

Northwest Territories   
Legislative Assembly

5th Session Day 9 16th Assembly

HANSARD

Wednesday, May 12, 2010

Pages 4807 - 4828

**The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker**

**Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories**

Members of the Legislative Assembly

Speaker

Hon. Paul Delorey

(Hay River North)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Mr. Glen Abernethy

(Great Slave)

Mr. Tom Beaulieu

(Tu Nedhe)

Ms. Wendy Bisaro

(Frame Lake)

Mr. Bob Bromley

(Weledeh)

Mrs. Jane Groenewegen

(Hay River South)

Mr. Robert Hawkins

(Yellowknife Centre)

Mr. Jackie Jacobson

(Nunakput)

Mr. David Krutko

(Mackenzie Delta)

Hon. Jackson Lafferty

(Monfwi)

*Minister of Justice*

*Minister of Education, Culture and Employment*

Hon. Sandy Lee

(Range Lake)

*Minister of Health and Social Services*

*Minister responsible for the*

*Status of Women*

*Minister responsible for*

*Persons with Disabilities*

*Minister responsible for Seniors*

Hon. Bob McLeod

(Yellowknife South)

*Minister of Human Resources*

*Minister of Industry, Tourism*

*and Investment*

*Minister responsible for the*

*Public Utilities Board*

*Minister responsible for*

*Energy Initiatives*

Hon. Michael McLeod

(Deh Cho)

*Minister of Transportation*

*Minister of Public Works and Services*

Hon. Robert C. McLeod

(Inuvik Twin Lakes)

*Minister of Municipal and*

*Community Affairs*

*Minister responsible for the*

*NWT Housing Corporation*

*Minister responsible for the Workers'*

*Safety and Compensation*

*Commission*

*Minister responsible for Youth*

Mr. Kevin Menicoche

(Nahendeh)

Hon. Michael Miltenberger

(Thebacha)

*Deputy Premier*

*Government House Leader*

*Minister of Finance*

*Minister of Environment and*

*Natural Resources*

Mr. Dave Ramsay

(Kam Lake)

Hon. Floyd Roland

(Inuvik Boot Lake)

*Premier*

*Minister of Executive*

*Minister of Aboriginal Affairs*

*and Intergovernmental Relations*

*Minister responsible for the*

*NWT Power Corporation*

Mr. Norman Yakeleya

(Sahtu)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Officers

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Mr. Tim Mercer

Deputy Clerk Principal Clerk Principal Clerk, Law Clerks

of Committees Operations

Mr. Doug Schauerte Ms. Jennifer Knowlan Ms. Gail Bennett Ms. Sheila MacPherson

Ms. Sarah Kay

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Box 1320

Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

Tel: (867) 669-2200 Fax: (867) 920-4735 Toll-Free: 1-800-661-0784

http://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca

Published under the authority of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**PRAYER 4807**

**MINISTERS' STATEMENTS 4809**

21-16(5) – Corrections Northern Recruitment Training Program (Lafferty) 4809

22-16(5) – New Licence Plate (M. McLeod) 4810

**MEMBERS' STATEMENTS 4810**

Housing Programs for Tu Nedhe Seniors (Beaulieu) 4810

Condolences on the Passing of Nunakput Residents (Jacobson) 4811

Response to the Finance Minister’s Fiscal and Economic Update (Ramsay) 4812

Current State of Northern Health Service (Bromley) 4812

Proposed Changes to Supplementary Health Benefits Program (Yakeleya) 4813

Proposed Changes to Supplementary Health Benefits Program (Bisaro) 4813

Proposed Changes to Supplementary Health Benefits Program (Abernethy) 4814

John Tsetso Memorial Library in Fort Simpson (Menicoche) 4815

Process for Lodging Complaints Against Physicians (Groenewegen) 4815

Department of Health Medical Escort Policy (Hawkins) 4816

**RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY 4816**

**ORAL QUESTIONS 4816**

**PETITIONS 4827**

**REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON THE REVIEW OF BILLS 4827**

**TABLING OF DOCUMENTS 4827**

**NOTICES OF MOTION FOR FIRST READING OF BILLS 4827**

Bill 7 – An Act to Amend the Elections and Plebiscites Act 4827

**CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS 4827**

**REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE 4828**

**ORDERS OF THE DAY 4828**

**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**

**Wednesday, May 12, 2010**

**Members Present**

Mr. Abernethy, Mr. Beaulieu, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Bromley, 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 1:37 p.m.

# Prayer

---Prayer

**DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Krutko):** Orders of the day. Mr. Miltenberger, what is your point of order?

## Point of Order

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I’ve waited until today to raise this point or order because I wanted to review yesterday’s Hansard. On Tuesday, May 11th, during his Member’s statement, Mr. Ramsay said, and I quote from page 5 of unedited Hansard of that day, “Minister Lee has been given her marching orders by Cabinet and she is being too arrogant and too ignorant to see that by pursuing this direction she is doing untold damage to her reputation as a people’s politician.” Mr. Speaker, I submit in the accusation of being arrogant and ignorant are clearly abusive and violate Rule 23(k) that states in debate, a Member will be called to order by the Speaker if the Member uses abusive or insulting language of a nature likely to create disorder.

In the same statement, Mr. Ramsay also said, and I quote from page 5 unedited Hansard from May 11th, “It is a gross misrepresentation of the laurels of this government to be fair and equitable to all they serve. All of this for what? To divide people on racial lines to save $2.5 million a year.” Mr. Speaker, these comments impute false or hidden motives to Minister Lee and the government as a whole, which is a violation of Rule 23(i), and moreover, Mr. Speaker, any comment that suggests the government establishes policies based on racial considerations is abhorrent, irresponsible and should not be tolerated in this House. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** To the point of order. Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do look forward to a resolution of this at some point in time, but it wasn’t my intent to hurl insults or be abusive or insulting to my colleague, Ms. Lee. Mr. Speaker, I take my position here as a Member of the Legislative Assembly very seriously. When I use

words in this House, those are words that I get in conversations with residents, constituents, people who bring issues to me, and if I do believe that a certain Minister is acting in an arrogant fashion, an ignorant fashion, it is my duty and my obligation as a Member of this House to come here and tell them that. I do look forward to your ruling on this point of order.

**MR. SPEAKER:** To the point of order. Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We spent a fair bit of time a number of months ago at Blachford Lodge talking about how we’re going to interact with each other, the importance of being respectful, to use proper language, to avoid the hurling of insults. I would assume and I would trust that whatever a Member hears on the street doesn’t necessarily feel or she necessarily feels obligated to repeat in this House without any kind of filter or editing to make sure that it fits the decorum of this institution that we all work in. The Member made a point of reiterating the very same allegations that he’s just been called on a point of order on.

I, as well, look forward to your ruling. If we’re going to allow the tenor of the debate, the tone of the debate to deteriorate to the point where we can start hurling those type of insults and invective back and forth across the floor, then it’s going to be a very difficult process to have meaningful debate within the context of consensus government that we all agreed was important and that we wanted to make sure we could maintain.

**MR. SPEAKER:** To the point of order. Ms. Lee.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to add that as Members of this Legislature we do have rules of debate. Sometimes our debates get heated. We are passionate people. We are passionate about the issues that we are fighting for and the people we represent. As the Members of Cabinet, we understand that we need to be accountable and answer questions and we should have a healthy debate on the merits of the policy as they are presented.

I think name calling, I can’t imagine that I could get away with calling any Members on the other side ignorant. That’s not a very nice word. Arrogant. And to suggest that the government is doing anything on racial lines, those are serious words. I think we should be mindful of the words that we are using. I ask you to look at this order and decide on the interest and the good of the integrity of this House.

**MR. SPEAKER:** To the point of order. Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I’d like to add a little bit to this debate. I think what I heard Mr. Ramsay expressing, certainly in terms of the description of the Minister, was, it might have been a little out of line, but he was suggesting that he was describing her actions. Again, that’s up to you to determine whether or not that was correct.

As to the statement about the government being fair and equitable and the division of people along racial lines, I have to say that I don’t believe that’s impugning the motive of the government. I think that’s an interpretation of a policy which is before us at the moment and which we are debating. I have to say that I have to side with Mr. Ramsay in the belief that this policy is divisive and whether it’s racial lines or ethnic lines, but it’s certainly implied in the policy. I’d like to encourage you to consider that in your ruling.

**MR. SPEAKER:** To the point of order. If there are no other points of order, I’d just like to take this under advisement and I will review Hansard and what’s been said.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Point of order.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Excuse me, I’m making a ruling here. Again, I’ll repeat, I will take this under advisement in regard to what’s been stated here with regard to the point of order and what’s been said here in the House and, more importantly, what’s in Hansard. With that, I would like to have an opportunity to review that and I will come forward with my ruling.

Ms. Lee, point of order. What’s your point?

## Point of Order

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I have waited until today to raise this point of order because I wanted to review yesterday’s Hansard.

On Tuesday, May 11th, during the question period. Mr. Abernethy said, and I quote from page 27 of the unedited Hansard for that day: “So what she is saying, that they are not covered, it is not completely true. It is doublespeak. She is saying one thing when really she is trying to say another…”

Mr. Speaker, the Merriam Webster Dictionary defines doublespeak as, “language used to deceive, usually through concealment or misrepresentation of truth.” Mr. Speaker, the term strongly suggests a deliberate misleading of the House and as such violates Rule 23(j), which states that in debate a Member will be called to order by the Speaker if the Member charges another Member with uttering a deliberate falsehood.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I ask for your ruling.

