I'd like to recognize Paul also. He was an instructor at Aurora College when a couple of us were there -- Mr. Beaulieu and myself -- and I'd like to welcome him to the House. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

### Oral Questions

QUESTION 85-16(3):

WELCOME CENTRE FOR IMMIGRANTS

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment. It's my understanding that the federal government is transferring \$600,000 to the GNWT for the purposes of supporting immigrant and new Canadians transitioning into their new communities and country.

For the last two years, as I mentioned earlier, the Centre for Northern Families has been delivering a similar service, with a proven success rate. Earlier this year the centre actually made a proposal for \$200,000 to Education, Culture and Employment, which is one-third of the total \$600,000, and I believe it wasn't supported. Could the Minister please commit to me today to review that proposal and work with the Centre for Northern Families to build upon their existing program and support immigrants using the money from the federal government? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, we do appreciate any additional funding from the federal government. With this \$612,000 that has been allocated to the North for basic funding for settlement, anti-racism, enhanced language training an...(inaudible)...initiatives. Those are federally funded directly to our NWT.

There are certain criteria and specific guidelines that we do follow, Mr. Speaker, and in the past ECE -- Education, Culture and Employment -- did provide a support letter for the Centre for Northern Families to access funding towards the federal government.

Also, our department has contributed funding towards this centre as well in the past and we continue to work with them through that fact. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. ABERNETHY:** I'd like to thank the Minister for that response. In just over two weeks the doors to the existing welcome centre will be closing. This will be a significant loss to the new immigrants coming to the Northwest Territories. To ensure continuity and support, will the Minister commit to providing funding to the Centre for Northern Families prior to February 28, 2009, so that it will be able to extend their lease and continue to provide services to new Canadians in their existing facility? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** I have to reflect on the federal funding that we received; the \$612,000. As I stated earlier, there are funding criteria, the guidelines that we need to follow. We certainly cannot just give out the various funding to certain organizations because they would have to fall under the criteria, which at this time the centre does not fall under.

However, Mr. Speaker, the federal government has a settlement agreement to assist organizations such as the Centre for Northern Families to deliver programs and services for newcomers. So ECE staff continue to work with the Centre for Northern Families to access this funding as well. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. ABERNETHY:** I am happy to hear that. I think we need to do something quickly to support that organization, because two weeks isn't very far away and they will be shutting their doors.

In the centre's proposal they included a component about reaching out to other communities in the Northwest Territories, Hay River and Inuvik as examples, to help these communities establish services for recent immigrants there. Will the Minister commit to working with the Centre for Northern Families to provide outreach services to those regions of the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Education, Culture and Employment does have service centres across the Northwest Territories that we work with, including, as the Member indicated, Hay River and Inuvik, to provide outreach services to all NWT residents. Providing services such as employment

development training opportunities. We will continue, as the Member indicated. ECE is committed to working with all non-government organizations to provide services and also program delivery across the Northwest Territories, including the Centre for Northern Families. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Final supplementary, Mr. Abernethy.

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In light of the fact that this government is looking at the Nominee Program and immigration into the Northwest Territories as a reality, this is obviously an incredibly important initiative. What will the Minister do or what will the Minister and the Department of Education, Culture and Employment do to support the welcome centre and new immigrants into the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mr. Speaker, as Members are aware, we are in the process of initiating an Immigration Nominee Program and it is progressing well. We are working with other jurisdictions on that new initiative, and at the same time, we will continue. I will commit in this House to continue with working with the Centre for Northern Families, and their staff is also working closely with us, because we... This is an issue that we have focussed on as a department, as you know, with the new initiative, the Nominee Program. So this is one of the areas that we need to deal with and dealing with various organizations, we will continue to assist any way that we can. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 86-16(3):  
ATCO PROPOSAL TO MERGE WITH  
NWT POWER CORPORATION

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister responsible for the Power Corporation. Getting back to my Member's statement, I would be the first person to stand up here and say we need to help our residents that are coping with these exorbitant power rates in the Northwest Territories. However, I don't know if we should jump all over the first proposal that comes through our door. It seems to me that that is what we are doing. We are going to be discussing with ATCO a proposal, a merger proposal. There is a review team that's been struck by the Government of the Northwest Territories. On that review team are four senior bureaucrats. I mentioned in my statement that I have a great deal of respect for each of those individuals; however, when you are dealing with a company the size of

ATCO and what is at stake in terms of for our residents, the government and the corporation itself, it would seem to me that the government would want persons on this review team that had a background in power distribution, sale or generation, and that's not the case, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Premier, has the government got any thoughts in regard to putting some individuals on this working group that do have that background and ability in terms of power generation? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister responsible for NWT Power Corporation, Mr. Roland.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the proposal that has been submitted, we are looking to have a review of it, as the Member has pointed out. We have a number of senior staff involved. We also have a past member of the Auditor General's office as part of that review team.

We've also kept open the opportunity to have that type of experience the Member has spoken about when we need to bring them in on specific areas of the review. So we have kept the avenue open of bringing people in when required. Thank you.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Again, to protect the corporation, the residents and the Government of the Northwest Territories, I think these experts need to be plugged in, if you will, all throughout the entire process of this review. It sounds like they are going to go on maybe an issue-by-issue basis, but I don't think that's good enough, Mr. Speaker. I think we have an opportunity here perhaps, but we have to get it right. Again, I'd like to ask the Premier, can we get some people on this review team that have a background in power generation, sale and such? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** The first part of looking at this proposal is, one, do we proceed any further than having a look at this? At that point, we would have to look at... If we are serious about this and get into an actual negotiation process, then we would definitely be bringing that type of expertise in. At this point, as we review this, we have left the ability there to hire expertise to help us out during this initial phase. Thank you.

**MR. RAMSAY:** If the Premier and the Minister responsible is reluctant to have this expertise there through the entire process, I am wondering if at the end of this review process of this proposal whether or not the government will go out for an independent review on the analysis that was done by both sides, by ATCO and by the Government of the Northwest Territories, for the NWT Power Corporation. Can we get an independent review of

the work that's been done, that is going to be done?  
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Before we go and want to do independent reviews and hire other people, the Member himself has said we need to put our own people to work and make them do their job. So here is one of those examples. As I stated and as we have let the information out, we're going to have this initial review done, bring a report back to myself and I can go to Cabinet and then to Members and decide if we should pursue this to the next level. At that point we'll decide if we need a further independent review, and that opportunity is available to us. Thank you.

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

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister responsible where the government stands in terms of looking at other proposals. This one is on the table, yes, but is the government willing to throw the doors open and go to a call for proposals once it establishes a terms of reference? Go out to other companies and see what the best deal is we can get for our residents. Thank you.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** In fact, when I last met with the regional aboriginal leadership this issue of the Power Corporation came up and I informed them if they were interested in submitting a proposal, that we were open to that. So the fact is that since this has become public, we've let others know that we would look at proposals that would come forward that would work for us. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 87-16(3):  
IMPACT OF GLOBAL RECESSION  
IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** As I indicated in my Member's statement today, there's been a lot of concern raised about the imminent fallout of this global recession and how it might impact the North. It'd like to ask the Minister of ITI what mechanism does ITI have to gauge the degree of impact that may be being experienced out there in the business community in the Northwest Territories already to date? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bob McLeod.

**MR. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Member knows, a large part of responsibility for

resource development lies with the federal government. We spend a large amount of time working with the federal government, so they would consider the impact of the global slowdown on the Northwest Territories. I think we've been successful with some of the recent announcements in the federal budget and also announcements with regard to a Northern Economic Development Agency for the North and for the extension of the Strategic Investments in Northern Economic Development for five years. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** I'd like to ask the Minister if there are any known sources of additional lending capital for northern businesses. Now there is a limit, I'm sure, on what the BDIC has that loans or that applicants can subscribe to. Is the lending portfolio of the BDIC already fully subscribed? Has there been any thought given to an additional source of money for that lending fund? Thank you.

**MR. BOB MCLEOD:** The last time I addressed the board of the BDIC I requested that they bring forward some recommendations as to how we as a government could assist the small northern businesses, and they've indicated that they would review this at their board meeting. They've also advised that the lending rates of the board, of the BDIC, have been reduced to coincide with the reductions of the Bank of Canada.

As well, we do have the Opportunities Fund that we have moved to make a passive fund more active and we will be working with the standing committee on that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** The Minister also made reference to a federal program. I didn't catch the exact name of it, but I was wondering if he could elaborate on it. Would it be something similar to the former Economic Development Agreement, which was a joint lending pool that was co-managed by the territorial and federal governments? Is that something that has been announced? Is it in the works? When will it become available? Thank you.

**MR. BOB MCLEOD:** There were two parts to the federal announcement. One was the extension of the SINED program, which is Strategic Investments for Northern Economic Development. That's \$90 million over five years and that's spread between the three territories. So essentially it's about \$6 million a year for the Northwest Territories for each year over five years. This is something that in the past was part of the EDA, except for the SINED, it's delivered by the federal government.

Also, the Northern Economic Development Agency, where it hasn't been determined where it will be located, but that agency has \$10 million annually

allocated to it. My speculation is that it will operate something similar to the Western Arctic Diversification Fund or FedNor, some of those regional economic development programs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand that the Minister of ITI also has a panel that advises him on matters related to the economy. I'd like to know if that panel is still in place and have they met and has he received any feedback from them since this rather quickly...The onset of this recession and the escalating effects of it have been quite sudden. Has he had a chance to receive any feedback from that panel?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** We've had very good response to a request to establish a ministerial advisory panel and we've now had nominations from all of the requested parties. We propose to have a meeting after both the federal and the territorial budgets were released, and we're working to have a meeting in the very near future with the ministerial advisory panel to get some feedback as to what this government could be doing to deal with the slowdown.

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

QUESTION 88-16(3):  
CHIPSEALING AND DUST CONTROL  
IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Premier and is in regard to the statement I made and other Members have made in this House today. It is with regard to the Main Street Chipseal Program that was announced in previous governments and has been concluded with the income of this government.

I'd like to ask the Premier, with the \$185 million under the Building Canada Fund and now with the timeline that we're under to come forward and expend those dollars over the next two years, will the Premier consider looking at reinstating the Main Street Chipseal Program, of which a lot of legwork has already been done? We have identified 15 communities in the Northwest Territories and we did do the assessment work to implement this program. I'd like to ask the Premier if he will seriously consider looking at the possibility of reinstating this program so the communities can chipseal their main streets and, more importantly, deal with dust control in our communities.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Premier, Mr. Roland.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To give the Minister the right information I'll redirect that question to Minister Michael McLeod, who is the lead Minister on the Building Canada Fund and the work that's been done in that area.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Michael McLeod.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The issue of dust and dust control in communities has been around for some time now, and this government, around 2003, had set up a program that would deal with putting chipseal on the main streets of our communities. That program has since wrapped up in 2007. The whole funding allocation to the communities has changed and over the last while, communities are getting funded on a formula basis. We've also increased the dollars available for capital from what was \$17 million historically to \$28 million now. We've also incorporated a Gas Tax Program through the federal government that provides, I think this year it's going to be \$15 million, and we also have the Building Canada Fund.

There is a lot of avenue for communities to spend money on chipseal. With the Building Canada money specifically, we work with the NWT Association of Communities and all the communities of the Northwest Territories to see what their priorities were in terms of bringing projects forward.

The initial request was to have the money flow on a formula basis that was outright rejected by the federal government. Communities then submitted projects and we have received 22 communities' budgets and only one of those has included a dust suppressant. I think there is a huge shift now that the communities have dollars at their disposal. They can decide through their capital plan to use it on dust.

**MR. KRUTKO:** It would all be well if everybody had the capacity to take on this project, but the reason the dust control project was put with the Department of Transportation was because they had the engineering, design, and ability to lay chipseal. Most of the assessment work and design work was done by the Department of Transportation on behalf of MACA. I think the whole reason for that is because the communities do not have the capacity to do it in-house.

I'd like to ask the Minister again, knowing that there is one community that has requested \$6 million to pave their streets, why is it that the 15 communities that requested the program that expired in 2007

have not had this program reinstated and funded through the Building Canada Fund, and not burden the communities with having to go back and do their reassessments and designs of the work that has already been done? The work's already been done. Let's get on with it.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** I can't explain why the communities set their priorities the way they did. I can explain that rather than having a \$1 million budget for dust control in communities, a chipseal program, and \$17 million earmarked for capital for a total of \$18 million, we are now providing \$49 million a year annually. Communities certainly have the avenue and the opportunity to use it on chipseal. I want to assure the Member that a lot of the communities are doing just that. They're including it in the capital plan. But the Building Canada Fund has come forward with other options. There is one community that has identified it. We certainly can raise it with the Minister of MACA. We can certainly bring it to the attention of the NWT Association of Communities. But I don't think the communities are going to shift their priorities. Thank you.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Mr. Speaker, it sounds like a copout from this government to really do anything for small communities. Mr. Speaker, our communities are running a deficit at this time. They do not have the capacity to spend \$5 million on chipseal in our communities, so let's be realistic here. I'd like to ask the Minister, will you implement and reinstate this program and I'd like to know why it is that you are allowing one community to go ahead with a \$6 million investment in chipseal of not allowing communities who do not have the capacity and this department does, for them to reinstate this program that was already in place beforehand.

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, the situation has changed significantly since the Members looked at the program. Mr. Speaker, at the time, as indicated, the communities only had \$17 million at their disposal for capital and only \$1 million for the chipseal program. They are now at around \$49 million a year for capital. That includes chipseal and we certainly have the opportunity to pay for the capacity that they require. Historically, they didn't have that. It's a whole new ballgame, Mr. Speaker. The communities are funded so they can deal with the capital issues and pressures in the communities, but they have to decide what their priorities are. Thank you.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** I thought the Minister was responsible for Transportation, not MACA, yet he seems like he is the Minister of MACA. So I'd like

to ask the Minister of Transportation, could you get the work that has been done and give that information to communities in regards to the assessment reports, the planning that was done to identify chipseal for 15 communities in the Northwest Territories, so that those communities can use that work so they basically don't have to go out and redo all this work again? The government has already put efforts in that by way of Transportation where they have done assessments and design for 15 communities. Will the Minister commit to that?