**MR. SPEAKER:** To the point of order. Mr. Abernethy.

**MR. ABERNETHY:**  Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, have a definition of doublespeak taken from a dictionary, as well, that says, intentionally deceiving language, not an outright lie or a tactful euphemism, but a systematic use of ambiguous, evasive words and sentence structures to say one thing but mean something else, commonly associated with the bureaucracy, military and politics. It is often practiced in commerce, also a calculated attempt to: (1) avoid or shift responsibility; (2) distort reality by making the bad, negative or unpleasant look good, positive or pleasant and vice versa; and (3) confused by using unfamiliar or concocted jargon, an example, see collateral damage as an example. It’s also called doubletalk or doublethink. The noun: evasive, ambiguous language that is intended to confuse. It comes originally in 1957 from a book by George Orwell and it’s often referred to as doubletalk, as well, which is meaningless speech which consists of nonsense syllables mixed with intelligent words, also sometimes known as gibberish, deliberately ambiguous or evasive language also called doublespeak.

Mr. Speaker, in responding to some of the things that the Minister said yesterday, I felt that she was clearly using ambiguous language that wasn’t clear and I think doublespeak fits that term. I look forward to your ruling. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** To the point of order. Ms. Lee.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Whether by the definition that I read or the definition that the Member read, I believe to say that someone is doing that in this House is in violation of Section 23(j). Mr. Speaker, I ask you to rely on a ruling in the House on February 21, 2003, pages 231 to 260, in which a former Member for Monfwi, which then at the time was North Slave which is now Monfwi, accused former Premier Joe Handley of travelling on a separate road from the truth. He didn’t say that the Premier lied. He just said that he was travelling separate from the truth and that was found to be in breach of this rule.

Mr. Speaker, it is a very serious allegation for any Member in this House to allege that another Member is either misleading the House or misrepresenting the facts or lying. That’s really important because Members have to be able to rely on the information that the Ministers give and that we can’t have Ministers or Members giving deliberate falsehoods. The Member, by reading the Webster definition that he just read, he’s reconfirming the notion that he is saying that I am actually misrepresenting or lying and double speaking. Mr. Speaker, if only because he doesn’t agree, that doesn’t mean that somebody else is misrepresenting. That only because he doesn’t agree with one interpretation, it doesn’t mean that what that person is saying is ambiguous.

At no time in answering my questions yesterday did I ever say anything that is not true. My point about the supplementary health for the lower income people, I focused on the fact that the program would expand to dental and eye care. That is a statement of the fact and to say that I...

**MR. SPEAKER:** Ms. Lee ...

**HON. SANDY LEE:** ...not lie. I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to say lie.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I would like to remind Members that we are dealing with a point of order that has been specifically stated. Could you keep your frame of discussion to the point of order? So, to the point of order. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to speak briefly to this. The Member did indeed use the term “doublespeak” yesterday. I think it is my impression, or my reading of his use of the term was that this Minister frequently does say things that can be taken in two different ways. When we are trying to have a discussion that clarifies things, that does not do service to the issue. Whether or not the Minister does that on purpose, I am not saying, but nevertheless, she does tend to use things that can be interpreted in two different ways. That does not add clarity to the issue under discussion. My interpretation is that by using the term “doublespeak,” Member Abernethy was simply expressing his frustration in this lack of clarity being brought into discussion by the Minister. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** To the point of order. Ms. Lee.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don’t have any more to add to the point of order. I just want to withdraw my very last word, which is that it was a lie. I didn’t mean to say that. I withdraw and apologize. I wouldn’t call any Member here to say that they are lying. I apologize. I withdraw and apologize. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I accept your apology. To the point of order. Similar to my last ruling, I will again take this under advisement. I will review the debate in the House in regards to this point of order. I will come back with my ruling.

Again, orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers’ statements. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Lafferty.

# Ministers’ Statements

## MINISTER’S STATEMENT 21-16(5): CORRECTIONS NORTHERN RECRUITMENT TRAINING PROGRAM

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to announce that the Corrections Northern Recruit Training Program is coming to Fort Smith.

This program supports the “Attraction and Recruitment” goal of the GNWT’s long-term strategic plan for the public service: “20/20: A Brilliant North.” The goal is to create a public service that reflects the diverse cultures of the NWT while promoting the development and advancement of our own people.

The six-week program provides the basic skills Northerners need to be eligible for entry-level jobs in our correctional facilities in Hay River, Yellowknife, Fort Smith and Inuvik. It is a targeted training program for Northerners to promote development and excellence. And it’s a big part of our long-term northern recruitment plan. We are looking for northern residents who care about their communities and want to make a difference in the lives of offenders. We plan to provide more opportunities to northern residents and encourage them to consider careers in our justice system. This maximizes opportunities and strengthens the role of communities in prevention and enforcement, especially in dealing with chronic offenders.

This training has already been delivered twice in Yellowknife. To date, 19 individuals have graduated from this program and 15 of them are employed with the Corrections Service. Many of the graduates are aboriginal and all are long-term residents of our Territory. They have more than just basic knowledge of how to work in corrections; they truly understand what it’s like to work in NWT communities. They’re uniquely qualified to support the reintegration of our offenders back into their communities.

But we’ve had trouble getting recruits from outside Yellowknife. It is important that our Corrections Service reflects our Territory in all of its diversity. So we are taking this program and reaching out into the communities.

Thirteen recruits from Fort Smith, Hay River and Yellowknife have been selected for the first program in Fort Smith. When the program ends, these Northerners will be ideally suited to work as corrections officers and youth officers. This training program, which is overlapping with one being run in Yellowknife, draws heavily upon our existing staff from Hay River, Fort Smith and Yellowknife to manage the program south of the lake and to deliver all the program training elements. We owe these staff a sincere bid of thanks as they help us to meet our goals to train, recruit and retain northern staff.

Mr. Speaker, training and recruiting the right people from the North for the right jobs is critical in helping us continue to provide and maintain high quality programs in correctional services. Our recruitment approach is assessable, relevant and enhances our existing programming. It is truly made in the North for Northerners. I look forward to welcoming the new graduates to the Corrections Service after they finish their program. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:**  The honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. Michael McLeod.

## MINISTER’S STATEMENT 22-16(5): NEW LICENCE PLATE

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to provide information on the new and improved NWT licence plate that will be available to the public starting July 1st of this year.

The Department of Transportation has been working closely with groups across the NWT, and has consulted with the RCMP, Municipal Enforcement and the Royal Canadian Legion, NWT Tourism, commercial carriers, manufacturers and other Canadian jurisdictions to update our licence plate and bring it up to current design standards.

Our shift to a new licence plate began when the discussions with the manufacturer of our current plate indicated they would cease to produce licence plates and that any other option to continue with the old plates would come at a considerable increase in costs. This, Mr. Speaker, combined with the fact that the 25-year-old tools and dies used to manufacture our current licence plate no longer met industry standards. We identified this as an excellent opportunity to examine our new options for our licence plate.

The polar bear design was first used in the Northwest Territories in 1970 and has become recognizable across North America. It is unique in the world and for the last 40 years has created an important branding opportunity to promote the Northwest Territories. The new licence plate will maintain our unique polar bear shape. Also updated on the plate is the tourism slogan, which was previously “Explore Canada’s Arctic,” but has been changed to “Spectacular,” the new NWT Tourism slogan. The slogan on the plate has changed a number of times over the years and aligning it with the current tourism campaign will help in our marketing and our branding efforts.

Mr. Speaker, road safety is our top priority for the department and updating our licence plate is a key way of ensuring the safety of our road users. The new plate features a modern reflective coating, which improves night time vehicle visibility by up to 700 percent. This is valuable for law enforcement as they will be able to identify and read the licence plate in low light conditions. Safety benefits will be seen by every road user as vehicles will become more visible, even if a vehicle is disabled without lights at the side of a road. Other jurisdictions across Canada have benefited from this improved visibility and now it is time for our drivers to receive this enhanced safety feature.

Beginning July 1st, when an individual enters or renews an existing vehicle registration or registers a new vehicle, they will be issued a new plate. New licence plates have a nominal one-time fee of $10 to cover the increased costs of using these new licence plates. By introducing the licence plate fee, we will ensure that funding needed for other important programs is not diverted for the purpose of producing licence plates.

The full rollout of these new plates will take place over 18 months, so every NWT licensed vehicle in the Territory will have a new plate by December 31st, 2011.

In addition to the improved reflectivity, Mr. Speaker, another important improvement is to note that the new licence plate is more environmentally friendly. We eliminated the toxic paint used on the previous plates and reduced the weight, which made shipping more efficient.

In conclusion, the department has developed this exciting new graphical licence plate that will improve road safety very much into the 21st Century and proudly market the Northwest Territories on every registered vehicle. The department has received excellent feedback on the new design from interest groups and stakeholders across the Territory. Mr. Speaker, I’m proud of this new licence plate and it is a plate that all of our residents can be proud of as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 3, Members’ statements. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

# Members’ Statements

## MEMBER’S STATEMENT ON HOUSING PROGRAMS FOR TU NEDHE SENIORS

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. [English translation not provided.]

Today I once again wish to speak on the issue of housing programs for seniors in Tu Nedhe. Last year we lost three of our oldest residents, plus six or seven other elders who have passed. With each passing there is a tremendous loss of wisdom and experience. I feel I lost a part of history and community knowledge, as I visited regularly with six or seven of these seniors during my visits to Fort Resolution and Lutselk’e.

This presents a loss of 20 to 30 percent of our most respected elders and some of these elders have been waiting for homes to be upgraded when they passed away. Fortunately some of them have had much needed work completed on their homes prior to their passing.

For the elders in Tu Nedhe, housing is a top priority when it comes to support being provided by this government. I have raised the issue of seniors’ housing many times in the past. I know the corporation is working on this and today I wish to confirm things.

Seniors are a special sector of our population and sometimes they are overlooked because they don’t speak up. Many elders that I am talking about were raised in a different time and have strong feelings of personal pride and getting things done without asking for help. Also, we must realize that English is not their first language.

We need the NWT Housing Corporation to be more proactive in dealing with our seniors. In the past I’ve suggested putting a higher priority on seniors’ applications and I’m wondering if this is being done today.

In a few weeks I will again be meeting with the seniors in Fort Resolution and Lutselk’e and again these seniors will first tell me how they are feeling and then they will tell me about the problems they are having with their house. This is the norm and it says a lot about the state of the housing programs and our seniors. Our seniors need attention when it comes to housing issues.

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

## MEMBER’S STATEMENT ON CONDOLENCES ON THE PASSING OF NUNAKPUT RESIDENTS

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today my Member’s statement is paying respect to the people who have passed away, and their families and friends, since the last sitting of this Assembly.

We lost a really important elder in our community of Tuktoyaktuk. Mr. Jimmy Komeak passed away April 2, 2010. Jimmy lost his parents at an early age and was raised by Peter Panaktalok. He married Jean and had seven children. He started with the RCMP in Cambridge Bay in 1941 and was a well-known reindeer herder in the Mackenzie Delta area. Jimmy will be sadly missed for his sense of humour and always teasing.

Out of Ulukhaktok we lost Mr. Philip Katoayak. He passed away February 14th. He was born to Simon and Effie Katoayak. Simon is now deceased. Philip lived in Ulukhaktok, his daughter in Gjoa Haven. Philip Katoayak loved spending time on the land and he’ll be sadly missed by his mom, Effie, and his sister, Hannah.

This last week we lost a real piece of history in the Beaufort-Delta, Ms. Bertha Allen, nee Moses. She was born in Old Crow in the Yukon to Caroline and Steven Moses. She was well-grounded in the Vuntut Gwitchin culture and traditions of her grandmother, and had great plans for her to do the work that honoured her. The strengths of the Vuntut Gwitchin upbringing allowed her to experience All Saints Anglican Residential School from 11 to 16 years of age, with a few negative impacts that allowed her to help students that were struggling within the system.

Her many accomplishments included forming the leading of the NWT Native Women’s Association, holding leadership positions in the NWT Status of Women Council and the Native Women’s Association of Canada. Bertha was also inspirational in improving the health and social services, through participation in various boards and agencies. She received the Governor General’s Award for commemoration of a Person’s Case in the NWT.

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

---Unanimous consent granted

**MR. JACOBSON:** After, she had received the Governor General’s Award for the Commissioner Volunteer Award, the highest level of national health and welfare of Canadian volunteer award and the National Aboriginal Achievement Award. She was named to the Order of Canada and her last accolade was when she accepted the Governor General’s medal. When she accepted these awards she brought acknowledgement to all women who helped her along the way. She is survived by her son Gerry Kisoun, Shirley Kisoun, Yvonne Camsell, Judy Mahoney, Dennis Allen and Donna Kisoun.

Last April 5th, Ronald Storr passed away in Aklavik. He was my uncle. He’s survived by his wife, my Auntie Marjorie; his son Ronald Storr Jr., and son Chris, and daughter Phyllis Kasook, and many grandchildren. Myself and Minister McLeod attended the funeral. It was a beautiful service and I put my uncle to rest.

To whoever lost family members these past few months, I pay my respects to you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Can I wait?

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

## MEMBER’S STATEMENT ON RESPONSE TO THE FINANCE MINISTER’S FISCAL AND ECONOMIC UPDATE

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I’d like to respond to yesterday’s fiscal and economic update which was provided to this House by the honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger. I listened very intently to the Minister’s statement, both for what he was saying and what he wasn’t saying.

It is my belief that our financial well-being is in grave danger. The Finance Minister does state that the economy shrank last year, as evidenced by a declining gross domestic product. What he fails to say is investment in our Territory was down 24 percent last year. We lost a net of 900 jobs and close to 500 people left the Territory, for a net decline in population.

I’m not an economist or an accountant, but when faced with these types of declines, doesn’t it stand to reason that our revenues would be adversely affected? These kinds of numbers will undoubtedly result in declines in personal income tax, payroll tax, corporate income tax, and not to mention eventually the grant we receive from Canada.

I don’t believe we can continue to, as the Finance Minister states, hold the course on spending. The Government of Canada has agreed to increase our borrowing limit by $75 million to accommodate the debt from the Deh Cho Bridge. However, we are skating very close to open water when it comes to our debt limit. We are still unsure of the disposition of the Opportunities Fund and how that money will eventually be booked.

Some very frightening items are on the horizon. Firstly, the Deh Cho Bridge, which has approximately $93 million left in construction costs and yet we have in place only a $3 million contingency. This is completely absurd. There’s little doubt that this bridge will cost millions of dollars more. As well, an early spring brings with it a heightened fear of a bad forest fire season, which would require additional millions of dollars. With the numerous capital projects underway around our Territory, like the Inuvik schools, any slippage is going to really hurt us.

I do have to give credit to the government for its capital plan and the fact that we have been getting projects underway, stimulating the economy at a time when it needed it the most. What we are not doing is being more productive in planning and preparing for the challenging times which, looking at the statistics, are going to hit us sooner rather than later.

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MR. RAMSAY:** Like the last government did, we can’t leave a mess for the next government to clean up. My recommendation to government is we should not start any new initiatives. Finish what we started. We should look at reigning in expenditure growth. Instead of 3 percent, how about zero percent? We should get moving on the work conducted by the Program Review Office. Shelve the divisive changes to supplementary health. People will leave and we can’t afford to lose any more residents. Continue with vigour our marketing and promotion campaign to attract new residents to our Territory, and we need to get more investment dollars into our Territory, especially any opportunities for federal positions and investments should be thoroughly explored.

We have one budget and a little over a year left in the life of the 16th Legislative Assembly. The opportunity will be there for each and every one of us to make a difference in what state we leave the Territory’s finances in for the next government.

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

## MEMBER’S STATEMENT ON CURRENT STATE OF NORTHERN HEALTH SERVICE

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today’s worries are focused on the Minister’s proposals on supplementary health, but we should not lose focus on the problems that devalue the quality of our current health services.

One such challenge is access to diagnostic services. Long waiting lists for essential testing and treatment is an issue familiar to every Member. Literally hundreds of patients are waiting as much as two years for audiometric testing, colonoscopies, bone density testing and other essential diagnostic services. Patients who get through the diagnostic line-up then join the line to see physicians. Wait times of one and even two years are not uncommon in such disciplines as internal medicine, oncology and orthopaedics. Prompt care in these cases is often critical to ease suffering and halt the advancement of the disease. Lack of specialists means more patient trips to the South, a terribly inefficient use of funds. Or we drop the service, such as access to pain clinics.

For our regional residents, the lack of specialists at Stanton Territorial Hospital means no services for visitors. Patients needing care that can’t wait, such as midwifery services and physiotherapy, are going without.

The inability to recruit and retain professionals is a chronic problem. Many patients simply can’t find a regular family doctor. The Territory has not had a resident psychiatrist for at least three years. Locum placements are an expensive band-aid on the lack of resident physicians. While the Minister proudly announced the launch of the department’s $100,000 recruitment website recently, high turnover and lasting vacancies in critical positions persist.

Despite the government’s professed commitment to the preventive approach, limits to approve procedures have often prevented my constituents from getting treatments that will save the system thousands of dollars in the long run. The limp answer I get in these cases is it’s not on the list; of course, with unexplained exceptions.

Patients who do get care and are paying their own medication costs don’t get their money back on legitimate claims. On what should be a routine matter with the Inuvik office, one Weledeh senior is now on her fourth go-around with the same recurring months-long-no-refund problem corrected only through repeated recourse to the Minister of Health herself. No doubt we can take a lesson on the future of co-payments from this case.

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MR. BROMLEY:** Health services are at the top of every Canadian’s list of priorities and Northerners are no different. Our residents receive many excellent services from our dedicated and often over-tasked health care professionals. My constituents still speak highly about the treatment they receive for emergency and catastrophic health issues. It is our preventative and diagnostic programs and access to specialists that are failing. Let’s see some real progress on these very real issues.

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

## MEMBER’S STATEMENT ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO SUPPLEMENTARY HEALTH BENEFITS PROGRAM

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to speak to the issue of the supplementary health care coverage. Tommy Douglas was voted the greatest Canadian of all time by the CBC contest back in 2004. Why? Because he is considered to be the father of medicare for all Canadians.

I might vote for my mother as being the greatest Canadian. Why? Because she told me something that broke my heart when I was a young man. She told me how as a mother with eight kids she once had to go without food for herself for two days so she could feed us and still buy the medical care she needed for one of my brothers. We perhaps forgot today just how recently such decisions had to be made in Canada and in the North. The medicine chest in some treaties is still important today, but it does not cover all aboriginal people. So they rely on the government’s extended health care too, just like half of our population that is non-aboriginal. Universal medical care is a Godsend.

Extended health care is of critical importance. We are told that 2,299 in the Northwest Territories go without access to the extended health care and that our Minister’s new plan will cover. That makes a lot of sense to me. I want to make sure no other mother faces that terrible decision like my mother, and no doubt that many others will have to make, to buy food or buy medicine. So for those 2,300 people, I support the Health Minister.

But I hear so many contrary arguments from both my fellow MLA and from the public that I have concerns, concerns that may impact my region in the future regarding health care.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister, if her current proposed plan is good policy, then please explain it to me. Help me understand it. What are the stakes here? We owe it to the 2,300 people who we are told will benefit and we owe it to those who may have to change the use of the current system. It’s about a basic principle, Mr. Speaker. It’s about bringing the 2,300 people into our health care coverage, plain and simple. First things first, Mr. Speaker, let’s get it right. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

## MEMBER’S STATEMENT ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO SUPPLEMENTARY HEALTH BENEFITS PROGRAM

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to follow up today on my questions from yesterday. I want to speak to the unfair Supplementary Health Benefits Policy being implemented by the Minister of Health and Social Services.