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** I realize I am not the Minister of MACA, but he is asking me questions that kind of fall into the area of Building Canada. Mr. Speaker, that information I believe has already been provided to communities and I can certainly follow up with MACA to see if that has not been done in certain communities and assure the Member that they will receive the information in a timely fashion. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

QUESTION 89-16(3):  
MILK SUBSIDY PROGRAM

**MR. BROMLEY:** Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my Member's statement, the majority of people in the House have jumped through all the hoops required and so on to urge a milk subsidy be given serious consideration. I am wondering if the Minister of Health has investigated the possibility of a milk subsidy program where needed, whether it's been considered as part of the Healthy Foods North Program, and whether the federal Minister of Health, who is a Northerner and surely understands this issue thoroughly, has been approached. What is the progress on this? Thank you.

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

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The House's recommendation and discussions on this issue have been before the Strategic Initiative Committee and the Department of Education, Culture and Employment has been analyzing and reviewing the possibility of this initiative. I believe the costs have been worked out to be about \$1.3 million. I can advise the Member that this idea is under active consideration, but no decision has been made. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you to the Minister of Health for that word. That is good news. Clearly there is a desire out there. We have spoken clearly on this. What additional information is needed to

make this a go decision and perhaps if this is...the Minister of ECE, that would be more appropriate; whatever. Has there been a consideration of tuning up the Food Mail Program as part of this as well? Thank you.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** There is the issue of funding to deliver such a program as well as lots of details about how this program could and would be delivered if we were able to do it. Right now it is under the jurisdiction of the Income Security Program with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. I will make the commitment to follow up with the Member and I will discuss that issue also with the Minister of ECE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thanks to the Minister for those comments. I was assuming since the cost estimate had been derived there has been some research and decisions on how to do this, but maybe that is not the case. In terms of cost, I think the Minister must realize that there are big returns to be had here. To me this is not really subsidy. It is an investment that will give us big returns. Our health care costs in the communities are very high; travel associated with them and so on. This is great, where we want to get at the problem. This is a very precise piece of action that can give immediate results. Does the Minister realize this? Is that the perspective which is being used in approaching this subsidy? Thank you.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Mr. Speaker, on the larger picture...Obviously I could say yes, Mr. Speaker, that the department and the government is very aware and focussed on the idea that we need to improve the quality of the food that our residents eat and consume healthy eating, healthy living. We all know that if our residents eat healthily, live actively and drink less and smoke none, we know that that is the fastest way to get to a healthier population. The department does send and invest lots of money to encourage people to do that. We are talking about providing certain food substances. I think good arguments could be made that there are lots of other stuff than food that our people should be able to be provided with.

The government as a whole is working on reducing power rates through subsidy of commercial power. The Minister of ECE is actively looking at this file under this responsibility. I expect that we should be going back to the Members with where we are and how we move forward as soon as possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Those are all good points that the Minister raises and I

don't want to take away from those many good programs. We need to keep doing those as well. I would be happy to debate milk against any other subsidy that we might think of in terms of food, but I am sure the Minister recognizes that as well. When can we expect to see those results coming forward? Thank you.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** I will say that I don't have a specific date. I will follow up with the Member on that. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 90-16(3):  
TALTSON HYDRO EXPANSION PROJECT

**MR. HAWKINS:** Mr. Speaker, during my Member's statement I talked about the Taltson expansion, and wish to make sure it is officially and clearly on the record I am definitely in favour of the expansion of the Taltson project. That is certainly not my issue whatsoever. The issue really in front that I want to draw attention to is that if we run the power route only around Great Slave Lake through the East Arm, really it is only benefiting one customer, which is the diamond mine. I am taking the position that maybe that is not thought out sort of the bigger picture, which is what is it for, which is to help the people of the North as well. I would like to see the people supported first and equally. The diamond mine corporations will be using them as paid customers to help to pay for this. Mr. Speaker, if the final recommendation in the next little while comes forward that states that the East Arm route is the only route they are proposing, would the Minister advise ITI...Would Minister Bob McLeod be taking to Cabinet a new position, saying that over the islands and towards the North Slave region so you can hook up to the largest customers would be the new proposed route that Cabinet would be willing to support to benefit all residents? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bob McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Taltson expansion transmission line is presently undergoing environmental assessment. There is a desktop analysis being undertaken, at the direction of the environmental assessment, to look at additional routes for the transmission lines. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. HAWKINS:** My first question is, if it was a question, would be which route would be assessed? But, Mr. Speaker, it is on the street

already that the route has already been chosen and the recommendation will be the one that goes through the national park around the East Arm. I am taking the position, that is, of course, if that rumour turns out to be fact. Would the Minister representing this issue be saying, wait a minute? That doesn't help the majority of citizens of the Northwest Territories and it doesn't create a grid which helps lower overall costs in the Northwest Territories. Would he consider that position as a Cabinet position, just in case it is around the lake is the only option presented to this assessment? Thank you.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** There are plans to give an additional updated briefing to committee with regards to the Taltson expansion. It is quite a complicated matter that presently what is being looked at that is the business case to go take a transmission line to the diamond mines. There is a corridor through the East Arm expansion, and the main consideration is the significant extra cost to look at different options going around the lake. The way it was set up was that the Hydro Act was split up so it would be paid by commercial users such as the diamond mines versus communities. The big question is if you go around the lake, there is significant more expense and there are significantly less customers to pay for the transmission line. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement, I said we have all heard about the road to nowhere, the bridge to nowhere and certainly if something happens to that sort of diamond area and some of those diamond mine companies have trouble in the economic world as we are experiencing now, we will have a power line to nowhere. Mr. Speaker, that is why I am suggesting that there are other routes such as over the islands that could hook up and create a grid with some of the largest customers in the Northwest Territories such as the North Slave Region, which could hook up other mines, not just diamond mines as well as Ingraham Trail customers. Mr. Speaker, is that area of consideration a reality from this Minister's point of view to be a potential or real option in this routing? Thank you.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** The numbers that we have seen with the preliminary analysis of the four proposed hypothetical transmission routes would indicate that it is very expensive and it will come down to whether it would be seen as a feasible investment for developing those transmission lines in view of the number of customers if you went around the lake.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Mr. Speaker, I'll be quick. I'm not suggesting going all the way around the long way, around the lake. I'm talking about taking a shortcut over some of the islands which plop you right into the north side region quite quickly.

Mr. Speaker, half the population lives in this region; more than 50 percent of the North lives in this region. Where should this government be investing its money and its future into? Four potential diamond mines or at least more than 50 percent of the customers of the North Slave. Which area will the Minister be supporting? Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** I'll be supporting a business case that would see a successful expansion of the Taltson and where the government and Power Corporation can make money.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

QUESTION 91-16(3):  
AMENDMENTS TO THE  
COMMISSIONER'S LAND ACT

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are addressed to the Minister of MACA and I think I want to specify the current Minister of MACA, not the Minister of Transportation.

I'd like to follow up on some questions that I posed about a year ago; questions related to amendments to the Commissioner's Land Act. It's my understanding that the Department of MACA is currently considering amendments to the act. I think the Minister should be aware of the huge impact on the environment that abandoned development sites, mine sites have and of the financial impact that these site cleanups can have on our government's financial bottomline. At the moment, there is no provision for security to be provided by an existing or a developer, a mine company to provide security to the government for any cleanup costs that might be encountered when they leave the site.

I'd like to ask the Minister whether the amendments to the Commissioner's Land Act that are being proposed will include wording to ensure financial security for the GNWT in respect to mining developments and other land leases and cleanup costs that might be associated. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Robert McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, the Commissioner's Land Act, as it's being proposed now, I think there has always been regulations in

there to require performance security, but if we're having to put it into legislation...This is an act that's going to be going before committee and they will have an opportunity for input before it goes out on the road. Thank you.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Minister, for that response, and I appreciate that it's going to go to committee. I do know that the power is there in the regulations that are there currently, but it's not being used by the department and that's a problem. That's why I think it needs to be put into the act itself. The Minister suggested it's coming to standing committee and I'd like to know when Members can expect that changes to the act will be brought to the standing committee.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** We're looking for introduction of the bill in the winter of 2009, so the committee should be seeing the amendments and the legislative proposal very soon. Thank you.

**MS. BISARO:** I guess I'd like to know if the Minister can advise whether or not, in his opinion or in the opinion of the department, that the power that's currently in the regulations is sufficient or whether or not the department is going to recommend a change in the word of the act itself to cover off the financial security that's required for these cleanup costs. Thank you.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, if it's found that we need to have these as formal legislation instead of just a regulation, if that is what committee would come back with and that would be their recommendation, then it's something that the department would have to look at and implement into the actual legislation itself, if it gives the security of knowing that performance security is required on these lands. Thank you.

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

**MS. BISARO:** Mr. Speaker, it's nice to know that in our new spirit of cooperation the Minister is actually going to listen to the recommendation of the standing committee. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. I didn't hear a question there. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

QUESTION 92-16(3):

LAND TRANSFER ISSUES IN FORT SIMPSON

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** I'd like to ask the Minister of MACA some questions. During the Premier's recent visit to Fort Simpson, the LKFN raised some land issues and band taxation issues. Subsequently, we received that letter from the Minister of MACA saying that currently, at this time, they won't be

entertaining any land transfers. I'd like to ask the Minister if he will look at this issue that is of primary importance to the Liidlii Kue First Nations. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Robert McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, again in the spirit of cooperation, we will commit to having a look at this, and it's something that we have to work with the federal government on at the same time. Thank you.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** It almost sounds like a commitment there.

---Laughter

He's just got to take that next step. Mr. Speaker, I'm glad that he's willing to look at that and I think that's exactly what's needed, is to work with the federal government. I'd like to ask the Minister to help the community organize such a meeting where the federal lands people are at the table along with the GNWT and the Village of Fort Simpson so that they can identify these lands that have issues and direct some action on it. Thank you.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I'm getting closer and closer to a commitment here, but I will advise the Member that I will speak to my officials at MACA and have them try and coordinate a meeting with the feds and with the community of Fort Simpson to see what kind of plan they can come up with so we can move forward on this issue. Thank you.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** The community will certainly be looking forward to that meeting. In the early '80s there was an actual land transfer swap that happened where some band lands were swapped for Commissioner's land and federal land, only to address this very same situation. That's the type of resolution we're looking for. I'd like to ask the Minister if that can be the goal of that meeting. Thank you.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** One of the things that we have to have in the whole process here is buy-in from all parties involved so we can move this issue forward. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Your final supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** The final issue around this is that there are landowners that are in arrears in taxation because they believe it's actually band land they're on. So this is causing quite some stress; they're getting large taxation bills, collections letters, because of this particular issue.

I'd like to ask the Minister, can he look at these particular instances, look at some type of abeyance or else some type of deferral for these particular residents who are affected? Thank you.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, this is also something that we would have to raise with the federal government with the taxation issue. These are all issues that we'd have to sit down at the same table and get all these ironed out before we can do anything and have any acceptance of the whole proposal. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

QUESTION 93-16(3):  
CHIPSEALING AND DUST CONTROL  
IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Today in my Member's statement I spoke about the dust problems in Fort Resolution. I'd like to ask the Minister of MACA questions on how we can resolve this problem. Can the Minister commit to having the chipseal project for all of Fort Resolution? I'm not just asking for chipseal on main street; I'm asking for chipseal for the whole town. Can the Minister commit to having that chipseal project costed out in Fort Resolution? Thank you.

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

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I can commit to the needs of the community, and some the community would have to do it themselves. But I can commit to having our staff work with the community to come up with a plan to implement their chipsealing program, if that's a decision that the community makes. Thank you.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Mr. Speaker, I am aware that it is a community responsibility under the New Deal, but I know that this government and the federal government that's trying to give this government some money wants the money spent. Rather than losing the money being hung up on policy, I'd like the government to see if there are new projects that can be done. I want to know if the Minister can commit to working with the infrastructure Minister and the Minister of Finance to find the necessary funds to chipseal all of Fort Resolution. That's why I asked my previous questions to see if -- since MACA has the engineers and the community doesn't -- they can cost it out as well. For this question, I'd like to know if he's prepared to meet with his colleagues to find the money. Thank you.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, if MACA can assist the community in coming out and costing the project out, then that's something that we'd be

willing to do; also, willing to work with the Department of Transportation and Finance. It's always a goal of this government and MACA to see where we can access extra money. If it's the wish of the community, if it's something that they put forward as a priority, then we will see what we can do about accessing some money to move the project ahead. Thank you.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you for that response. The Department of Transportation will be rebuilding a portion of the highway right next to Fort Resolution, so the main area of concern is about 12 miles or 20 kilometres of road between Fort Resolution and Little Buffalo River. It's a good opportunity to gain some synergies by using the equipment that will be used on that highway to chipseal Fort Resolution. I'd like to ask the Minister if he's prepared to, again, meet specifically this time with the Minister of DOT to see if there can be something gained from that other project.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I can do that. I can check with the Minister of DOT and see if there's something that could be worked out. If it's the request of the community and it helps bring the costs down, then it's something that we should seriously look at. Again I say, at the end of the day, the decision will be one that has to be made by the community and direction has to be given to us by the community. I assume they're doing it through the Member so it's something that we would have to seriously have a look at.