The Minister has often mentioned the words “fair and equal” in relation to this policy, and no one disputes the need to put in place benefits for those who are currently left out. That we must do to make things fair. But I fail to understand how eliminating access to benefits for only some of our residents, which this policy will do, can be called fair. I fail to understand how making only some residents pay for their medical costs can be called equality.

Mr. Speaker, policy can be one of two things: good or bad. This Supplementary Health Benefits Policy is all bad. It is divisive and we’re seeing its effects already. NWT residents are breaking into camps and animosity is building.

For a very long time we in the NWT have all been Northerners, and by that I mean residents who happily lived, worked and played together, appreciative of our differences and respectful of each other no matter our ethnic origin. This policy threatens to totally destroy that. Should we not be a Territory of many peoples living, working and playing together as equals? Certainly that is my vision. But I am hard pressed to believe that it will endure if this policy comes into effect.

I found a phrase yesterday that I want to share with you. It says our country is blessed by a very diverse cultural mosaic. That can easily be applied to our Territory, Mr. Speaker, but does the Cabinet across the House from me believe the NWT’s diverse cultural mosaic is a blessing? Their actions in relation to the Supp Health Benefits Policy force me to answer no.

In my conversations with constituents I’m often asked why is this policy being implemented, and I cannot answer them. I cannot determine the rationale for this divisive policy. My constituents ask me, why now? What is so pressing that this divisive policy must be put in place right now or even put in place at all? Why is this Cabinet adamant that this policy is so right? I cannot answer those questions, either. I can only conclude that our Executive Council has some nefarious purpose in mind and ask what are they trying to achieve. Is this the start of a regime of new taxes and fees called co-payments? I believe, as do many of my constituents, that the Minister and the Cabinet are solving one problem, the problem of the hard-done-by, desperately struggling families, as the Minister would say, who are currently left out.

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

---Unanimous consent granted

**MS. BISARO:** We are solving one problem but we are creating another problem by solving the first one. By implementing this policy, we will establish a class of residents who are medically bankrupted, a new class of working poor, except they’re only poor because their government believes in unfairness and inequality. What policy will Cabinet put in place, then, to help those families and individuals who are desperately struggling financially? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

## MEMBER’S STATEMENT ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO SUPPLEMENTARY HEALTH BENEFITS PROGRAM

**MR. ABERNETHY:**  Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I tabled a process convention that was fully agreed upon by Caucus in Fort Smith last summer on the standing committee review of proposed policy initiatives and implementation plans. This process convention outlines the roles of Cabinet, Ministers and committees, when it comes to establishing new policies or making substantive amendments to or rescinding of existing policies. This process convention does not apply to minor administrative amendments which will not significantly impact established policy commitments.

I suggest that the proposed changes to the Extended Health Benefits Program being implemented by the Minister of Health and Social Services are not minor administrative amendments and that the changes will significantly impact all residents of the Northwest Territories. As such, I believe the Minister is responsible for ensuring that all of the proposed changes and implementation tools must go through appropriate standing committee for review prior to implementation. Not just a presentation of the information, but a discussion, a debate and actual consultation.

The Premier of the Northwest Territories is responsible for ensuring that his Cabinet follows all of the terms and conditions contained within the approved process convention. Later this afternoon I’ll be asking the Premier some questions on how it’s possible that one of his Ministers could stray so far from the approved conventions. Specifically, given that the new plan is proposed for development in June 2010, after the close of this session, with implementation on September 30, 2010, prior to the fall session in October, I wonder how this Minister can possibly adhere to the agreed upon process convention. Specifically with respect to paragraph 8 which states, “when Cabinet decides to establish a new policy review, the application of an existing policy or substantively amend an existing policy in accordance with this convention, the Minister responsible for the implementing policy will provide both Cabinet and the appropriate standing committee with briefings on the relevant implementation and communications plans, as well as any significant implementation tools” -- example: ministerial policies, eligibility criteria, program guidelines – “in advance of the policy’s application or implementation in any substantive public communications.” To date, we have seen no program guidelines.

It’s possible that the Premier will respond consistently with the Minister’s remarks that committee has been consulted all along.

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

---Unanimous consent granted

**MR. ABERNETHY:**  Mr. Speaker, it’s possible that the Premier will respond consistently with the Minister’s remarks, that the committee has been consulted all along. I’m a member of the committee and I agree that I have been informed and/or told what the Minister’s plans are, but, frankly, I don’t feel consulted or that any advice I have provided has been remotely considered by the Minister or by Cabinet. Many of the public feel the same way. Given that the 16th Assembly’s very own process conventions are being ignored by the Minister of Health and Social Services, I don’t see how the Premier and Cabinet could possibly support these changes at this time.

Mr. Premier, let’s take the initiative back to the drawing board and work on the real problem. Let’s find a way to provide coverage to low income families without insurance. Let’s do the right thing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

## MEMBER’S STATEMENT ON JOHN TSETSO MEMORIAL LIBRARY IN FORT SIMPSON

**MR. MENICOCHE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Within the last year I raised the subject of the John Tsetso Memorial Library in Fort Simpson a number of times. Since the relocation of the library from the Deh Cho Hall, the community has had its much used facility reduced to a resource centre. In short, there is no library. I spoke about the value of the community’s library as a place to pick up reading materials and for many literacy and educational programs it has offered over the years.

Last month the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Jackson Lafferty, and a few days later, the chair, Mr. Tom Beaulieu, and some members of the Standing Committee on Social Programs were visiting Fort Simpson. They saw for themselves how inadequate our library is. The facility is too small and because of foundation issues, it cannot even support the library’s collection of books.

John Tsetso Memorial Library is designated a public library and the residents of Fort Simpson deserve to have it back. Not only that, but a region of our size, about 4,200 residents, should have a regional library located centrally in Fort Simpson. This library would serve the needs of Fort Simpson and outlying communities. Books and programming could be circulated to our smaller communities.

Later today, Mr. Speaker, I will be submitting a petition from the residents of the community of Fort Simpson and constituents of Nahendeh, to call upon the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment to provide funding towards a new John Tsetso Memorial Library. There was a lot of interest in this petition and also a number of children drew pictures and wrote about how they felt about enjoying the library. I will table these pictures in the House later and send the Minister a copy as well.

Mr. Speaker, the government has made a firm commitment to promoting and fostering literacy. A library that provides a welcoming space and a good selection of books in Fort Simpson will contribute to this literacy. I support a regional library that will provide this valuable service throughout Nahendeh. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

## MEMBER’S STATEMENT ON PROCESS FOR LODGING COMPLAINTS AGAINST PHYSICIANS

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to follow up again today in my Member’s statement about the topic I spoke of yesterday, and that is the protection in place for people in our Territory who require the services of a medical professional. Mr. Speaker, although this case I speak of may be isolated in that these things do not occur very often, it is still unchecked and has the potential of impacting and touching on very many lives. Because one physician doesn’t just see one patient, they see a group of patients.

But, Mr. Speaker, you would think that our government might have learned a valuable lesson. When there were questions raised in the past about the conduct of certain educators that were operating here in the Northwest Territories whose irregular circumstances occurred and these situations continued to exist and no intervention was made, for whatever reason, and this government and Nunavut government ended up being sued successfully by the people who were abused at the hand of that educator and had to pay millions of dollars in compensation. I use that as a parallel to this.

There are processes in place to allow people who come in contact with the medical system and who feel that their rights and the conduct of the physician has violated them in some way. There is a process in place. When I asked the Minister of Health and Social Services about this yesterday, she did not seem very aware of her duty and her responsibility as a Minister.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister, and only the Minister, has the ability to revoke the licence of a practising medical practitioner in the Northwest Territories. No one else can do that. No College of Physicians and Surgeons, no board of inquiry. The Minister and the Minister alone has that authority.

Mr. Speaker, there is a provision, as well, that once an inquiry is struck and allegations have been laid, there is a provision for the Minister to temporarily revoke that licence to practise until that matter is finished with and disposed of in some manner. In the case that I speak of, that was not done either.

Mr. Speaker, I fully recognize that there are quasi judicial processes in which we as politicians do not interfere. However, at some point, our responsibility needs to intersect with that process. I still do not understand why the results of this particular inquiry were not reported to this Minister and the findings in that inquiry acted upon. I will have further questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services on this again today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

## MEMBER’S STATEMENT ON DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH MEDICAL ESCORT POLICY

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to use my Member’s statement today to further talk about the transplant policy I raised before. The reason I want to talk about it is because certainly things aren’t going very well. I think our Territory, I believe in it very strongly and I believe in the passion people have who work here and develop policy, but as I talked about it before, we need respite for mothers or perhaps fathers that are sitting by their child’s side through these horrible processes, but we don’t have a policy that occasionally unites the family through those special visits.

I can tell you many times over, that when this particular family had the father flying down and the children in tow, that the little boy there sparkled in a way that the fire was back. I also talked about the time, at the time about a month or two months ago, about how we need a policy that, if dark days happen, when that phone call comes in the middle of the night, that we have a government that shows the empathy for the particular situation and unites the family if that flicker goes out for the final time.

Mr. Speaker, I am speaking today because the call did come this morning. Of course, they scurried as quickly as possible to put their affairs in order to get to Edmonton. It is a very difficult statement to talk about. This little boy is a wonderful little boy. I can tell you the last 10 weeks have been a significant blessing to have every extra minute with him around with his mother and his brother and sister and certainly his father. Many people in this community have come together through a fundraiser last night, on Saturday, to raise money. Even McDonald’s through the Ronald McDonald House, which is the pin I’m wearing right now... Sorry; local McDonald’s has raised money for the Edmonton Ronald McDonald House to donate so they can make sure that they can have families together through these trying times, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, every moment has been a gift. I will certainly be asking the Minister during question period today that although we know we can’t have broad, sweeping policy change just here and there, some days I really wish we could, but I will be asking the Minister, would she be willing to at least take a look at this to see if we can create a strategy over the long haul, if this is something we can do to make sure we can have families together as often as possible during these difficult times. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

# Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure today to welcome grade 5 and 6 students of the Ecole Boreale in Hay River here today with their teacher, Patrick Poisson, and their chaperone, Marie-Mathilde Tessier. Mr. Speaker, if I could have the Assembly’s indulgence, I would just like to quickly recognize the students, and if they could give a wave, their mom and dad might see them on TV. Jake Danielsen, Georgia Dawson, Jonathan Frise, William Frise, Cordell Gagnier, Ksydaig Henry, Lochlan Munro, Billy-Jack Warrington, Sherisse Bouchard, Brooklyn Harrison, Angela Roy, Nicholas Stainbrook, Kateryna Staszuk, Celina Carmen and Graham St. John.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I would like to take this opportunity to recognize two constituents in the gallery from my riding. My constituents are Liz Wright and also with her is Roxanne Koe who is chaperoning a few Pages here from my riding. Welcome to the House. I thank you for procedures and for the other people.

In front of the other people in the gallery that haven’t been recognized, welcome to the House and watching the procedures. Welcome.

Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

# Oral Questions

## QUESTION 102-16(5): HOUSING PROGRAMS FOR TU NEDHE SENIORS

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today I spoke on the issue of housing programs for seniors in Tu Nedhe. I would like to follow up my statement with questions to the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell me if there is a plan in place to inspect and upgrade seniors’ homeownership units in Lutselk’e and Fort Resolution? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Robert McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. All these programs are application based and we have decided that those that are applying for homeownership repairs, especially the seniors, we are willing to go to their units and do an inspection. That is all part of the application process. Also, if interpreters are required, we would be willing to provide interpreters so they’re understanding all the parts of the application and the information that is required. Thank you.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Mr. Speaker, in his response to my first question, the Minister indicated that they would be conducting a door-to-door approach in the delivery of housing programs to seniors in Tu Nedhe. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, we will go to the units of those that express an interest in applying for one of the homeownership programs, especially the seniors. We will go to their units and do the inspection. That’s all part of the process, and also, as I mentioned to the Member earlier, we would be willing to provide translation so they’re understanding. So those that are interested in going through the application process would let our district office know and then they would make a point of making it to their units. Thank you.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Many of the elders have land lease and land tax arrears. Does the Housing Corporation have some sort of plan to work with the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs or even maybe the municipality, to deal with this issue and still be able to assist the elders with their housing issues? Is there a number in which, or an amount that can be provided to seniors if they have land lease issues, land lease arrears or tax arrears, for an example? Thank you.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you. The land tax arrears and any arrears in general are always a detriment to those that are applying for assistance. It slows up the process. A lot of folks out there have been able to clear off their arrears, knowing that this would help their application for the housing programs. So it would be awfully difficult for us to get into giving out the programs, administering the programs with people carrying arrears. So we try and encourage all those that are applying, to take care of their land and tax arrears, especially, and any other arrears they may have because it would slow down their application process. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Final supplementary, Mr. Beaulieu.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. This is a rather serious issue. In communities where we have access by winter road or access by barge, an issue such as land tax, mortgage arrears, lease arrears on the land or anything, holds up the process and it goes beyond the point where they’re able to send materials in to assist the elder. So can the Minister commit to me today that if these issues are something that can be set aside or can be dealt with in another light, that they could proceed with assisting the seniors? I don’t think seniors have huge arrears. If they could proceed with assisting the seniors and deal with any of these land tax, land lease arrears at a later date. Thank you.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you. We’re always willing to do what we can to help seniors. I have to speak again on the arrears, the tax arrears. We do like to try to get those cleared up before we proceed. Our intake this year is going to be in August and September. So that will give us more time to have all these issues dealt with before the barges, and some of it may be because the municipal governments are not getting back to them quick enough or the band governments may not be giving them a letter quick enough. So all these issues we have to deal with, but we’re always open to doing whatever we can to make the process a little easier for seniors. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:**  The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

## QUESTION 103-16(5): PROPOSED CHANGES TO SUPPLEMENTARY HEALTH BENEFITS PROGRAM

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I asked an awful lot of questions in my statement and I’d like to go back to some of those questions and ask some of them of the Minister of Health and Social Services, to try and get some answers to some of those questions.

In order to try and, again, get some clarity for my constituents, I’d like to ask the Minister why such a divisive Supplementary Health Benefits Policy, dated September 2007, is being implemented. Thank you.

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

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I have explained in our presentations and in answers to questions, Mr. Speaker, I believe this policy will enable access to those people who are excluded from the policy right now. We have a group of non-aboriginal people who are excluded from having basic coverage of dental and eye care, and, Mr. Speaker, I don’t believe this is divisive in any way. It is a Supplementary Extended Health Benefits Program to those who need it. Thank you.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you. Thanks to the Minister for her view. I have to agree to disagree. Again, this is a divisive policy, because it targets only a certain portion of our residents. I asked in my statement, as well, why does this policy have to be implemented now and what is so pressing that it has to be done at this particular moment, and many people have expressed concerns with the policy, have expressed concerns that the implementation that’s being put forward is not the right way to go. I don’t think the Minister has heard from anybody on this side of the House, that the people who are currently uncovered should not be covered. We all agree that that should happen, but the method that is currently being proposed to cover that is incorrect. So why is this policy, in this format, so pressing that it has to be implemented now? Thank you.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Thank you. Why? Why do we have to do that? If the question is why, then the answer to why is because we have a group of people who need us and that is the working poor. What I’m hearing is everybody says help the working poor, cover them, what’s taking you so long. Mr. Ramsay said you’ve known for three years 2,200 people are not covered, why don’t you include them? That’s not my problem, include them, spend the money, get it from somewhere else, tax the people. Mr. Speaker, that’s easy to do and what people are telling me is you can cover the poor as long as you cover everybody else, as long as you don’t touch me, you cover the poor as long as it doesn’t impact me, it covers the poor. You keep the benefits for the rich and then cover the poor. It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, everybody out there is saying you know what, cover the poor, but don’t let that affect me.

Mr. Speaker, I remind the House and the people, we’re talking non-insured benefits, we’re talking taking money out of insured benefits, we’re talking people saying unless you do everything for everybody else, you’re not going to cover the poor. Mr. Speaker, my question to you and everybody is how long do the poor people have to wait?

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you. I’m not sure I heard an answer to my question. I agree that the people who are currently uncovered do need to be covered and, again, I don’t think there’s anybody that disagrees with that. My question had to do with the implementation that is currently being proposed, and that was my question. Why does the policy, in its current format, have to be implemented now? I don’t believe I heard an answer to that. Absolutely we need to cover people, but I think there have been at least eight or 10 suggestions from the general public, from Members, that could cover the costs of the people who are currently uncovered and I haven’t heard that information from the Minister that they were considered.

We have presented suggestions over the last period of a number of months, and what keeps coming back to us as a committee and to the general public is that Cabinet is entrenched in their position. So I would like to ask the Minister to tell me why she and the Cabinet believe that such a divisive policy is right for our Territory. Thank you.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Thank you. This policy is not divisive. It’s divisive to those who believe that it’s divisive, Mr. Speaker. This is covering a group of people who are not covered. We have listened to everybody who gave us input over the last three years. We have responded, we are coming out with a proposal that will be as good or better than any government employee package. That is generous, that’s going far, that’s taking into consideration what everybody has told us, and, Mr. Speaker, we’ll have to agree to disagree, but, Mr. Speaker, we have done our best to come up with the best package. Thank you.

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

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think our best package is a long way from what we currently have in front of us. The Minister has said that she is covering some. I agree. We are covering some, but we are uncovering others and that is not the right way to go. I mentioned in my statement that my vision is an NWT where all people live, work and play as equals. What is the Minister’s vision for our Territory?

**HON. SANDY LEE:** On that, I agree with the Member. I need to tell the Member that this new package excludes no one.

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

## QUESTION 104-16(5): PROPOSED CHANGES TO SUPPLEMENTARY HEALTH BENEFITS PROGRAM

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask the Minister, regarding my Member’s statement, if she would agree that the program that she is proposing could be better explained to the people. I understand that some people in my riding were approached in terms of signing a petition, but they didn’t know what they were signing for in terms of the supplementary health benefit. That’s the question I have for the department. Can this proposed program be better explained to the people in my riding or in Yellowknife?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I agree that there’s a lot of information that has been going out and there’s a lot that people need to know. I am willing to answer any specific questions that the Member’s constituents may have about what supplementary health benefits are and what we’re trying to change, what is covered right now and how that is different from NIHB and other supplementary health benefits policies across the country.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Will the program the Minister is proposing resolve the new costs for this government while you’re trying to manage the changes within the existing program budget?

**HON. SANDY LEE:** The fact of the matter is, we have a supplementary benefits program. The changes we are proposing are not cost-cutting measures. At the same time, we need to make sure that the costs are affordable and reasonable. What we are trying to do is we are realigning the Supplementary Health Benefits Program for non-aboriginal people. What we have now is we cover those who are over 60, and those who have a chronic condition, and those who make under $30,000. We have a group of people among non-aboriginal people who are excluded. The changes we are proposing are to bring them on stream.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** I want to ask the Minister, for example, what are the implications or consequences of requirements for new funding for residents in small communities if we were to not go ahead with the proposed program?

**HON. SANDY LEE:** The answer to that has to do with what I keep saying about insured services versus non-insured services. Insured services are what people know as our health care. That’s our doctor service, hospital service, nursing service, surgeries, hip replacements, having a baby. Those are what we know to be a health care that everybody is entitled to and everybody will get. Nothing changes from that.