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

**MR. BEAULIEU:** That's good. Good response.

---Laughter

I'd like the Minister to agree to discuss this with municipal government as soon as possible.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** I'm sorry. I'll have to ask the Member to repeat his question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Beaulieu, could you repeat your question for the Minister.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Can the Minister agree to discuss this project with the municipal government as soon as possible?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thanks to the Member for that. I was trying to think of an answer already before the question was asked and I apologize. Yes, I will commit to working with the community, as I will to all small communities across the Northwest Territories in advancing their projects. I always say, having lived in a small community for a

long time, I'm well aware of the challenges they face. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 94-16(3):  
CHIPSEALING AND DUST CONTROL  
IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to follow in line with the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe in terms of the dust control. I guess I was thinking about some time as to how do we get to a point where this issue's become a springtime discussion in our communities. I guess from 20 years ago to today, you didn't see so many vehicles 20 years ago. Today you see a number of vehicles in our community. I want to ask the Minister of MACA in terms of standards and guidelines, as with the airport standards in our small communities, water treatment plant standards, sewer lagoon standards. Is there a policy within MACA that a role within the communities that need to be upgraded to a certain standard that they need to be looked at in terms of upgrading our roads in our communities?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Robert McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure if it's a policy within MACA itself. It may be a municipal policy or it may be something that's in Transportation. But I think that it's something that the municipal government would decide how far or how much deterioration their roads need to have before they look at upgrading them. Thank you.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Speaker, the Minister is correct in terms of this government here empowering some of our municipal councils in terms of standards and where the priorities are, and sometimes it's a very difficult position to be put into. However, Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Minister of MACA if he would, with this good staff in our region of the Sahtu, go into the communities and look at the issue of roads, as he's committed to other Members here, in terms of assessing and working with the department in order to bring the standard up to a road. This is what they need to do in terms of long-term planning in terms of allocating a certain amount of dollars to bring our roads up to standard in the Sahtu.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, well, first of all it would be the community's call as to the condition of their roads. They as a community or as a municipal government would decide what's best for them. If they're needing further assistance, which a lot of communities are right now, Mr.

Speaker, then MACA would have no issues about going in and assisting the communities. Again, I go back to the fact that the communities have to make the call to ask for technical assistance. We can't get in there and tell them this is how things are going to be done.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Speaker, the Dempster Highway was built by the federal government and they just put the road in. Now, today, through different programs and funding, they're bringing the Dempster Highway up to a standard that is suitable to the national highway standards. Again, I'm looking at the...Just like the water treatment plants in our communities. We're bringing them up to a national standard through the guidelines of funding. I know that this wouldn't be a community call. The Minister, in his discussions with the Cabinet colleagues to determine if the roads are another issue that needs to be looked at with the cooperation of the hamlet in terms of bringing it up to standards that would be suitable in the community.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I'm sure there are guidelines as to the condition of the roads, and I go back to the fact again that the community knows their community better than anyone and I think it would be their call as to whether their roads are in need of repair and funding. Thank you.

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

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Speaker, certainly I agree with the Minister in terms of the priorities the community knows. The issue is the amount of funding in order to bring it up to a certain level. The drainage...You should see our roads in the springtime coming from our airport in Tulita down to the community. It's just like quicksand; like the Liard Highway in terms of those type of standards. I guess what I'm asking is having some consideration in terms of looking at our roads and seeing if a certain amount of dollars could be allocated to our roads in our community. Look at Colville Lake in terms of they're finally getting some roads in that community. I guess I'm looking at seeing that the government looks at allocating a certain amount of dollars to our roads and helping out our communities.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Good afternoon. In Colville Lake, I think it was a decision of the community to start putting some roads into the community. I have had an opportunity to meet with the chief and the band manager there and they were telling us about the work that they were doing in Colville Lake and the training that they were giving to their people. So that was a decision they made and they should be applauded for it.

As far as the roads go in the communities, I've seen a lot of the communities in the springtime and the condition of the roads, and a part of it is the quality of the materials that are used. Many communities are trying to upgrade that quality of material that they use on the roads and it's something that we, as Municipal and Community Affairs, can assist them with is upgrading their reports, not so much their standards but just assisting them technically any way we can. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 95-16(3):  
ATCO PROPOSAL TO MERGE WITH  
NWT POWER CORPORATION

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Mr. Speaker, my questions at this time are for the Premier as the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation. Mr. Speaker, the headquarters for the NTPC is in Hay River. It was repatriated from the federal government from Edmonton to Hay River almost 20 years ago and it has been a great source of economy in our community. It has allowed Hay River to attract many people of different disciplines and professions to live in our community, and regardless of who would offer up an unsolicited proposal to joint venture and be involved in a merger with the Power Corporation, the issues around how such a merger would impact the operations in the Northwest Territories and most specifically the head office, which are something of a concern to the people in Hay River. I'd like to ask the Premier, since this unsolicited proposal was discussed when it arrived, what communication has taken place with the employees of NTPC to make them aware of the government's undertaking and their intentions with respect to their jobs and their livelihood? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister responsible for the Power Corporation, Premier Roland.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the concerns of employees started coming forward after, in fact, a previous assessment we had where we had a theme day on power generation in the Northwest Territories and the word was going out about the potential of a proposal being received. I am aware that the board itself has been having some discussions with the staff around the need to be patient with this, that there is no decision as of yet, and to try to relieve some of the concern about jobs and the impact of that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** I'd like to ask specifically because of the degree of concern amongst the employees in Hay River, what specifically has been told to those employees? Thank you.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** I will have to get that messaging from the board itself and then I will provide that to the Member. Thank you.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Would it be appropriate for the Premier himself, as the Minister responsible, to have some form of communication with the folks who are our constituents in Hay River who work at headquarters with respect to the government's plan?

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Mr. Speaker, that could be taken into consideration, if it's felt that that messaging going out from the board itself is not adequate or needs something coming directly from my office. We can work on doing that. Thank you.

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

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If a meeting were to be arranged for for any NTPC employee in Hay River, would the Premier agree to come to Hay River and have a meeting with those employees and the MLAs to discuss, I suppose, what some of the minimum requirements of the government would be with respect to the analysis of the benefits and contributions that NTPC headquarters in Hay River brings to the Northwest Territories? Would the Premier agree to a meeting to be convened for that purpose?

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Mr. Speaker I would be prepared to work with the Members on messaging or setting up a meeting or propose a potential meeting. One of the things we would have to look at is what type of information we have available, if they wanted to get into technical stuff, we'd have to look at that through that review. But if it's to try to address the concerns of the employees within our headquarters staff, we'd be prepared to try to work and set something up around that. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Roland. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to opening address. Item 11, replies to the budget address, day four of seven. Item 12, petitions. Item 13, reports of standing and special committees. Item 14, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 15, tabling of documents. Item 16, notices of motion. Item 17, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 18, motions. Item 19, first reading of bills. Item 20, second reading of bills. Item 21, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other

matters: Tabled Document 7-16(3), Ministerial Benefits Policy; Committee Report 2-16(3), Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures Report on Matters Referred to the Committee; Tabled Document 11-16(3), Northwest Territories Main Estimates 2009-2010; Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Historical Resources Act; Bill 3, International Interest in Mobile Aircraft Equipment Act; Bill 4, Public Library Act; Bill 5, Professional Corporations Act; and Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act, with Mr. Bromley in the chair.

### Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** I'd like to call Committee of the Whole to order. We have under consideration: Tabled Document 7-16(3), Committee Report 2-16(3), Tabled Document 11-16(3), Bills 1, 3, 4, 5, and 7. What is the wish of the committee? Mrs. Groenewegen.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The wish of the committee today is to proceed with consideration of the budget for the Department of Health and Social Services, of course, starting with the opening comments and see how far we get from there. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Okay. Committee agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** We'll take a short break.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHARIMAN (Mr. Bromley):** I'll call Committee of the Whole back to order. Committee, we've agreed to consider Tabled Document 11-16(3), NWT main estimates 2009-2010. We've specifically agreed to review the Department of Health and Social Services. Minister Lee, would you like to provide opening comments?

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Yes, Mr. Chairman, thank you. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to present the Department of Health and Social Services' Main Estimates for fiscal year 2009-10.

The department is requesting just over \$313 million, an increase of approximately \$3 million over last year, which is an increase of just about 1 percent.

Mr. Chairman, the department is committed to effecting significant changes consistent with our Integrated Service Delivery Model, ISDM, including refocusing on health promotion, preventative

services and primary care, improving information management and technology, standardizing processes and lessening our dependence on costly institutional care, and maximizing the efficient use of our health care providers in a way that is congruent with our small population size.

Mr. Chairman, this budget will enhance our approach to primary community care to ensure clients receive appropriate, accessible, effective and quality care at the right time by the most appropriate provider in the most economical way. As the Minister of Finance stated in his budget speech on February 5, 2009, for Department of Health and Social Services, "strengthening prevention programs will be a major focus of our work. Putting more dollars into our health care system is only part of the answer. We can all help reduce health care costs by taking more responsibility for our own health. We need to encourage Northerners to stop smoking, drink less, eat a proper diet and exercise more. The government has a role to play, but so do individual Northerners."

To that end, I will be coming forward with a Minister's action plan for reforming the way we deliver health and social services in the Northwest Territories. I look forward to discussing this in greater detail with the Standing Committee on Social Programs.

### Strategic Initiatives

The department will continue to advance a number of initiatives under the government's Strategic Initiatives Committees.

Through the Building Our Future Strategic Initiatives, we have five initiatives that are being funded and advanced. They are as follows:

### Expanding Programming For Children And Youth

- An additional \$64,000 for In-House Respite Program for 2009-10, in addition to \$224,000 from 2008-09.
- This initiative provides an essential "time-out" for parents and caregivers of children with special needs.
- Work has also begun to develop a Framework for Children with Disabilities. Key non-government partners as well as other government departments are working together in this framework process.

### **Encourage Healthy Choices And Address Addictions**

- We are supporting the Healthy Choices Framework with \$350,000 for 2009-10. This investment will fund a health promotion specialist and focus on activities that enhance supports aimed at encouraging health lifestyle choices such as physical activity, healthy eating, being smoke free, and avoiding high risk activities.
- We are implementing a healthy eating initiative in three Beaufort-Delta communities.
- To address the mental health and addictions issues for youth we have developed a social marketing, resiliency programming and life skills programming.
- Immunization is recognized as one of the most cost-effective public health interventions in prevention and control of disease. This year the department will implement the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccination program in the NWT. The federal government has provided a \$388,000 vaccine trust for the NWT to implement and fund the program for 2009-10.
- The successful Don't Be a Butthead campaign will also continue this year.

### **Implement Phase II Of The Framework For Action On Family Violence**

- Actions under Phase II of the Framework for Action Against Family Violence has been developed in a cooperative manner with the Coalition Against Family Violence. Phase II will build on the successes of the first phase and focus on expanding services to smaller communities to alleviate further impacts from family violence and prevent family violence by providing treatment to abusers and services to children who witness family violence.
- Eight hundred thousand dollars has been allocated for the implementation of phase II.

### **Strengthen Continuum Of Care**

- The demand for homecare and community care is growing and there is a need to ensure that the NWT has a sufficient number of workers to meet this demand. To address an identified training gap, we plan to implement an eight-month Nursing Assistant Diploma Program in cooperation with the Dene Nation and Aurora College. This program will train candidates for the position of home support workers and resident care aides.

- The government will support our residents with dementia through the opening of the Territorial Dementia Facility, which is scheduled for completion in 2009-10; \$1.462 million has been allocated in 2009-10 budget for the operating of the facility.
- The Hay River Supported Living Campus for adults with cognitive and behavioral challenges will address the need for appropriate social contact, life skills programming, behavioural support and personal care needs. This budget includes an additional investment of \$538,000 for the operation of this purpose-built campus with day program as it becomes fully operational.

Through the Managing this Land Strategic Initiative, departments of Health and Social Services, Municipal and Community Affairs and Environment and Natural Resources under Protect Territorial Water Initiative will work to increase public education on water issues. We will also undertake a continual release of an annual water quality report, develop a website and materials to assist with public education. The department's contribution to this initiative is \$95,000.

Through the Refocusing Government Strategic Initiative we will strengthen service delivery through the successful implementation of the new health information systems. These systems are new tools which would support patient care and safety as well as achieving a more financially sustainable health care system. I would like to highlight the following initiatives and their status:

Interoperable Electronic Health Record, IEHR – Phase 2, implementation, started in 2007-08 and is expected to be completed in 2009-10.

Planning for the Diagnostic Imaging/Picture Archiving and Communication System, better known as DI/PACS, began in 2005-06, implementation activities began in 2007-08 and the planned three-year rollout will be completed in 2010-11. In 2009-10 we will continue the rollout of these systems to community health centres. Communities that will receive this new technology, computed radiography readers, CRs, in 2009-10 and 2010-11 are:

- Aklavik
- Deline
- Fort Good Hope
- Fort Liard
- Fort McPherson
- Fort Providence
- Fort Resolution
- Fort Simpson
- Ulukhaktok

- Lutselk'e
- Norman Wells
- Paulatuk
- Behchoko
- Gameti
- Sachs Harbour
- Tuktoyaktuk
- Tulita
- Whati

The order of rollout will be decided in collaboration with the authorities and will depend largely on site readiness and the suitability of the GNWT digital communication network, DCN, in different regions of the Territory.

To ensure efficient and effective access to NWT Rehabilitation Services across the NWT, the Telespeech program has been a priority for the department. Since 2006-07, investments have been made to establish four regional rehabilitation teams across the NWT. Without Telespeech capacity this investment would not achieve its full potential in effective use of resources. The deployment of a total of 15 new or replacement tele-video consultation units, five health centres, 10 schools, will take place in 2009-10. Communities receiving the units include:

- Norman Wells (school)
- Deline (school)
- Paulatuk (2) (school and health centre)
- Tulita (school)
- Fort Good Hope (school)
- Inuvik (school)
- Tuktoyaktuk (school)
- Ulukhaktok (school)
- Sachs Harbour (health centre)
- Tsiigehtchic (health centre)
- Fort McPherson (2) (school and health centre)
- Aklavik (2) (school and health centre)

#### **New Program And Initiatives 2009-10**

Mr. Chairman, in addition to the above strategic initiatives the department has a number of other initiatives we are working on.