What we are talking about is uninsured services. Things like the cost of drugs, glasses, dental, and equipment. Right now the aboriginal people get those covered through NIHB and Metis health benefits. For non-aboriginal people, we have a group that are excluded. We are trying to make that fair and equitable. The more we spend on that, we will be spending money on other things. We are willing to pay to support those who need it the most and we are saying we will determine the access by looking at people’s income, because that is the fairest way of looking at one’s ability to pay.

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

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask the Minister how the new program will affect young working mothers who make enough that they will be expected to cover their own extended health care and might have to decide to either buy food or buy medicine.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Right now, as the program exists, we have a real working mother on Facebook every day. I got on Facebook six months ago. This lady posts every day. She says she’s a single mother with two kids. I need a job with a dental plan. I need a job with a dental plan. And I go, there’s a lady with two kids and she is struggling to pay for our dental care. Under the existing system it is totally possible for somebody making $500,000 a year -- and there are people who make $500,000 a year, good on them -- $200,000, $300,000 with no expenses and they get 100 percent coverage. To me, that is not fair.

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

## QUESTION 105-16(5): DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH MEDICAL ESCORT POLICY

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the House I talked during my Member’s statement about our Territory needing a transplant policy that is clear, that can help northern families keep the family unit strong and united during those darker periods of life that no one certainly wishes upon them. My question to the Minister of Health and Social Services in the past is, would you look at this and it has been an outright no, feeling that we don’t have the money or whether the existing plan doesn’t really allow it or whatnot. That’s not so important as the question today, which is simply if the Minister of Health and Social Services will reconsider this request of mine, to examine the possibility of what it would cost to develop a policy to ensure that families who have loved ones out of the Territory for care do get a chance to respite. And certainly have a section in there in case something happens where it’s required to unite the whole family for one particular circumstance. Would the Minister be willing to at least investigate that possibility and see what it would cost the government if we were to go down that path?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Member knows, we have investigated this. I have responded to the answer to this. We are not in support of designing a separate program based on different medical conditions.

When somebody needs to go away for medical treatment, their needs are similar, whether an elder or somebody having brain surgery. We have mothers who need to be medevaced out or babies who need to be medevaced out. We have elders who need to be taken elsewhere. We provide all kinds of medical services where the family needs to be there. We provide that service. We have a Medical Travel Policy that allows for an escort. We believe that having one policy that applies to all is fair.

**MR. HAWKINS:** I’m not sure that’s necessarily right. The reason I say that is because one policy is great when the questions are simple. But in this particular case and other cases that have been presented by this House, our questions aren’t typically black and white. They require a lot of melding and forming to and fro. The Health Minister is correct, we do have a Medical Travel Policy, but people have been refused even with doctors’ notes. That’s why I’m suggesting that could an analysis of this particular situation, which has not been done, be considered at this time and we could examine what the true costs would be through an analysis and then make the type of decision could this government afford health care support in this regard.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** I believe the Member is speaking about two different things. One is somebody who can be denied medical travel even if someone has a doctor’s note. Yes, that is possible. If a doctor prescribes uninsured service, they will not get medical travel.

The second thing is, the original point that he was suggesting is because of the situation of a family who has had a child needing a transplant is different, we should set up a different policy for that situation.

Mr. Speaker, as dire as the situation is, we get… I’m only aware of one situation, and to set up a whole new policy just for one situation, Mr. Speaker... I’m not saying all family situations are the same. I’m not saying all medical situations are the same. Yes, there are many unique situations. But the fact of the matter is, we require our residents going away for service for all kinds of different reasons. We get asked every day from families who would like government support to be with them and sometimes it’s for months. What we are saying is government policy is that we pay for one person. Yes, we could do more and we don’t even need to do the cost analysis. It just means that we have to pay more. We are doing what we can do with the resources we have. Thank you.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Mr. Speaker, this isn’t about one family, and I want to make sure that that’s absolutely clear. You know, it may be about one family to the Minister, but as I proposed it, and the Minister has discussed with me that there are other families that this could apply to, so you can’t say it’s one family only.

I’m talking about when your loved one dies in Edmonton and we have to leave their family here in Yellowknife or we have to leave them in Inuvik, we have to leave them in Fort Smith, we have to leave them wherever, that we don’t unite the family. We don’t have any kind of policy. And that does happen here. They only come one way and it’s not the right way.

So, Mr. Speaker, I’m asking the Minister to do that type of analysis about what it would take to unite families for that sort of opportunity. I think it’s more than just one family. It’s about good territorial policy that puts the importance of health care above everything else, and this is one of the issues. Would the Minister, once again I ask, reconsider this opportunity to look at this situation? Thank you.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** I believe I answered that question. I really feel we have one policy that looks after our families and I don’t know what else to say. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Your final supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at one time there was a Compassionate Travel Policy and it was stopped. It could well be suited for particular cases like this. Would the Minister reinvestigate it from that point of view, from a compassionate point of view? I mean, all I’m asking her to do, and I want to be absolutely clear, Mr. Speaker, is I’d like her to do an analysis and we could cost it out and take it from a compassionate point of view when these situations are very dire, as the old Compassionate Travel Policy allowed. Would the Minister reconsider this under that circumstance? Thank you.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Mr. Speaker, I don’t believe there was ever a compassionate policy. I am aware that there is a Medical Travel Policy. If you need a medical escort, you get one. The elders would have an escort. Somebody with a language issue will get an escort. Mr. Speaker, the Member is asking me to do a compassionate analysis. Maybe the Member could tell me how do we decide what is more dire: a family who needs to be near a child who has had a transplant, a 90-year-old elder from Fort McPherson who’s dying of cancer who we don’t know how long it will take, somebody who’s had a brain… I’m just thinking of this thing. Somebody who needs to be in long-term care for three to six months in southern jurisdictions and I get asked for the whole entire community to come and stay with the family. Maybe the Member could tell me what is the indicator we use to do what is compassionate. We have people in small communities who need to be near a doctor. In Inuvik we have somebody from Fort McPherson. We have somebody from Ulukhaktok who needs to be in Inuvik or in Yellowknife. They need housing and they need their families to come in.

Mr. Speaker, this is not about cost. In health care when somebody needs medical care, they get their care. When they need an escort, they get an escort. And under the rule, we allow one person. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

## QUESTION 106-16(5): PROCESS FOR LODGING COMPLAINTS AGAINST PHYSICIANS

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Mr. Speaker, I asked the Minister yesterday if she was aware of any complaints or inquiries into the conduct of any physicians. I’m going to sort of move away from that today because she didn’t really directly answer my question and I still don’t really even know if she knows. But it raises an interesting point. To be the agency which approves the licences of people to practise medicine is a huge responsibility. It’s also a huge liability, because if a complaint is laid and an investigation is undertaken and it is elevated to the point of going to a board of inquiry or going to the College of Physicians and Surgeons, then it would be really good if the Minister of Health and Social Services was aware of that happening and was also aware of her options with respect to suspending a licence to practise for a period of time.

So I’d like to ask the Minister what is the protocol currently in place for when a complaint is laid and how she would become informed of that complaint and the process that would ensue. Thank you.

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

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have the access to information when the complaints come forward. The Medical Profession Act allows that when there are sufficient complaints, a licence can be suspended or even while the investigation is going on and the medical legislation committee would make a recommendation to the Minister to revoke a licence. So all those powers are available under the current system. Thank you.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** So the Minister is saying that she would not just maybe be informed, but she would most definitely be informed of a complaint and the process that would follow. And this is not about the number of complaints. This could be one complaint. One complaint could be enough to launch some type of an investigation or disciplinary action.

Mr. Speaker, how involved is the Minister or our government or the act, how involved is it in laying out the process for an inquiry that would ensure the integrity of that inquiry and of that process? Because there are certain laws that are part of inquiries, public inquiries and inquiries in general, there are certain laws that pertain to the complainant, to the defendant, and there are certain laws of natural justice, and there’s a standard to be upheld in that process. How much would the Minister, in her role, be involved in ensuring the integrity of that process as it unfolded? Thank you.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** The legislation sets out a very clear process on the steps that a complaint would go through. A board of inquiry would obviously follow the administrative rules which speak to apprehension of bias, making sure there is no apprehension of bias and natural justice and all that. Mr. Speaker, my role in that regard is to appoint the Members into that board of inquiry, and the Medical Profession Act states clearly how that inquiry will take place and then they will make recommendations. Thank you.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Mr. Speaker, is the Minister satisfied that the process as it exists now has sufficient teeth in it or, well, let’s just say in the case of an uncooperative defendant, somebody who has been complained of and just chooses not to cooperate with the process. What kind of teeth are there in the process that would compel somebody to even participate to respond to a complaint or appear at a hearing or participate? Is she satisfied that the process is sufficient to do that? Because what I’m hearing is to the contrary. Thank you.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Mr. Speaker, there are teeth in the legislation to take actions, including suspending the licence while the investigation is going on. The key part in this is that anybody who has a concern about any physician should come forward and lodge their complaint. If they have some concern about criminal conduct, they should go to the RCMP. The most important thing is the evidence that the complainant brings forward in this process, because without the evidence, the process may not have the impact that some people might be looking for or the Member would like to see. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Your final question, Mrs. Groenewegen.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If we as a government fail to deal with these types of complaints in a very serious way, I think we are putting ourselves at great risk and great liability. It’s one thing for a patient who has filed a complaint, to want to pursue a remedy with respect to the doctor, but we are throwing this wide open for this government to become the party that would be pursued for negligence if these processes are not intact.

Mr. Speaker, in the case that I am referring to, the complainant filed a complaint. The response from the defendant was not even shared with the complainant nor could it be without the defendant’s permission. This speaks to me of a real flawed process.

Mr. Speaker, how can I as an MLA or a private citizen challenge this process? How can I get access to this? It is all shrouded within this privacy of the people that are being complained of. How can a regular citizen, or even I as an MLA, or anybody gain access to know about what is going on within the confines of these processes? I don’t think the process is as good as the Minister thinks. Thank you.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Mr. Speaker, I agree with the Member that government has a responsibility, the Minister has a responsibility and we have a responsibility to respond to the people that bring forward serious allegations. So far, even talking to the Member, I do not have any specific information about what the situations are. That is why I am asking anybody out there who has concerns about a physician, they should follow this complaint process.

Mr. Speaker, so far what we are hearing is what we heard from somebody else. Mr. Speaker, the legislation states the board of inquiry, for example, could be open to the public. The conduct and the process and the outcome depends on evidence being put forward. I would just encourage. I have to state that anybody who has any information should come forward with that information so that it can be assessed and the individual in question could go through the process with the evidence before them. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Next I have the honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

## QUESTION 107-16(5): PROPOSED CHANGES TO SUPPLEMENTARY HEALTH BENEFITS PROGRAM

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Originally, I was going to ask questions to the Premier on supplementary health, but now I am going to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services some questions on supplementary health. In responding to Ms. Bisaro, the Minister of Health said that this new policy excludes nobody. Can the Minister please confirm for me that this new policy that is going to be proposed is not going to exclude anybody? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister of Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Mr. Speaker, this supplementary health excludes nobody for the non-aboriginal people. Thank you.

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Mr. Speaker, I find that response kind of funny, because when I look at the Minister’s numbers in the presentations that were provided, I see 1,232 people that are being excluded from this policy. Pretty much anybody that has insurance is excluded. If you have insurance, you are excluded. Therefore, not everybody is covered by this policy. My biggest concern is not all 1,232, although I do have a concern for all of them, my biggest concern is for the 532 people that have insurance that are currently receiving specified medical condition support under supplemental health. By cutting those people off, we are putting a huge financial burden on people who are really sick, people who have specified conditions; Crohn’s, other conditions, cancer, all those types of things. I am wondering, how can we exclude those 532 people? My question is to the Minister. Why would we want to exclude those 532 people with specified conditions, catastrophic conditions, who have incredibly high costs? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Mr. Speaker, we have presented in our presentation on the website and in our public presentation, the profile of those who use our program under supplementary health and such. Mr. Speaker, we have designed a program to make sure that supplementary health benefits or extended health benefits are available to everybody in the Northwest Territories. You get them either by NHIB, NHB or third-party insurance. If you don’t have those, you fall under supplementary health benefits.

I know this is a point that people disagree with, but I am just trying to explain and I am being straightforward here. Our supplementary health benefits I said is a non-insured health benefits program. Government is saying we want to be the safety net for those who don’t have access elsewhere, so that nobody is excluded from having an extended health benefits program. But if you have insurance, yes, you have to have that insurance program and you have to rely on that insurance program. If you don’t have an insurance program, we will help you and we will give you access by your income. I know people may not agree with that, but that is the fact of the program. I keep repeating that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Mr. Speaker, I think it is a far bigger problem than the Minister is giving it any credit for. I met a young man yesterday. He has a chronic condition. It costs him $10,000 a month. If that individual, who just graduated from university goes and works for the GNWT, he gets 80 percent coverage under his insurance. Therefore, he is only going to be spending $2,000 a month out of pocket. He is probably going to start at about $50,000, so if he chose to say, okay, I don’t want to work for the GNWT, I am going to go somewhere where they don’t give me insurance, he is going to get all the money covered, which is $10,000 a month; 12 months, $120,000. It is going to cost us more money.

Our best interest and the best interest of everything is to get as many people on insurance as possible. If people are covered by insurance and then we provide some top-ups, it is going to save us a lot of money in the long run. That is consistent with the policy that came out on September 30, 2007, yet the Minister’s plan is going to be a disincentive for anybody to get insurance. Everybody is going to dump their insurance. Anybody making under $50,000 or $60,000 is going to dump their insurance. My question to the Minister is: where is the incentive for people to get insurance? What is the incentive to help us save some money so that we can provide some of our services? The only thing we are doing is increasing our costs and hurting our people.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Mr. Speaker, I am not going to disagree with the Member for what he is saying, so I hope he understands that I don’t reject everything he says, as he suggests, Mr. Speaker. That is a serious issue. That is a challenge for any insurance.

What we have right now is that under seniors policy where anybody who is over 60, you are covered 100 percent on everything. So people do drop insurance already. We are going to, on their policy, encourage people to get insurance. If we know they have a job that has insurance, we are going to encourage them to keep those insurance. We are going to ask them to go to their first insurance first, before they come here. The question we have to ask is we have a people right now who have no insurance at all. We have a system right now with the insurance who is dropping out of the insurance. I don’t know why that would be a factor that prevents us from looking at coming up with a program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Final supplementary, Mr. Abernethy.

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the Minister hit it on the head. Let’s do something to find a solution for those people who don’t have insurance. That is our problem. Right now they are already covered for drugs, under supplemental or specified medical condition, so we need to find a way to get them dental and eye care. So let’s do that. But what she is doing is creating a program that is going to be a disincentive, she says. I don’t know how she is going to do it, but the Minister says we are going to encourage people to keep their insurance. People aren’t stupid, Mr. Speaker. If they look at the program and they go, oh, I’m going to get 100 percent coverage if I had no insurance but I am going to have to pay $2,000 a month if I have insurance, who is going to get insurance? Nobody. Therefore, our costs are going to go up. This is going to do nothing but increase our costs. The Minister didn’t address that. I would like the Minister to address how we are going to stop our costs from going up, because we created a program that is going to destroy insurance. How are we supporting insurance, Mr. Speaker?

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Mr. Speaker, first of all, we are talking extreme examples in saying that somebody will pay $10,000 a month in insurance. The second thing, Mr. Speaker, is, yes, somebody could get their company insurance to pay for it or the government insurance to pay for it under our program. At the end of the day, there is individual responsibility to that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

## QUESTION 108-16(5): JOHN TSETSO MEMORIAL LIBRARY IN FORT SIMPSON

**MR. MENICOCHE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to follow up on my Member’s statement when I was speaking about the John Tsetso Memorial Library in Fort Simpson and I would also like to ask a question to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

I was very pleased that he did have an opportunity to view the facilities in Fort Simpson and he saw the state and condition of the library, which is now a resource centre, and also in meeting with the leadership they have indicated that they would like to move forward, they would like to do something to the library, get it repaired or get a new one built for Fort Simpson. I’d like to ask the Minister at this time what plans has the department been looking at since his visit to Fort Simpson last month, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Jackson Lafferty.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Since our last visit to Simpson, looking at the library and the situation it’s in and that the books are stored away, I did instruct my departmental staff to visit the community and look at those options that were put forward by the Dehcho Education Council back in March 2010. They’ve identified four different options and we were waiting for the community to come back to provide us with the options. Now we have those options and my department is going to the community to meet with -- I believe the MLA is arranging that meeting -- the superintendents and the board as well. Mahsi.

**MR. MENICOCHE:** Thank you very much. I’m very pleased that departmental staff, especially from libraries, will attend a meeting in Fort Simpson. That’s something that we’re looking at. Knowing business planning as I do, I’m hoping that the meeting that will occur at the end of this month will have enough impact to urge the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment to be getting some financial resources in the business planning for our next fiscal year. Thank you.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** These are the discussions we’ll definitely need to have, along with other capital projects that are in the system. But this will lead to our general discussion about the community library. It has been in the works for quite some time now. The discussion has been brought to this level as well. Mr. Speaker, I’m sure the Member will be addressing that issue, as well, as we move forward discussing the capital plans within Education, Culture and Employment. So, Mr. Speaker, yes, we will be discussing this topic along with other capital projects as we move forward. Mahsi.

**MR. MENICOCHE:** Once the meeting is completed, is the Minister prepared to provide some advanced funding to start some work on the pre-planning, looking at building size, et cetera, even towards costing out a Class D estimate of a project of this nature? Thank you.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** We haven’t identified funding for that particular initiative, but we want to see what comes out of this meeting that we’re going to be having with the departmental staff and the Dehcho board as well, and also the superintendent that’s involved. We need to have a planning process coming out of that so we can involve that into our capital planning process. So I can’t really say that we will commit funds at this time, but that should be a part of the working document that will be put toward us as a department from the DEC. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Final supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

**MR. MENICOCHE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is hopeful that as a result of this meeting at the end of the month, that the community will pick one of the four options and want to begin moving forward with it. So I’m asking the Minister, can he look at his resources and see if he can assist the community of Fort Simpson in moving forward with whichever plan they choose at that time? It will be very helpful as we work towards the business planning this coming fall. Thank you.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Yes, I would commit to the Member that we’ll provide departmental staff to work closely with the DEC, and also the Member, as we move forward developing a package plan for the capital planning and whatever we need at the development stages. So we’ll provide those resources that we possibly can to provide an action plan. Mahsi.

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

## QUESTION 109-16(5): QUALITY OF CURRENT HEALTH CARE SERVICES

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. The Minister reported on statistics yesterday, in response to oral questions, that outlined some really horrible wait times for diagnostic and specialist medical services. She did report that our volume of services has gone up. I’m happy to see that, but that still leaves too many people waiting. She made a reference to our wait times being the same as down south. Again, I want to discourage in this, as well as in the supp health question, trying to be the same as the rest of Canada. We expect better. So what are we doing now to reduce these backlogs to zero? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The point of saying that our rates of wait time is similar to the rest of Canada, that is just showing the challenge that all jurisdictions in Canada face, and to stay similar to the rest of Canada, actually we are making really good effort on the part of all the people who are delivering those services at Stanton.

Mr. Speaker, to give the Member more information, the CEO of Stanton and other CEOs actually, because we’re working at a territorial plan together, and all of the medical directors in each health authority, Doctor Corkal at Stanton and Doctor Claude and Doctor DeClerc, all the medical directors in charge have been working for months together with the department, to come up with a plan to reduce wait times. As I indicated to the Member earlier, I am planning on announcing that soon, when we have it in place. But, Mr. Speaker, we are working to reduce the wait time.