#### **Seniors Action Plan**

The department will continue to fund the NWT Seniors' Society through a contribution agreement. Funds are being used by the NWT Seniors' Society for the following activities: Seniors' Information Line, Seniors' Advisory Council, Seniors Awareness Week, Canada Senior Games and community outreach programs.

#### **Chronic Disease Management**

The department, in consultation with key NWT stakeholders, is finalizing the NWT Diabetes Strategy. It is proposed that, upon consultation with the standing committee, this strategy be implemented through a pilot project in two authorities in 2009-10.

#### **Cancer Screening**

Cancer is now the leading cause of overall mortality in the NWT. Significant impacts on cancer mortality can be achieved through well-organized evidence-based screening programs to detect cancer at the earliest possible stage when treatment is more likely to be curative. Some types of cancer are on the rise in the NWT, such as those of the large intestine, colorectal, and of the lungs, which are considered for the most part to be preventable. We have increased our cancer screening programs and have implemented a cancer registry. The maintenance of the NWT cancer registry is done in partnership with the Alberta Cancer Board, where most NWT residents with cancer receive diagnosis and treatments.

We have expanded our Breast Screening Program to Hay River and an estimated 450 to 500 women will be screened every year. We are funding Stanton Territorial Health Authority to test the elements of an organized screening program against colorectal cancer, and we currently have a protocol for conducting testicular cancer screening in the Community Health Nursing Program Well Adult Clinic.

We are also working with Health Canada to implement a screening mammography service in Hay River. This service will be a part of the Territorial Screening Program and will have a common database with Stanton Territorial Health Authority. In Supplementary Appropriation No. 3 we will be seeking to draw down funding from Health Canada's Patient Wait Times Guarantee Pilot Project Fund to fund this program.

#### **Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI)**

Public Health Agency of Canada has provided funding for the hiring of a sexual health coordinator that will work with regions to implement components of the STI Strategy. One hundred thousand dollars from the Pan-Territorial Health Access Fund has also been allocated to develop an STI website and to develop some mass-media public STI education materials in partnership with the other two territories.

### Healthy Choices Framework

The department will continue to carry out health promotion and prevention activities including: coordinated programming, interventions and public messaging on physical activity, healthy eating, mental health and addictions, tobacco harm reduction and cessation, injury prevention and high-risk sexual behaviours.

### Addictions Initiatives Related To Aftercare

The department will provide \$450,000 to establish culturally appropriate community treatment options for youth, along with a targeted media campaign that will highlight and promote community based addiction aftercare services. The intention is to build community-based programming that could include on-the-land treatment and aftercare programming, healing camps and mobile treatment. I look forward to working together with the Members of the House as we focus our resources and change how we do our work in this important area.

Lastly, Mr. Chairman, we have heard loud and clear from Members who brought forward a motion and from the public who may be affected, that changes to the Supplementary Health Benefits Policy requires more work. I would like to take this opportunity to announce changes to the policy will be delayed until April 1, 2010...

---Applause

...in order to facilitate a comprehensive review of the implementation tools necessary to advance the policy's intent and to undertake full consultation with the Members of the House and stakeholders on the policy's objectives and implementation.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my opening remarks and I would be happy to answer questions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you very much, Minister Lee. Would the Minister like to bring witnesses into the House?

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Yes, please. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, committee. I will ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to escort the witnesses into the Chamber.

Thank you. Would the Minister please introduce her witnesses?

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have with me to my left, Mr. Dana Heide, acting deputy minister of Health and Social Services; to my right is Mr. Derek Elkin, director of finance. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Minister. I will now open the floor to general comments on the Department of Health and Social Services. We will start with Mr. Abernethy.

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to thank the Minister for her opening remarks. I am just going to start off with where she finished off. I am very happy to hear that the Minister had decided to delay until April 1, 2010, the implementation of the Supplementary Health Benefits Policy. I am also happy that she acknowledged that it requires more work and that she's going to go out and do full consultation. Clearly that's what is needed in this case.

We need to get out there; we need to do the financial analysis; we need to talk to the stakeholders that are going to be affected; and we need to get that information from them so that a comprehensive and reasonable policy can be developed. I look forward to working with the Minister on that, as I'm sure many of my colleagues do, and I look forward to seeing how they proceed and go forward.

Not to be answered now, but certainly there's a question that I'm hoping at some point the Minister will come to the Standing Committee on Social Programs and give us a bit of a timeline and outline on how the department plans to move forward on this. I look forward to that.

A comment I made yesterday with respect to the budget is I see that it's only a 1 percent increase. Now, that on principle sounds really great. Not a significant growth in this area. But health care traditionally and consistently increases by about 6 percent to 7 percent in most other jurisdictions, and even in the Northwest Territories our forced growth in the government is around 3.5 percent or 3 percent. So when I see a 1 percent increase in the Department of Health, it appears to me to actually be a 2.5 percent or 2 percent decrease. Given the importance of the health services that we provide, I'm not a big fan of seeing a decrease in this department. I'd rather see that typical forced growth 3 percent. But we do need to find some efficiencies within the system to ensure the money we are spending is being spent in a reasonable and responsible way.

In going through the budget I'm still struggling with some of the deficits that we see out there and some of the authority. I know we did a lot of work in the last budget and there was some significant work

done in one of the supps to address some of the shortfalls that they had, and I see we're still predicting some deficits in that area. I know a lot of work has been done to mitigate some of those challenges in the authorities, but we need to work a lot harder to find efficiencies within the system so that we're not having any significant deficits in the individual authorities.

Some things that I'd like to have some more information on...Last session we talked a lot about the money that we believe that Nunavut owes us. We provide services through Stanton, which is a territorial authority. We provide a lot of services to residents of Nunavut out of the Kitikmeot region and keep hearing anecdotally, but also practically, that there's money that technically they owe us that we haven't been able to get out of them. I'm looking forward to hearing from the Minister and her staff about how the Minister plans to improve that situation, both through the 2009-2010 fiscal year and into the future, to ensure that the services we are providing to Nunavut are in fact being paid for.

I'm sad that there is no reference in this health budget to the milk subsidy. The Members on this side of the House passed a motion with all 11 Members...

---Interjection

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Sorry, with 10 Members -- one of them was out. Ten Members passed a motion, on this side of the House, talking about the importance of getting the nutritional supplement known as milk into the bellies of our babies, which is obviously an incredibly important thing to do. I'd like to see...

---Interjection

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Pardon? Sorry. I'd like to see a little bit of movement on this, if not in 2009-2010 then in 2010-2011. If nothing else, pilot it in a community to see if it works, to see if we're improving the health of children in these communities. We need to try. We need to do something. If you don't want to implement fully, I would like to see it maybe piloted in a couple of communities to see if there is any impact in that area.

I believe it's in this fiscal year and started last fiscal year, but we know that some of the money that we're getting from the feds will be sunseting. The Territorial Health Act and whatnot will be sunseting at some point. We're using those dollars for very important things within the health system and I'd like to hear from the department as to whether they're working with the federal health to find out if we're going to have access to any of those dollars for future years in order to continue doing some of

the good things we're doing with nurse practitioners and community health nurses and midwives, all the types of things that we've been supporting through there. If that money is gone, I'm worried that we'll have to cut back on those services. I'd like to hear from the department whether they're moving forward on trying to get any dollars out of those areas.

Another area -- and I know many others raised Members' statements to ask questions about this last year -- is the money we're getting from INAC. Or rather, the unresolved financial issues related to the INAC contribution agreements for aboriginal health services. I've heard all sorts of numbers. Millions of dollars, outstanding funds that INAC theoretically owes us. I don't see much in the way of progress being made in this area.

In health care, as I've said before, I'm not super happy to see only 1 percent growth. I'd like to see at least the forced growth levels. If we're cutting back and we have people who owe us money, I find that a little unfortunate. We should be out there trying to get every penny we can to support the provision of health and social services to the residents of our Territory. Health care is one of the most important services that we can provide and if we're letting money slip us by, we're not doing our jobs.

So you're going to hear this one a lot. I'll start. Board reform. I'm not 100 percent convinced that rolling health into regional boards where they're part education and part housing is in the best interest of the people of the Northwest Territories by way of provision of health services. I'm obviously curious on how the Department of Health plans to move forward with the board reform group on rolling health into those areas. I'm concerned that a beast like health -- and it is a beast -- if it rolls into a combined board it might either overpower education and housing or they might lose themselves by way of more support going to education or housing. We need to be cautious that we don't lose the quality services. And we are providing, yes, there are shortages, yes there are people out there who aren't getting exactly the services that we say we can provide and want to provide, but I have to tell you, the nurses and the doctors and the allied health professionals we have in the Northwest Territories are some of the best in the world. They're committed to doing the work. We need to make sure we have the mechanisms in there to support them as well. Every one of them deserves a pat on the back and if we're rolling them into a joint board, I'm worried that we might lose some of our quality people and might actually do them a disservice by having money flow out of the department rather than into the department. I'm

concerned about board reform. We'll be talking about that one more, I'm sure.

One other area I'm confused by, and I'd certainly like to hear from the Minister if she could help me understand this, we've gone out and pulled money out of the department in order to reinvest by way of the Strategic Investment Committee. However, to me, I always understood those things to be new initiatives; new things that we're doing in different and exciting ways. New things. Whereas when I look at some of the reinvestments that are occurring in the Department of Health and Social Services, they look to me like things that should have been known, things that should have been understood. We know we're building a dementia facility. How come the funding and staffing of the dementia facility comes out of the strategic initiative money? I think that should have been more forced growth or new programs, but certainly not out of the strategic investment funds. I would have expected that to be new things that we're not doing. The same is true for the Hay River assisted living. That money is coming out of the reinvestment dollars, as is the ITE health system. To me those are things we knew were coming, we should have known they were coming, and they probably shouldn't come out of the strategic initiative money.

The last thing I'd like to just talk about briefly is I'm really happy that you're building the dementia facility here in Yellowknife. I think it's great; it's great for Yellowknife, it's great for the people of the Northwest Territories. But in talking to my colleagues, it's becoming increasingly clear that there are challenges in the smaller communities with respect to some of the seniors facilities out there. I was up in Aklavik, God, it might have been almost a year ago now, and we looked at the seniors facility in Aklavik and it looked a little rough, to be quite honest. I'm curious at what point we're going to start getting on to those seniors facilities to help the elders in those communities. Don't get me wrong, I'm incredibly happy about the dementia facility here in Yellowknife, but I'm wondering when we're going to take the next step to start helping those people in the smaller communities. They deserve quality facilities as well.

So overall, I mean, I don't mean to sound too awfully negative. I think there's a lot of really good stuff in this budget. I think there are areas that we have to work. Health care is tough. I know that. We need to find the efficiencies within the system. I do like many of the new things you're doing within the department, and overall I support the budget and I'm excited to get into the detail to talk about a few of those areas where I do have concerns.

Once again, thank you for moving on the supplementary health benefits. I think it's great. I

look forward to working with you and I look forward to working with the department and all the stakeholders out there in trying to find a Supplementary Health Benefits Program that works for all the residents of the Northwest Territories. Thank you very much for that.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. We didn't actually confirm the protocol. We had gone to a protocol of accumulating general comments before the Minister responds. Is committee still fine with that this time around?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you. We will stick with that protocol. Next on the list is Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chair, just in regards to the Minister's opening comments, I like what she is saying but I didn't hear anything in regard to what is going to help our small communities. We have health centres which basically are locked up. No one is operating those facilities. We have nurses that show up in our communities maybe three times a year if we are lucky. I think it is important that this government has to do a better job to basically ensure that we have a health care system that is provided in all communities in the Northwest Territories. We have health centres in our communities. We have facilities in place, but yet for one reason or another, I don't know, it is simply a problem in the Beaufort-Delta region. This issue has been raised in this House time and time again by myself and Mr. Jacobson. I would like to state that I was hoping that the Minister would have been able to make some comments in regard to what we are going to do with the challenges we face in our small communities, especially when it comes to recruiting and retaining health services in those communities.

In regard to Tsiigehtchic, there was a commitment made last fall. There was a nurse there for three months. The nurse basically was willing to stay longer in regard to having a contract obligation from this government. The process took so long that the nurse basically got hired in the Yukon, which basically we lost a nurse from the Northwest Territories to the Yukon. I think that shows us exactly how unresponsive this department is to small communities and our issues.

Another issue I have a real problem with is the Tl'oondih Healing Society and the mental health position in Fort McPherson going on over 10 years. Because of political differences between the health boards and that society, basically the individual had enough and quit and basically moved on. But yet, Mr. Chairman, the Department of Health and Social Services' remedy to the problem is they will send

someone into Fort McPherson one day a month, for over 850 people. One day a month to provide mental health services to that community, which, again, is totally appalling in this day and age, and then for a health board in Inuvik to be running deficits going on over five years. This year there is an excessive deficit of over \$6 million, yet this government doesn't do a damn thing about it.

When it comes to the Stanton Health Board, that ran a little deficit a number of years ago. The government stepped in, took over, got rid of the board and basically instituted someone to manage that operation by encompassing a financial arrangement looking at the deficit, finding ways to work it through. Yet, Mr. Chairman, I find it awfully hard to encompass a deficit running every year while we don't have programs and services being delivered in our communities.

I think, for myself, even in the statement that has been read -- I can read between the lines when you talk about community care and perceiving appropriate and accessible and effective quality care -- this is the right time by most appropriate measures, but then the bottom line for me is the most economical way. I think by using that in your statement clearly tells me the dollar at the bottom line and the more people you have in your communities, that is where the money is going to be spent. But for those communities that are basically struggling, I think for most of our small communities I think it was said here today that our communities that have predominant seniors in those communities, those individuals have made that their home, lived out their lives in those communities and they are going to live out the rest of their lives in those communities. I think that we do have to improve the quality and care for our seniors in our communities. One of the fundamental principles of care for seniors is looking at the health and well being of those people to ensure that they do have health care services that they can provide.

Mr. Chair, another area I have a real problem with, and I know we didn't really touch on it in the Minister's comments, is the area in regards to child and family services under the act in regard to adoption and also the people in foster care. It has become an epidemic in the Northwest Territories. We have over 600 kids in care. The majority of those children are aboriginal children. I, for one, know that is a cash cow where people are receiving in excess of \$2,400 a month tax free to take a kid into care and which, because he can prove the aboriginal child is affected by FAS, this government basically has to enhance the cost to that individual. It is costing us millions of dollars in regard to that care.

When it comes to adoption or basically trying to re-establish that child with their parents, grandparents or family siblings, this government has every excuse in the world why the grandparents are inequitably feasible to take care of that child, or another family member. But yet we are paying people in excess of \$2,400 a month to take care of kids in care. I, for one, have a real problem after we went through the residential school nightmare. It is still upon us. Then for this government to get into the same type of mentality in regard to residential schools using a policy of this government, which basically is the same type of heavy-handed tactic that was used by previous governments to take kids and drag them out of their communities, take them away to school for years on end and then basically try, at the end of it all, to reunite them with their families.

Another area I have a concern about is the area of treatment rehabilitation. I know that it is great to have slogans like cool people quit smoking, quit drinking and quit playing cards. Maybe that will solve all of our problems. Well, excuse me. I think the problem is poverty. This government has to wake up to the reality that we do have poverty in the Northwest Territories. We have poverty in small aboriginal communities. We talk about a recession we are in today. Well, aboriginal communities have been in a recession for hundreds of years. I think it is important that we tell this government that deals with that apprehension, that poverty is the problem of a lot of these ailments in regard to alcohol abuse, drug abuse and basically abusive behaviours in our communities. If you were unemployed for years on end, some of it you didn't have a hope in heck of getting a job or having an opportunity to maintain a lifestyle for yourself, your family and your siblings, and have people take away your children whenever they wanted to, I think you will have a different insight in regard to what the reality of life really is.

Mr. Chair, another issue that we don't seem to talk about but I think it is only when we get approached by either our constituents or our political masters out there that basically has court services in our communities, especially when patients have cancer and other ailments have come across by way of an accident, and that basically a policy that we have is becoming very stringent. But yet, Mr. Speaker, a lot of community members still would like to have the ability to escort their siblings or grandparents or parents to a hospital, especially the individuals with cancer and other ailments. I think it is important that this government does whatever it can to have a flexible policy, especially for isolated communities and communities who depend on that family unit.

Another issue in regard to this budget and bill that the government has put forward, you don't make reference to dealing with territorial water issues and

whatnot. But I think, from what I have seen in my riding and over the years with the challenges we had with water issues in THMs in Fort McPherson and H. pylori in Aklavik, where Aklavik has done a community comprehensive review from the University of Alberta to work on a way to find the source of the problem. I believe the problem is dealing with environmental water issues, which are basically airborne or flow downstream from these issues we hear from Fort McMurray and what is happening in regard to Fort Chipewyan and now seeing it happen in a lot of our communities along the river systems. I think that the government cannot just look at the contribution of \$95,000. I think it has to do with education. I think it has to do with more studies, testing and research that has to be done to compel individuals to come forward, get tested to see exactly where those ailments are, how many people are affected and what remedy we have to take to try to pinpoint the problem and, more importantly, treat those people who are affected by these ailments.

Mr. Chair, I believe we have to do a better job of working with aboriginal organizations. We have the T'oonidih Healing Centre above Fort McPherson. That thing has basically been run off federal programs for the last number of years. Now we have a healing centre just outside of Inuvik, and we were all there for a Caucus that we had, and everybody made grand statements and great comments, but this government has to find ways of delivering programs and services so that we can use these facilities and quit building new facilities that we don't have to.

There are already facilities on the ground that can be used for treatment and healing programs and also even looking at the possibility of management workshops for our health care professionals or people within the system so that they can have a place to go to receive cultural enhancement programs or give them some education about these regions that they are in and be able to promote those programs.

Mr. Chair, again, I will have a lot of questions for the Minister in this area. I feel that we've been let down by this department, especially in the area of Inuvik health services. Again, I don't see anything being too grand to celebrate here. I think, as a government, when you have a health board running deficits going on six years and do nothing about it, I think you have a problem.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Moving on to Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the issues that I wish to highlight have been broadly raised by previous speakers, but I

would like to highlight a few in particular that are sincere interests.

First and foremost, the shift in the Minister's position needs to be applauded and recognized in the fact that it's a representation that government is listening that this needs a full and comprehensive review and we'll start from there. In my view, that unlatches the chains of bias and predetermined results but yet gives them the spirit and the intent of saying we have some concerns with this policy, they want to go look at it. By listening to the simple point of suggesting that moving it back a date that's more reasonable, I think, is understated here. The fact is it's a bold recognition of how important this issue is, so I want to compliment the Minister for doing that. My view is that consultation won't be rushed in the context of getting to the finish line. Consultation will be brought forward in a reasonable amount of time certainly, but not for an endless amount of time. I want to look at it that way.

Mr. Chairman, just really quickly, I would have liked to have heard something about how the Minister plans to deal with the debt at Stanton and as well, of course, the Beau-Del. I, too, don't support board reform and I certainly have said for years that I'd like to see Stanton have a board of its own overseeing that. I'm pleased with the progress that the new downtown clinic is coming forward with. I certainly look forward to seeing that open. I think that will take a much needed stress off the system over at Stanton which will allow people to have a great ease of getting treatment for simple things, whether it's a simple blood test, a quick X-ray, seeing a doctor. I think the other thing about the downtown clinic is it provides the synergy of having all the doctors together and allows more of a sense that if one's free, they can certainly calculate their time in a more efficient way that we're...It's not necessarily putting them on a treadmill, but if somebody walks in off the street and says I need to see a doctor, can I see one today, that option then becomes a reality.

Mr. Chairman, like other Members, I'm concerned with billing with Nunavut, but I also have concerns that I've heard that there seems to be internal billing problems with a certain area. I will address that directly with the Minister. As well as, of course, I was hoping for the opening remarks somewhere to mention some highlight about the work that's been done on the NIHB money, the \$100 million that's outstanding by the federal government.

Some new areas with these, I look forward to questioning the Minister on developing a policy and a program certainly for organ donation. I've had some experience with that problem lately with some people in the community and them trying to get

assistance and sometimes the theory works good, but we need a fair bit of work on that area.

Mr. Chairman, talking about synergies, there's a respiratory therapist position that I believe has been rolled back to half time and when the dementia facility comes up to full speed, you know, it causes me concern that it's been rolled back at Stanton. But the fact is it may be an important and critical role, or play an important and critical role, sorry, at the Dementia Centre. I would hope that the department, when they roll back or make adjustments to positions, that they've taken an eye to the future at the same time, because I think positions like that that have been hit hard for...I think, there wasn't long enough thought gone out to see where the picture is on our needs and the impact it has.

I'm glad to see the Dementia Centre moving along. I drive that Avens Court loop quite regularly just to see the progress.

I just want to finish off by saying, you know, Mr. Krutko has brought this issue up many times, which is the health centre nursing and I couldn't agree with him more in the principle that we should be trying as hard as we can to get nurses out into the communities to make sure we can help people there. That would probably take a lot of pressure off our great system.

Mr. Chairman, I'm going to close with an addictions area that I've been raising, which is I look for more leadership to the department of coming up with solutions as addictions treatment. I proposed during the October session that they consider investigating coming up with a program for the Gwich'in Wellness Centre outside of Inuvik. I think that would make a good compendium to the many services we offer here in the Northwest Territories. I think it could integrate in such a way that we could still offer treatment in the North, still help support groups that are working well and taking care of our people rather than sending them south. If I may compliment them in an area here, in my closing area, which is there's recognition that youth options need to be developed for treatment for them. I look forward to seeing a bit more.

Mr. Chairman, I'm going to say that as the budget as a whole, I'm happy with the progress to date. Other than a few specific areas which I've highlighted, I'm relatively pleased. If I was to say one thing, the delay on the supplementary health benefits implementation is a significant and bold move and I was glad to see that the Health Minister has listened to the concerns of this side of the House. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Moving to Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. There's not much that has been left unsaid for me. Mr. Abernethy covered most of my points but I will speak to them as well because I think the more times they're mentioned, perhaps the more it reinforces the position.

At the top I want to also indicate my appreciation for the statement made by the Minister in her opening remarks to the change to the date for the implementation of the Supplementary Health Benefits Program. It's great to have a motion passed on this side of the House that actually is heeded by the other side of the House. We thank you for that. I only hope that the policy, the intent of this change is not predetermined and that everything will be on the table; means testing and all.

There were a couple things that the Minister mentioned in her remarks that I wanted to highlight and one is that we're developing a framework for children with disabilities and that's something that I think is very positive. The other thing is that we're finalizing an NWT Diabetes Strategy. Certainly, diabetes is a condition in the NWT that is almost an epidemic and is one that really needs to be worked with. I'm very glad to see that we're going to have a strategy that can be put in place and hopefully will reduce the incidence of this particular disease.

A couple of things in terms of a little more specific stuff in the budget. I, too, am concerned about cost overruns at the Stanton Hospital Authority and the Inuvik Hospital Authority. They have been in deficit positions for many years now and I will be asking the Minister what sort of plans are in place to deal with these particular cost overruns. I know the department's been working on it but I know that Members are looking for something concrete, so I will have questions in that area later on.

I mentioned in my statement the other day that I'm disappointed about the lack of a milk subsidy in the budget. I'm encouraged by the Minister's comments today that it apparently is still being considered. I think that's great. The sooner we can get that in place the better. Again, I want to reiterate that I think to depend upon the commercial Power Subsidy Program for businesses is not going to be in place as soon as we can put a milk subsidy in place. It's something that needs to be...It's a program we need to have within a few months' time, not in a year or two years' time.

I, too, have concerns about the funding agreement that we have with the federal government relative to insured health benefits. I believe that the Minister has previously told Social Programs committee that that's being worked on and negotiated and I'll be looking for an update from the Minister on where that's at.

There is absolutely no way that this government can continue to absorb the cost for the NIHB program if we are not being funded adequately by the federal government. We either have to reduce the services or we have to get more money from the feds, and it's something which is creating a real drain on our health budget.

I, too, have difficulty with strategic initiative funds being used to pay for, or being identified for, an operations and maintenance cost, and I am referring to the Dementia Centre and the Hay River...I have totally lost the title, but the Hay River.

---Interjection

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you. The Supported Living Facility. Both of those facilities have their operations and maintenance budget identified as a strategic initiative and it is hardly, to me, an initiative. We know both of those buildings are being built and are going to be or are currently completed. I think at the time that we start building any facility, we have to put the operations and maintenance funds into the budget as an ongoing expense.

I am little concerned, as mentioned by a couple of other Members, about the age of some of the buildings in some of the communities for seniors facilities and health centres and so on, and I am wondering when committees and/or Members will have an opportunity for input into the capital plan for '10-11 for this particular department. Members know within their ridings which buildings need to be replaced and certainly have opinions on which buildings should be targeted in the capital plan, and I think an opportunity for input should be provided and I would like to know when that is.

Again, board reform is an issue for me, I don't feel that this particular model, as laid out, is one that can work at all. There is not much more I can say, except that this model will not work.

The combining of the Department of Health and Social Services and the Department of Education, both of those are two huge areas, very different areas and one will take over the other or the other will take over the one. Housing, I think, is going to be a very poor second cousin at the bottom of the pile and unlikely to survive, in my estimation. So I really feel that the department should be looking at the effects that the board amalgamation will have on the department itself.

It was stated in one of our committee meetings that each department, as part of board amalgamation should be doing their own analysis, their own evaluation. They should be looking after their own needs, so to speak. So the Department of Health and Social Services should be considering this

board reform only in the light of health and social services. Is it going to benefit the department? Is it going to benefit the clients that take advantage of the programs and services that are offered through this particular department? I don't think that has been done. That is all I have, Mr. Chair. I will have questions for the Minister as we go through the detail.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Most of the comments I will just go over them. I have heard a lot of what I was going to say from other Members, so I will try to keep this short.

I guess I wanted to start off with thanking the Minister for delaying the supplementary health benefits changes, or proposed changes, until April 1<sup>st</sup> of next year. That is a welcome sign that the Minister and the government actually listened to us. I have said to the Minister that I still don't understand why this policy would go out the door in the state that it went out, and I think, in my mind, somebody has to be held accountable for that bad policy that went out the door that caused so much frustration and anger in some communities here in the Northwest Territories. We had close to 2,300 signatures from NWT residents end up on the floor of the House. It was a mess, and I don't want to see that happen again, Mr. Chairman. Like I said, somebody has to be accountable for the mess that that was and that that caused, not to mention the amount of work that it caused Members. We are busy enough as it is, other than having to answer to 20 or 30 e-mails a day from residents who are upset about this. So again, I think that somebody has got to be taken to task for that bad policy that came out. They have had five years to work it, so you have to ask the question: what are they doing there at the Department of Health? I know they have other policies they are working on, but I hope they get this one right the next time and I do look forward to seeing that as it goes forward.

The other thing I wanted to mention is on the issue of board reform. I know we went through the business planning process, and not just the Minister of Health but the other Ministers were reluctant or did not want to answer questions pertaining to the provision of services and programs their departments respectively provide, and now that we are in a public setting those questions are going to come again and not just to you, Ms. Minister, but to the other Ministers. Those questions are going to be here. How are you going to protect the programs and services that are being delivered in education, in housing and health? What are you doing as we move through the budget itself? There will be a

number of questions and I would expect that all Ministers would be able to answer for their own departments, not continue to recite the gospel as it pertains to the Cabinet. I do look forward to having that kind of discussion with the Minister when we get to it.

It was mentioned, you know, there are a number of good things in there. The Dementia Facility, that is a good thing; though I agree with the Members that the planning should have been better. It should have been better planned for the O and M money for the Dementia Facility itself. The consolidated clinic is close to being done. I think this time next year it will be open, and that is a step in the right direction as well. Stanton and the Beau-Del definitely need some attention. We start to sound like a broken record, but we can't continue to allow these deficits to accrue at both of these authorities and not do anything about it, and sit idly by and approve supp after supp or bailouts for the authorities. I know there is a new CEO at Stanton, and I like to think that the department is taking the deficit in the Beau-Del seriously as well. There are a number of concerns. You have heard from Members that represent constituencies in that area, there are a number of large concerns. If you are not delivering the services, why are you still running up these huge deficits? I don't know; the two just don't seem to coincide for me, Mr. Chairman.

Also, I wanted to speak in favour of the Milk Subsidy Program and there were 10 Regular Members that threw their support behind that. I think that where there is a will there is a way, and this is definitely an area that the department needs to be focussing in on. You are always asking us for ideas and opinions on what we think can make a difference in people's lives and I think starting somewhere with something like a milk subsidy, if it is done and implemented the right way, I don't think it would be too onerous an administrative task to handle. You can make it more trouble than it is worth, but, like I said, I think there is a way to do it justice and do it right. That is something, like Ms. Bisaro was saying, that should take a few months, not a few years, to get to and I certainly would like the department to spend some time on that.

We always need to keep the interest of the people we represent at heart, and I know our health care system, for all its challenges across the North and the vast distances between communities, I know we do what we can and we do a good job at it. I would commend the Minister and the government. It is a challenge, like some other Members have alluded to, and it is a tough position to be in, but we do the best that we can.

We certainly could be looking at doing some more things. I mentioned in the past about services that

presently are done in Edmonton that we could look at repatriating back to the Northwest Territories, if we had the staff and the expertise here in the NWT to do it. I think it is becoming very costly to have people attend hospitals in Edmonton. Wherever possible we should be trying to keep people in the Northwest Territories to receive care. In some cases, that is not possible, but I think there are some areas, and I have talked about the nursery at Stanton as being one of those areas. Women in the Northwest Territories today who have a baby under I think it is 35 weeks have to have that baby in Edmonton. I don't think there's any reason why women shouldn't be able to have their children here in the Northwest Territories from the 32 to 33 week mark on. If we had the staff and the nursery up and running, that would be the case, but, unfortunately, they have to have their children in Edmonton.

I could go on with a few other things, but I think I'll stop there. I do have questions as we go through the Department of Health's budget itself, but for the most part I'm pleased with what I see.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Beaulieu.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** My number one issue in health care, Health and Social Services, continues to be seniors' care. I think seniors tend to be viewed by all the people in the community almost as the unofficial leaders of the community, and one of the things that really have bothered my community of Fort Resolution. I think for the most part the people in Lutselk'e have been able to keep their seniors at home in their last days. But they, too, have had no options in their community once a senior hits a certain level of health and has to be taken outside the community. If there are some seniors that require more than just basic care -- they could get a little basic care from home care people -- then they pretty well have to be removed from the community.

We have situations like that that are not comfortable for the families. It's difficult for the senior and very difficult if the senior that is taken out of the community for better care into Yellowknife, Hay River, Fort Smith or whatnot has a spouse that is still able to care for themselves and they're left behind. It's a real issue.

I think that the community of Fort Resolution has asked the department to try to come up with some sort of a plan. I don't think it's a plan that would indicate they would be taking care of people that have dementia or people that have care to do everything, but individuals in the community that still have some ability to care for themselves with assistance and then providing that type of care. I recognize that there is a cost to that, but at the same time there's a lot of value to the people and in

my riding to have these seniors remain with the family as long as possible.

I'm still looking for a plan from Health and Social Services to address that issue. I'm looking, like I said, in the community forward to having something done. We've had discussions on it and at some point I think we're not really connecting, because what the community wants and what I'm asking for is less than what the full care that individual needs in their last days that can only be provided by certain professionals is what the department feels the community is looking for, but that may not really be the case. In a lot of cases where one of the local people in Lutselk'e indicated to me that I guess the best term he could come up with individuals that used to take care of the elderly in their dying days in their own homes were Dene nurses. He said you should use that term because that's a term that they used. They never really used that term, but in the aboriginal language they basically referred to them as that, and these people took care of a lot of people back in the day when transportation wasn't easy and individuals passed away in their homes.

I think that the department should pay a lot of attention to addictions and the prevention of addictions. The addiction prevention and aftercare seem to have much greater value for money than treatment. So I'm looking forward to some of the stuff in the plan for the prevention of the various addictions and what type of aftercare and what type of support the local workers in the communities would have. Sometimes they're not in the best location for this type of work and so on, but at the same time I recognize that sometimes there's a long-term commitment for these individuals who are located in the community. It's a problem for some community members as far as accessing addictions and mental health counselling and so on. Along that line, I think that communities should have some sort of therapeutic aid or something along those lines that I think I may have mentioned previously. Something where individual therapists would come into a community and they see clients in the community, around the community, around the schools and so on. But we really don't have anybody to assist them, anybody to coordinate their activities, to keep track of what's happening when they're not in and out of there on short spurts. That's something that at least the community of Fort Resolution and also Lutselk'e would benefit from something like that, if the department went and got some sort of aid for these professionals and therapists that come into the community and see people along the way. There's no real coordinated approach.

I think the department should look at the Child Protection Act. I don't really know a whole lot about this act at all. In fact, I don't think I've even read the

act. However, I have seen results of what the act unapplied can do. I have a couple of really serious situations, serious cases in Tu Nedhe where individuals who were taken from their communities at a very young age and today these adults are suffering the consequences of actions taken under that act that was designed to protect them and has completely destroyed their lives. If the act is there to protect someone yet at the end of the day completely destroys their life, there must be something wrong. Maybe it's the application or maybe it's where the act comes from, how it's written, and how people have different needs in the community as far as child protection goes, and different views and so on. That's just an area I think the department should look at.

Board reform. I, along with the Member for Kam Lake, sit on the board reform with Cabinet and we've looked at that. Because of our positions in there we've had a lot of opportunity to speak to a lot of different boards and so on. It's not something that is favourable as it is planned out at this point, but there may be some board reform necessary. I think the one thing that definitely has to happen that cannot happen is the amalgamation of the three departments. I think it should be board reform for health, for housing, and for education in three different streams and leave it that way. That would be something that would be more acceptable.

I, too, will put in a plug for the Milk Subsidy Program. I think that's something that will benefit the small communities where milk is very expensive. In fact, I heard a person from Lutselk'e talking about that and the Healthy Food Program, that they had on this morning on CBC.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Mr. Menicoche.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** As we're about to deliberate the health budget I just want to reiterate many of the concerns that come from my constituency of Nahendeh. First I'll just mention that during my Member's statement I mentioned the nursing station in Wrigley. Myself, the community and all the residents went through great effort to get the RCMP established with a full understanding that once that was in place, the nursing can be reinstated in Wrigley. The safety of the nursing station there was of primary concern. So we went through all this routing and achieved, through much effort and work, getting the RCMP. Now we're looking at getting the nursing back.

This community is poised to be one of the impacted communities, should there be a pipeline, and working towards that. But right now it's the community that's without services and it's very much needed. It felt very left out by government when it comes to providing professional services.

We do have monthly visits and commitments for health coverage during freeze-up and break-up, which is lasting longer and longer now. It's averaging just in excess of a month now.

But over the course of time, in my five years as MLA representing Wrigley, occasionally we come across a nurse that's willing to work in a small community; someone who is ready and willing to be there. But because of the way the budget is structured, they couldn't put that nurse there at all. People who want to move to small communities...And professionals do exist. They're willing to commit for long periods of time. I believe we should take those opportunities when they come. Once again, I'll be raising this issue with the department and doing the budget deliberations here in Committee of the Whole.

I just wanted to speak about some of the other concerns that come from the other communities of Nahendeh. The Minister toured with me in May of last year and she heard many of those concerns. During the monthly visits a lot of the concerns are that if there's inclement weather or else a visit is missed, they felt that it actually extends the period between their health being taken care of. I'll just share that with the Minister, as well, and I would just like to ask the department that should there be a missed day, that immediately and as soon as we can to get the doctor back there.

One of the recent concerns from the community of Trout Lake was that it's a very small community and the community members did not understand why they had to have an appointment when the doctor is there. I can see if the doctor wanted to see certain people, but what is happening is our elders who don't have a good command of the English language are going to the nursing station, sitting there, wanting to be seen either for their aches and pains, but the staff are saying, well, you didn't have an appointment, so see you later. Why do I want to book an appointment for next month? It's today I'm aching. So some of those sensitivities I believe have to be in our system. They've got to be there. We've got to have the flexibility. I don't know if timing is an issue, but we have to take that extra hour to see an extra couple individuals, if that's what it takes. That speaks to us being the caring and attentive providers of the service to our communities and to our people.

Also, there are businesspeople that have a good command of the aboriginal language -- South Slavey in my case -- who are often asked to be escorts for our elders. What's going on is that they're putting potential wage-earning opportunities aside and work opportunities to travel with these elders, and they're coming here with little or no money. I know that we're providing them space and

providing them food, but it really doesn't make sense that they have no spending money. They're here with an elder for three or four days. I don't know; it's just not manageable. We need some kind of...I don't know how we're going to do it. I don't think they're asking for a per diem, but probably something along the line of incidentals to help them out. It doesn't have to be universal. If we put in some kind of...If we reviewed it and looked at it, if we do it for smaller communities and their people, particularly the community of Fort Liard. There are a couple of individuals that are often the go-to people to travel with the elders. They have many elders and so that happens quite a bit. They're often asked to assist and, being good-hearted, they do. But at the same time they're in Yellowknife for four or five days with little or no money at all. We don't want to lose their goodwill or their service, too. I believe that somehow we should support them while they provide this valuable service to us, because they are providing translation services.

Our translators in our health centres I believe should be adequately supported and offered continued training so that they can update their skills and learn medical terminologies that will be beneficial to them in their jobs. This also helps create, as well, a little bit of a business for people that can provide aboriginal language services. So with those translators I believe they have to be supported only because people continue to be concerned about misdiagnosis, because our elders are going there and they're going there for probably serious things, but once again they're continuing to be given aspirin. I don't know if they're wrongly diagnosed or misdiagnosed, but real or imagined I believe it's a concern of our people and our constituents and that this must be treated seriously. Our people deserve the best care.

When someone comes in I believe they should be checked over properly and not to be put off until the next day, because everybody has busy lives and if they miss a scheduled visit, then chances are they won't come back. The reason they're going to the health centres during that day and during that specific time is because they are concerned about their health, and to be dismissed is not a good feeling at all. Or else to be given a bottle of aspirin or something is just not...Once again, our health centre is not being viewed as caring for the people.

Mind you, I do have to give a pat on the back, too, that we're doing our best at those times. But like I said, it's largely our non-English speaking aboriginals who don't have a good command of the English language are the ones being affected the most. It goes through everything. Even glasses. I always say that. Our elders always concur. They always say "eh-heh," which means yes. Sometimes I believe that because of their nature, when they

even do an eye test, it kind of skews the way the person is doing the exam. When they get their glasses, they are largely non-confrontational, our seniors and if the prescription is too strong or too weak, they are not going to say anything. They just move closer to the TV or something like that. But it is up to us. We are the providers. I believe we should take the time and the opportunity to provide the best services there are. I think one of the ways that we can do that is...and I have always been a strong provider of cross-cultural training and I believe that should be continued. I know that we do it. I don't know how often we do it, but I would stress to the Minister that something should be on an annual basis. It doesn't mean that the same people have to be taking the same courses, but I do know that their staff turnover will largely benefit from cross-cultural training when they are working in the small communities and the aboriginal communities. It will benefit not only them but the people we do serve. This is one small way. If we continue that, I believe it will help improve our services. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have no further comments.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** The comments by other Members, what I heard today, are somewhat on the same line as my comments, so I'm not going to go too far into having similar types of comments here.

I would thank the Minister for putting together a very difficult budget and plan for the Northwest Territories. Certainly there are so many needs out there that sometimes we would want more for our regions because of the services that we see when we go to different parts of the Northwest Territories. Sometimes I would get into thinking, why not have that in the Sahtu region or that type of service in the Sahtu region. Mr. Chair, only once I started to understand the processes, the expenditures and the amount of services that are going to each of the regions I started to realize some of our services that we desperately want to see in the Sahtu, I think that will come into play in time.

I think the issue here is how to implement the dollars that you do have available for the Sahtu region in terms of implementing it in a way that makes sense to us in the Sahtu amongst our people in terms of how to take care of the elderly that want to stay home, that could be staying home. But sometimes medical services just because, or because the patient needs 24-hour care, that patient should be sent to Inuvik, Yellowknife or Behchoko where they have that type of service. Is it possible with this department to say, can we do something in the native ground that we would like to keep our elderly people home?

There are 3,650 seniors over 60 in the Northwest Territories. In the Sahtu, there are 241 who are 60 years and over. Is it possible in some way that we can provide some of our services with the existing funding that we have and propose to have in our region working with our health board to keep our seniors home as much as possible? I understand there is no type of facility right now. I haven't seen any type of plans or indication of looking at a facility like the Aven Manor centre or the Behchoko Elders' Facility in the plans for our region.

I am looking at creative ways that the department can look at how we keep our seniors home, with improving care, training, hiring on additional workers to have people in the communities. I am looking at places like the Aven Manor centre where we have people from our region in that centre. Certainly Aven Manor has done a good job in terms of providing care for them, but the elders that I spoke to, elders who have lived there and have gone on, their only wish was, it would be nice to have a place like this in the Sahtu. The late Paul Baton said that to me. We could have a place like this in the Sahtu. That is something I look forward to this department, to see if they can become creative and do what they can.

Mr. Chair, the hospitals and facilities review report came out. Another report came out. Again I am going to be questioning the Minister as to recommendations of the report and get feedback she's gotten and what kind of consultation has happened in terms of the facilities and hospitals review.

Certainly I am going to still continue advocating that the Sahtu certainly would like to see a regional wellness health centre in our region. There are a lot of arguments for it. I will probably get good rationale why it is not happening from the department, but I would like to see somewhere that we do some serious planning, as other facilities have seen upgrades and renovations and new facilities are on the books to happen in Yellowknife or any other centres.

I was in the last government where I supported the Dementia Centre because there was a real need in the Northwest Territories. The department, previous colleagues talked about the need for a dementia centre and I agreed with them. I think that because the space that we have in the hospital here is filled we need a place in the Northwest Territories to have special care for these special people. I ask no more or no less for the Sahtu people in terms of having a regional wellness centre in our region. I won't go further into details to why we need one in our region, but I am going to continue pushing for the Minister to go to bat for us at the Cabinet table to capital infrastructures with the senior

management to see if you can put something in the books for us. I know it takes a long time to get things on paper in the book, but I am asking. I am not too sure how to go, but I want to ask that from the Minister.

There are many other issues there that, Mr. Chair, I think the Minister needs our support in terms of working with the federal government on funding by the non-insured health benefits. I know our government through different discussions are having their struggles and their challenges dealing with the federal government in terms of money owed to us. I think, and I hope, that the Minister can come forward. How do we deal with this deficit that we have with the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs on the billing issue? Shame on them for trying to offload those on our department and our government. I look forward to if the Minister is ever going to come forward with the discussion paper, a paper maybe from her colleagues and the Cabinet, saying that this is how we are going to deal with the federal government issue, because we can no longer continue to carry a disputed number because that's affecting us in our communities. That's something that I look forward to from this Minister. In terms of her leadership, how do we deal with the federal government? Do we need to get the chiefs on side? Do we need to organize with the other aboriginal governments? I look forward to those and seeing if anything comes about in terms of how we resolve that.

Mr. Chair, the one issue that I would like to commend the Minister on is that she's implemented some programs that I agree with in terms of how it's going to impact our people in the Sahtu and the Northwest Territories. I think the Minister needs to look at how we support our small communities and health centres, upgrading our health centres, helping our aboriginal CHRs -- most of them are in my small communities -- in terms of the proper medical training. I'd like to see Colville Lake become a health centre. Right now it's a health station. I'd like to see Colville Lake become a health centre and have more people in that community get some proper training, as we do with any other medical field in the Northwest Territories. I hope to see that Colville Lake gets some attention in terms of becoming a health centre, rather than just being labelled a health station.

I have some more questions for the Minister, but overall I'm pleased with what she's doing. I think there's room for some good discussions. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I'd like to respond to the Minister's remarks here with some general

comments and I'd like to start by just saying I greatly welcome her announcement regarding the supplementary health benefits. As all of us in the House, I think this has been the hottest item that I've received feedback from constituents on and the response that the Minister has offered is totally appropriate and very welcome. I'm looking forward to participating in that process.

Reference is made to maximizing efficient use of our health care providers in a way that is congruent with our small population size. I'll look forward to hearing further what that means. I welcomed the Finance Minister's statement on strengthening prevention programs and that they will be a major focus of our work. The Minister of Health made reference to that. I totally support that approach. Of course, one brief word on the milk subsidy, that would be appropriate there, but there are many good programs that we can see happening. I am also intrigued with the Minister's action plan on reforming the way we deliver health and social services in the Northwest Territories and the opportunity to discuss this with the Standing Committee on Social Programs. It sounds like an intriguing document. I'm wondering if the program review office was involved at all or whether this is within the context of board reform and so on. Regardless, I think a community approach, community involvement, a community perspective in delivering programs is going to be key. I'll look to that. I think the comments we heard from my colleague, Mr. Menicoche, are relevant there.

Again, I'm just highlighting a few things that I'm happy to see and anxious to get more details. The mental health and addictions issues we've heard about before. Social marketing, resiliency programming and life skills programming -- very glad to see that. I'm assuming they're going ahead. I see they're developed, but no statement has been made about putting those programs in place. I am assuming that that's going ahead.

We've heard about how our seniors will continue to build and become a significantly large proportion of our population, so some attention to them is clearly needed; some increasing attention. I think there's some indication that this is happening here. The programs that are being implemented now, the Hay River Supported Living Campus and so on are, I think, already proving to be of interest to our people.

Just wanted to mention that phase two of the program on family violence, Framework for Action, I'm very happy to see the funds dedicated to that program.

The new annual water quality report, again, I will be welcoming. I'd like to see what that might be covering. Is there federal involvement in that? I

know there are other departments likely to be involved in that. I think the Minister indicated that. Further details to be discussed there.

Chronic disease management, Diabetes Strategy...Again, is this our first strategy? I wonder. We definitely need one and we need to get it implemented. We are following the predicted increase, I understand, in the incidence and potential for diabetes. I know there was a decision to cut a dedicated person in Inuvik last year with, apparently, the understanding that existing positions could take on that work. Anyway, I will be very much looking forward to the details of that strategy and seeing that gets in place.

Again, cancer screening was highlighted and, yes, as the leading cause of our mortality, there are some really good screening programs, I know, happening now on that. We've learned a lot over time. That, combined with milk to prevent cancer, of course, vitamin D, and so has some opportunities for some synergy.

Sexually transmitted infections have got a lot of press lately. Not a lot of cases involved but the trend is obviously of concern. I think some resources in that direction are wise.

The community-based addiction aftercare services, again that's something we've been talking about for a while and I'm happy to see some resources dedicated to that, and particularly to the extent that they can include the on-the-land treatment and healing camp approach. I think that for a lot of our people that's a real opportunity for some holistic healing that can be substantive and get at the underlying issues.

A number of people have mentioned the added focus needed on small communities getting our stations staffed up. That's been highlighted since this Assembly began and I have to say that that's something I'd really like to see focused on and some solutions in place.

Some of the funding issues, I also support those comments. We've talked about the rate of increase in costs and so on and the federal role and failure to come to the table on some of those issues. That needs to continue to be a focus and hopefully get some resolution happening there.

Finally, I just want to mention the recreational position that was cut to half-time last year. That's still proving to be a trial for people working at Stanton and it's a key position in terms of focusing the efforts on recreation, an important part of healing in the hospital and for bringing other volunteers, effective and dedicated volunteers, to the table. I'm hoping with the efficiencies we've seen here we might be able to bump that back up

at some point soon here to a full-time position in response to those pleas for help.

Not to belabour many of the things that have been mentioned already, I think I'll leave it at that, Mr. Chair, and look forward to the detail. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Jacobson.

**MR. JACOBSON:** All of my colleagues brought up a lot of good points. From our small communities we do have major problems with our health, with our doctor visits. It's good to see in the opening comments, Ms. Minister, with the electronic health record or diagnostic imaging going into all four of my communities, which we really need. We're having to remove people from the community to go get an X-ray.

Again, getting back to the doctors' visits, the elders in my communities are being sent out to see the doctor and if they're ill enough, they have to stay in the hospital. The last couple of weeks I had an elder pass away from pneumonia -- sent home too early. Trying to deal with that with the family members is really tough. In our small communities our elders never see a doctor sometimes for two or three months, if not longer. The health system in our ridings -- myself, Mr. Krutko -- is not up to par with Yellowknife where if you want to see a doctor, you make an appointment and you see him in the next couple of days. If it's an emergency, you'll get to see him within a couple hours. Back home, the nursing station will give you Tylenol and send you home. That's not right.

Over the next couple of weeks I'm going to be bringing forward our elders facility in Ulukhaktok. I'm going to bring a motion into the House. My elders in Ulukhaktok want to take care of our own and we want to bring our elders home instead of having to send them to long-term care in Inuvik or Aklavik; both good facilities but they want to be close to the community and their families. A lot of little problems we've been having are elders with arthritis and stuff like that. I have an elder in Tuktoyaktuk who's been having a lot of problems trying to get treatment, wanting to drive to Inuvik himself. Just the way he's been treated in the community health centre, it's not right. I really think this should be looked into.

In our community of Paulatuk, in our community visits, myself and the Minister heard many issues in regard to mental health workers, psychiatrist to be brought into the community, which we really need. The community said that loud and clear on our visit, so I hope something is being done with that.

The cancer screening, in my riding it's either too late or you're trying to prevent and -- how can I say

-- basically if you're diagnosed with cancer in my riding, it's just like getting a death penalty. You can prevent the cancer in regard to the treatment that...There is no treatment. I mean, it's too late. You can't catch it at the start. You're really lucky if you do. The screening for cancer, there's none. How many people could we have saved since I've been an MLA down here? How many people died with cancer in our communities? Something's got to be done with that. I really hope that the Minister is willing to get more doctors, more locums or whoever, just to provide the service that's required in the smaller communities, because we're treated like second-class citizens sometimes in the smaller communities of Paulatuk and Sachs. Having to be sent out, it's not right.

Just to close up, on the board reform, it's not a good thing. I'm not going to be supporting that supplementary health. You might as well just get rid of it because we're just wasting our time on it. April 1<sup>st</sup> isn't go to go anyway. I'm not supportive of that. Again, thanks for your time.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. As that was the last Member on my list, we'll go to Minister Lee to respond to Members' comments. Minister Lee.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There were a lot of issues that had been brought up. I think most Members have indicated that they will be asking more specific questions as we go through the review. I will try, Mr. Chairman, to just highlight some of the more commonly raised issues, if I may.

With respect to the review of the changes on the supplementary health, I just want to state again that I will be coming forward to the Standing Committee on Social Programs with a timeline and outline and some of the framework for the review. I expect that we will do that when this session is over, if that's okay. The officials are working on that so that we can have a document starting point and to get the input from the standing committee, and then after that we can move forward with public consultation and more of a back and forth information exchange. I think the past two months have shown that not only we hear from the public, but then there's information the public will benefit from having as well. I look forward to that situation in that work.

With respect to deficits in our authorities, I just wanted to advise the Members that our health authorities are doing much better this year financially than last year. They are doing much better even than the last detailed report we had back in the second quarter. We are approaching...I think we just got the third quarter results back. All the authorities were asked to balance their budget this year and they had to take on some mitigation

measures, and that recreational therapy position is one of the examples. Last year our accumulated deficit system wide was about \$9 million; that's taking on all the deficits minus surplus. This year we are looking at about \$700,000 deficit as a system. Stanton is looking at about \$2.2 million deficit this year and the Beaufort-Delta is looking at \$91,000 in deficit. Those are projections. We don't know what's going to happen at the end of March right down to the penny, but I think it demonstrates that some of the mitigation measures have worked. It hasn't been without difficulties, because in the health system we need every position and every program. But I think by the hard work that the authorities and their officials have done, we've been able to balance and get better numbers doing some hard work but not seriously affecting negatively the programs that we do offer.

Another issue that I would like to speak on is with respect to...(inaudible)...funding renewal. I just want to advise the Members that the Minister of Health from Nunavut, and the Yukon and myself met with Minister Aglukkaq at the beginning of the month, in January, and we had a very good, lengthy meeting, much to the chagrin of all the staff there. We had a very nice northern Ministers' meeting for about an hour and a half and it was nice to speak to a Health Minister who knew a lot not only about the North, but exactly how...(inaudible)...funding renewal works. We understand that she has to work through the challenges within the federal system, but we are working closely to see how she can help us with renewing that funding; because I think we all understand how crucial that is. It's about \$10 million funding to our budget and we need every dollar and every funding program. We will continue to work on that.

With respect to the programs for small communities on the issue of capital projects and facilities and health care and other facilities, capital projects will be reviewed during the capital planning process. I look forward to having more discussions on that. On providing nursing services and additional services in small communities, the Minister's action plan, that I hope to come to defend in the Standing Committee on Social Programs, will address that question and others. Because I have learned in my role as the Minister of Health and Social Services that the template that we are following is the ISDM, model, which works well and has worked well for many number of years. But what I am trying to do with the Minister's action plan is to sort of make a super ISDM- plus, because there is some lack of flexibility in the ISDM in that it states very clearly that for a community of certain size you can have a certain level of staffing. I think that there is not enough flexibility there and I want to build in special needs for some of the communities. Obviously the issues about nursing coverage in Wrigley and

Tsiigehtchic are the most often heard and that is the kind of thing that I want to discuss with the Standing Committee on Social Programs. It is a plan as we move forward. It is a plan about how we could look at our health and social services system differently. It is a completely new action plan that we, the department and myself, have worked on for the last eight weeks. It is not directly related to the board reform work, but I think it is an opportunity to discuss some of these issues. We work to plan for the next business plan cycle.

Tl'oondih Healing Society, I am happy to advise the Members that we have an agreement. I have been working with the Beaufort-Delta authority on this for many months now. The Beaufort-Delta Health and Social Services Authority is willing to work with the community and provide the funding to the community, the council of Fort McPherson, directly, where they could hire their own person to provide a counselling service so that they don't have to have somebody coming from Inuvik and that there would be some flexibility on the programs they can provide. There are so many issues here at Stanton.

On the billing issues with Nunavut, we are working on finalizing an agreement with Nunavut where we will have...I learned when I came into this office that there was not a formal agreement on how Nunavut will pay us for the services we provide and how much each service is worth; not all of it anyway. We have an agreement on that where we are expecting to finalize that. We also have had to agree that some of the outstanding amount could not be collected, so we may have to write that off.

The Stanton Territorial Health Authority has gone through some changes in management, but I think they are very stable now. Everybody is staffed. They have a new CEO there. I have not had a chance to get a direct report from the acting PA, who is sitting next to me, with Stanton, because the new CEO there just started about eight weeks ago. I look forward to listening and getting a report from her about some of the things that she wants to do for the Stanton authority and I think her expertise and experience could help us in working through the system.

I just want to...There are so many notes here. I am going to have to just wait until I get all these questions asked back and I will answer those questions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Minister Lee. I have nobody else on my list. Does the committee agree that there are no further general comments?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Does the committee agree that we proceed to detail?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Okay. I don't think you can say nay, can you? There are more general comments, so we will go back to Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a question to the Minister of Health in regard to under grants and contributions. I see the Northern Lights Special Care Home in Fort Smith is going to be purchased by your department from the Town of Fort Smith. I would like to know exactly...We are putting a lot of money into the hospital in Fort Smith where tons of money is being spent in that area...

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Mr. Krutko, could we not deal with that when we get into the detail? You will be able to ask your questions at that time.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** We will move back into detail. We will defer the department summary and review the estimates by activity summary beginning on page 8-8. Infrastructure investment summary, information item. Are there any questions? Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Page 8-9, revenue summary, information item. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question is under grants and contributions. I know that the Northern Lights Special Care Home in Fort Smith is being purchased for \$639,000 from the Town of Fort Smith and yet we are putting a lot of money in facilities throughout the Northwest Territories. I would like to know what are we doing purchasing property off municipalities and yet we are spending a lot of money in regard to the capital in regard to the health services in those communities. Why is this item there in regard to purchasing this asset and yet we are spending a ton of money on capital expenditures?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Minister Lee.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is basically an accounting procedure. The facility was owned by the Town of Fort Smith but, for many years, the government has been paying them lease payments which they use to pay the mortgage. While we were doing the latest renovations, questions about ownership came up in that it is better for us to do the renovations because we are paying for all of the expenses; not only the lease payments but they used to pay the mortgage,

but running, operating and renovating. So this is just to clean up and make it clean a property that really is, in practice, owned and taken care of by the government. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Mr. Chair, this is a purchase of property of over \$600,000. I don't think it is just a small item. I think, if anything, this government basically has to identify capital expenditures and yet we are spending a lot of money on capital. We are looking at different types of facilities throughout the Territory and yet this government can find it in their budget to purchase private property. I think that, if anything, this government should be looking at...

On the top line item under "general," you basically talk about a subsidy to the same facility. On the one hand you are still asking for the subsidy, and on the other hand you are purchasing the same asset. I would like to know what it is. You are providing a subsidy and you are purchasing the asset on the next line item. I think, as a government, how many other types of these purchases are out there that we are not aware of?

**HON. SANDY LEE:** There is no actual exchange of cash here. This is an accounting procedure. We are assuming the ownership of the property. The assumed value of that property is \$2.75 million. We are buying it for \$2.5 million because that is the outstanding mortgage on it, so the accounting department is telling us that that is the proper thing to do, that we have to report a gain that we are making from this purchase. That is why it is being recorded here.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Just in regards to another line item regarding hospital services to Nunavut, \$5.883 million. It looks like it's an ongoing expense. Did I hear the Minister correctly that you're going to write this off?

**HON. SANDY LEE:** No, we're not writing this off. That is the projected revenue from the services that we provide to Nunavut for next year.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Well, if that's the case, can the Minister clarify her comments earlier when she mentioned that there's a possibility of writing off the outstanding account regarding Nunavut health care?

**HON. SANDY LEE:** The Members here are very well aware that over the last 16 months we have had many discussions here about the deficit situation at Stanton. The department has been working very closely with Stanton to get to the bottom of that, so to speak. We have discovered that we know that part of that deficit has had to do with outstanding receivables from Nunavut. The Stanton officials, under the leadership of Mr. Al

Woods, and the department officials have had a number of meetings with Nunavut officials and we have been able to collect most of the money. But there is an amount of about \$2.5 million accumulated over many years, not one year but over many, many years, that we have agreed that it's not collectible. So we will be looking at writing that off. But most of the revenues we have collected. We also have a good agreement in place that would allow us to have a clearer picture as we go forward.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Ms. Lee. Moving on I have Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do have a question on page 8-9 relative to the revenue for hospital care, Indians and Inuit, and medical care, Indians and Inuit. This is the revenue that I presume we're getting from the federal government. I wonder if the Minister can advise what our expenditures are for these two line items.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Ms. Lee.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For the 2006-2007 actual expenditure it's \$40 million.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks for the answer. So 2006-2007; we don't have numbers then for 2007-2008?

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Not yet.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you. Okay. So what I'm seeing here is give or take \$26 million in revenue and at least \$40 million in expenditures, because we're talking two years ago now. So I'm wondering if it's accurate to say that we are spending \$14 million more on expenditures for these two line items, hospital and medical care for Indians and Inuit, than we are taking in.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** There has been an increasing level of gap between the services we provide and the amounts that the federal government recognizes under hospital and medical care for Indians and Inuit. The reason being that the federal government has imposed a 2 percent growth cap across the country. We are a very small player in comparison to, say, I don't know what the amounts might be with Ontario or B.C. So it's not even, we can't even really describe it as a dispute because if it's a dispute, it's got to be a different understanding between two parties. The federal government is very clear about their understanding of this. They are imposing 2 percent cap on the growth, whereas our actual expenditures have been growing at a much higher rate than that. Anywhere from 13 percent in one year to about 5 percent in 2005-2006 is the information I have.

I think the important thing that we need to specify here is because some of this got mixed up into debate about self-health as well. I think what we need to understand is GNWT provides health and doctor service and hospital service and every other service to all residents whether you are eligible for NIHB or not. For our residents who are eligible for NIHB, we are able to claim that money with the federal government. That helps us with our expenditure. But whether we get all of the money or not from the federal government, we will continue to provide that service.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you. Thanks for the answer. I think I understood that already. I guess my concern is more what the department is doing to try and close this gap from what the feds are willing to pay us and what we're actually spending. What actions are we taking to try and change the minds of the federal government to fund us appropriate to the amount of money that we're actually spending, or what actions are we taking to try and reduce the services that we're providing? Because this is putting us continually into a deeper and deeper hole.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** I guess that what the Member's stated, that we have to look at reducing services, is not really an option. That's my point. We are going to continue full services to all the residents in the Territories whether or not we are going to get NIHB reimbursed for the NIHB eligible residents or not. I think that's an important point. We will provide the same service to all of our residents. For those residents in our Territory who are eligible for NIHB reimbursement, we hope to get more than what the federal government is willing to pay us, but we're not going to reduce the service because the feds won't pay us.

With respect to what the government and department have done, there have been a flurry...Every opportunity the Premier and Minister of Finance in this government and previous governments have had, we have indicated to the federal government that a 2 percent cap is not desirable or not what we are happy with. The last communication I had as Minister was to write to Minister Strahl that this is not acceptable to us, and we asked that his staff and our government staff get together to see if we could re-open this. The deputy minister of Health and Social Services met with the senior officials in July 2008. I'm not sure; I don't think we have been able to convince them that a 2 percent cap is not reasonable, but we keep working to continue to convince them.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Chairman, the item on Patient Wait Time Guarantees Trust for this year, I

wanted to follow up to Mr. Jacobson's comments to the early preventative diagnosis of illness in our communities, such as cancer. Take note that it's on the increase and some of our elderly people, people who go into our health centres and often are not quite yet diagnosed with an illness, that could be potentially dangerous or fatal in the future. Sometimes they're given different types of prescriptions and told to go home until later on. When they do go back for further diagnosis or a family member decides to do something to get them to Stanton here, they're diagnosed with a more serious condition of an illness.

I wanted to know if this funding that the Minister has indicated here goes towards some type of early detection in terms of Patient Wait Time Guarantee. Is that something that she's looking at in terms of how we get our elderly people more quickly serviced in terms of seeing if there's a more serious illness when they go to the health centres? Such as cancer.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Ms. Lee.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is a three-year funding program that we're receiving from the federal government for the total of \$4.6 million. This is year three and this year we proposed to spend \$1.068 million on CHN development, and \$600,000 on nurse practitioners, and \$225,000 on DI/PACS for the diagnostic imaging and pictures, picture archiving system that I think I mentioned in my opening statement. It would allow different health clinics to send images back and forth. So that's really using money for human resources and some of the equipment necessary to enhance access to our residents.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Minister. I guess what I'm looking at is in terms of more of the smaller, isolated health stations that have limited resources to really do a proper diagnosis of a patient when they come from the communities into the health centres. That sometimes for no fault of their own the hard-working health staff in their small communities do the best they can with the resources they have. So are we giving them additional resources that could get a quicker diagnosis of diabetes, cancer and other issues that could be diagnosed faster? There are a number of things that I could say to support my argument. There are a number of incidents I could say to support my comments here. I guess I'm looking for some support in the health centres other than finding out later that certain patients are coming into Stanton or the Inuvik Regional Health Board or to Edmonton, only to find out that they had cancer there or cancer had developed three or four months back. So I'm just looking for a good answer from

the Minister in terms of how we are helping our people in our communities that are only told later on that possibly something could have been done to detect an early diagnosis of cancer or some other terminal illness.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** I'd like to just advise the Member and the House that I understand when the Members say that our communities, especially small communities, are having to go without a lot of services that are available in major centres. I accept that; I understand that; and we have to continue to work to enhance those services. There's no argument from me there. It's really hard to have everything. In our smaller communities we just don't have the same level of service.

Having said that, I think I read last week that our residents come into contact with health care providers about 28,000 times a year. We don't hear, thankfully, many of them go without any incidents. But I hear from people all over the Territories, especially from small communities, that early detection might have made a difference in their outcome. Now, I hear this from bigger communities as well, because I think when Members of our family are struck with something like cancer, families and everybody wants to know what we could have done to prevent that, or would an early detection have saved this person from an outcome that could be sometimes fatal.

I think that's a constant challenge that the health care system and health care providers have to work under. Our nurses in our small communities are trained and provide support and a lot more services than a nurse in any big centre would provide. Our CHNs or nurse practitioners or nurse-in-charge are constantly trained and supported and constantly in touch with doctors or other people that they need help with, in Yellowknife or other places. I think we have to take every one of these cases seriously and when I get these inquiries in my office, I ask the officials to look at them individually and see if we can review the file to make sure that we constantly work on our system to improve that.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** I certainly wanted to say to the Minister that she certainly has been responsive to some of the issues that I have been dealing with in my life or in my constituents' lives. She has been very helpful in terms of how we get to some of the issues. I want to say that in our smaller communities it is a reality for us that when we go back, we are stopped by certain members in our communities and told, or given a call, or when we go visit, that certain things in the communities for the hospital for early detection sometimes is not taken too seriously. There's a number of cases I could give to the Minister and that's why I'm asking these questions here. Is there any type of

community guarantee wait time? I know every case. Sometimes I like to look at it as an isolated case, but some things have been happening for too long and too far in between in terms of having our people come into some of the centres here that need to look at some of their illnesses. So I guess in that sense that's why I'm asking these questions here. I'm hoping to see something that will make a difference in some of our people's lives. Working with our health boards, give them resources. Look at Colville Lake with 135 people and the few dogs that Bern Brown has in terms of the population here. Colville Lake in this day and age with their health centre, there's a case that I don't want to say right now, but it's not as rosy out there as it may seem. It's actually quite sorry to say that in this day and age, with the modern type of equipment, that Colville Lake is still operating their health centre in the '30s and '40s. This is why I'm asking these specific questions. I haven't yet seen much of an improvement, since I became an MLA, to the services in Colville Lake. That's only one community. That's why I'm asking these questions here. I know the Minister is trying hard, but I'd like her to try harder.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** I understand. I think the Member is asking if we have a policy that says no matter where you live in the Territories, you don't have to wait for so long to see so and so. That's not part of our policy. We don't have a policy that says that. The Wait Time Reduction Trust and Patient Wait Times Guarantee Trust is the language of the federal government. That's the program that they have set up to fund us, and we are accessing those funds and we're using those monies to enhance community capacity by putting more resources into CHNs and nurse practitioners.

I take the Member's point very seriously, that we do need to give more confidence to people in our small communities, that they are looked after and that when they go in and talk to the staff about their conditions, that they're taken seriously and that all of the processes for diagnoses and detection are followed through. I take that point and I will continue to work hard on that with the officials. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Minister Lee. Noting the clock, Mrs. Groenewegen.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to move that we report progress.

---Carried

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley):** Thank you, Minister Lee and your witnesses. I will now ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to escort the witnesses out of the Chamber. I will now rise and report progress.

### Report of Committee of the Whole

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

**MR. BROMLEY:** Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 11-16(3), NWT Main Estimates 2009-2010, and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Do we have a seconder for the motion? The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

---Carried

Item 23, third reading of bills. Madam Clerk, item 24, orders of the day.

### Orders of the Day

**PRINCIPAL CLERK OF OPERATIONS (Ms. Bennett):** Orders of the day for Wednesday, February 11, 2009, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Opening Address
11. Replies to the Budget Address
12. Petitions
13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
14. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
15. Tabling of Documents

16. Notices of Motion
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. Motions
19. First Reading of Bills
20. Second Reading of Bills
21. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
  - Tabled Document 7-16(3), Ministerial Benefits Policy
  - Tabled Document 11-16(3), Northwest Territories Main Estimates 2009-2010
  - Committee Report 2-16(3), Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures Report on Matters Referred to the Committee
  - Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Historical Resources Act
  - Bill 3, International Interest in Mobile Aircraft Equipment Act
  - Bill 4, Public Library Act
  - Bill 5, Professional Corporations Act
  - Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act

22. Report of Committee of the Whole

23. Third Reading of Bills

24. Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Madam Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Wednesday, February 11, 2009, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 6:04 p.m.