Lastly, it’s important for people to know that our physicians examine the people on the list constantly and if there are any emergencies or urgent cases, they are dealt with accordingly. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you. Last fall the Minister announced the launch of the new website, the recruitment and retention website, hopefully to overcome some of these chronic problems of staffing our professional and specialist vacancies. So I’m wondering what monitoring is being done, what the results are. Can the Minister tell me what progress is being made as a result of that and whatever other efforts the department is taking to decrease our vacancies in our medical staff and specialists? Thank you.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Thank you. I could follow up on that, Mr. Speaker, and give him the latest information coming out of that website. I think what’s important to note is reducing wait times for some of these procedures doesn’t necessarily have to do with the vacancy, because for those procedures, we have our staff in there. If there is nobody permanent there, we have locums in place. What we are trying to do is we need to have a team of specialists, whether surgeons, internal medicine specialists, nurses, supporting staff, they need the space to make sure that they do the job they need to do as quickly as possible, and that’s the team approach that we are working on. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you. The Minister had mentioned the wait times and wait time standards, per se. We don’t have such standards. That seems odd to me and a slippery slope. If we don’t have standards, of course we’re going to continue to allow those to slip and slide without correcting them, and obviously they need correcting. So I’m hoping the Minister will actually put those standards in place so we can prevent that.

I’ve repeatedly asked the Minister to say whether analysis is being completed on the increased cost of administering a co-payment system, and this information has never been supplied. I’ve spoken about, in my statement earlier today, the four in a row fumbles and rebounds of my constituent’s prescription cost claims to Inuvik, which could be a prophecy of what lies ahead. I’ll ask again, has the Minister completed analysis of what the increased administrative costs will be? And since she has not met with the Pharmaceutical Association and others, how can she know what key burdens this will place on our front-line providers who have a bottom line to meet? Thank you.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Mr. Speaker, the plan is that once a decision is made as to the implementation of this policy, we will be going for RFP to find a service provider such as Blue Cross or any other insurance companies. They are equipped and trained and set up to deliver a program like this. They do that for our other existing GNWT program, as well as the GNWT employee program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Your final question, Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will speak more on what those costs were and, of course, the lack of progress we’ll be able to make on reducing our costs, given the complexity of what the Minister is currently proposing. Mr. Speaker, I’d like to have from my last question, how are we encouraging Metis and non-aboriginal residents to get and maintain third-party supplementary health insurance? It’s a pretty straightforward question and I don’t think it was answered when my colleagues asked that question. If we don’t currently have the answer to this, which I assume to be the case, not having received an answer to a repeated question. And that may just be a fact: we don’t know what the answer is. Do we intend to fill this gap, given its potential to again negate any hope of achieving cost reductions with the current plan? How are we going to encourage third-party insurance? What mechanisms are we putting in place for Metis and non-aboriginal? Thank you.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In all of the, I believe, written material that’s been on the website, the presentations made in public meetings about supplementary health benefits, we have stated that NWT residents receive supplementary health benefits in various ways by all kinds of different third-party insurance. NIHB is a third-party insurance. MHB is a third-party insurance. Employer health insurance is a third-party insurance. People who have private insurance, that is a third-party insurance. And supplementary health is trying to address these people who don’t fall into any of that, who don’t have any of those. That is who we are trying to help. So that’s what we mean when we are saying third party. Third party includes NIHB, MHB and employee insurance. Thank you.

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

## QUESTION 110-16(5): PROJECTED GNWT REVENUES

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today get back to my Member’s statement and that is the financial well-being of our Territory going forward. Mr. Speaker, the numbers are out there. They don’t lie and all you have to do is look around. You know, investment in our Territory was down 24 percent last year and a net job loss of 900 jobs last year. At one point in time we actually lost 7 percent of all jobs in the Territory during 2009, a net loss of 500 people from the Territory, and a decline in our gross domestic product, which would lead me to believe that, Mr. Speaker, our revenues going forward are in tremendous peril. I’d like to ask the Finance Minister what do our future projections for revenue look like. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that we, along with every other jurisdiction in the world, have been managing our way through the most turbulent economic times, by many estimations, since the Great Depression, and we’ve done it in a way that’s allowed us to maintain service levels to provide us a role of stability in our economy as the private sector suffered and struggled through the downturn. We are continuing to do that. We’ve just come through the two biggest capital years in our history. And, yes, there are challenges out there and there always will be challenges out there.

Our projections are that there is some modest growth on the horizon both nationally and in the Northwest Territories. Mining exploration is looking like it’s going to start inching back up. The price of diamonds is holding. The price of gold is at an all time high. We have some good prospects with Avalon and Nechalacho and rare metals. But, yes, we still have cost pressures, we have expenditure issues, and we have the issue of beefing up our revenues. But we are managing this. We’ve laid out a fiscal plan that’s been successful to date. What we’re projecting and proposing for the coming year is going to see us being able to continue to manage that. We have to be careful. We have to be wise. We have to be frugal. But we can do it. Thank you.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Mr. Speaker, I agree wholeheartedly with the Minister. I think one of the best things this government has done is the capital planning process, revamping that, getting money out the door in an effort to stimulate the economy when it needed it the most. I think that’s a good thing during an economic downturn, to be doing that type of thing.

What I’m getting at, and I think the Finance Minister knows what I’m getting at, is if the numbers aren’t there, how are we going to plan future budgets on declining numbers in people that are living here for the grant to Canada, CIT, PIT and the payroll tax? If the numbers are trending downward, to me, the revenues would start to turn downward as well, Mr. Speaker. I’d like to ask the Finance Minister how we’re going to address that. Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Speaker, as we do our fiscal planning and the overviews we provide regularly to Members, we factor in anticipated costs. We recognize, like we did last year and the year before, that there has been a downturn, to a certain extent, in our corporate income tax. We believe, and the numbers showed us, that there has been a stabilizing and a flattening out and in some cases an actual upturn in some of the different areas.

We, of course, have to watch very closely our expenditures. We have to look, at this late date, as I pointed out, it’s a time to consolidate. I think the Member said the same thing, as well, that this is a time to consolidate, to secure what we’ve done and not be looking at new initiatives that haven’t been budgeted or planned for. We’re going to do that as well. We’re going to look, as a government, at how we are spending our money to make sure that we are doing it as wisely as possible so that we maintain as much of a fiscal cushion as we possibly can for the coming year, and most of all we want to make sure that our last budget is strong enough and forward looking enough that the incoming 17th Assembly will, in fact, have some flexibility. Thank you.

**MR. RAMSAY:** I thank the Finance Minister for that. Being that the Government of the Northwest Territories has recently gotten this $75 million reprieve, an extension on our debt limit to $75 million, and we’re getting precariously close to that limit in the future, Mr. Speaker, I’m wondering what extraordinary measures the government may be looking to employ to make sure that we aren’t setting ourselves up for failure should a catastrophe happen. Like I mentioned in my Member’s statement, a really bad forest fire season or, you know, hopefully not a great deal of further expense on a project like the Deh Cho Bridge. Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** I’d like to point out that even including the Deh Cho Bridge into our financial considerations, Moody’s came up and they reviewed our finances and they came back with an Aa1 rating, one of the best in the country. They recognize that, yes, we have taken on this challenge, but we have shown, over the number of years preceding, that we have been prepared to make the right decisions, sometimes often tough decisions, to make sure that we maintain control of our expenditures, that we recognize that we’re in an economic downturn, and that we have to manage our money very carefully. We’re going to be looking at measures to make sure that we are spending the money wisely. We want to look at trying to, as I indicated, have as much of a cushion as possible for this year and the coming year. As we’ve shown to the Member through our fiscal update, this year and next year are going to be the most problematic, but after that, all trends and indications are that we will be able to get back to historical spending patterns and minimize our short-term debt. And I point out again, at this point we’ve avoided taking on any long-term debt. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I’d like to recognize the clock and time for oral questions has concluded; however, I will allow Mr. Ramsay to ask his final question. Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I’ll keep this brief. I’m just wondering if, you know, given the projections that the Department of Finance comes up with, given the fact that we are so close to the debt wall, we’re in a precarious position. I’m just wondering, would it be wise or prudent to send the projections the Department of Finance has to a third party or let somebody else have a look at these projections to make sure that we are, in fact, on a solid track with our financial situation going forward? Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** We do have significant third-party involvement in our finances. We present our consolidated accounts. We have our books audited by the Auditor General. We are going to have the bridge audited. We have the Members here that are vigilant and keen in terms of monitoring our expenditures, our budgets. They are fully involved in our budgeting process.

We’ve been up to date and on the mark for three years. We’ve managed our way through the most difficult economic times since the Great Depression. We’ve done that collectively because we’ve applied ourselves, we’ve paid close attention and we’ve made the right decisions; in some cases, hard decisions. We are going to have to continue to do that. We’ve passed three budgets unanimously in this House and we’ve managed, even with whatever curve ball we may have been tossed, to be able to manage our way through this and protect the interests of the people of the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to opening address. Item 11, petitions. Mr. Menicoche.

# Petitions

## PETITION 3-16(5): JOHN TSETSO MEMORIAL LIBRARY FUNDING

**MR. MENICOCHE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to present a petition dealing with the matter of the John Tsetso Memorial Library funding.

Mr. Speaker, the petition contains 144 signatures of Fort Simpson residents and, Mr. Speaker, the petitioners request that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide the funding necessary to construct a new John Tsetso Memorial Library. Thank you very much.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Mr. Beaulieu.

# Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills

## BILL 1: AN ACT TO AMEND THE VETERINARY PROFESSION ACT

## BILL 2: AN ACT TO AMEND THE DENTAL AUXILIARIES ACT

## BILL 3: MISCELLANEOUS STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2010

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to report to the Assembly that the Standing Committee on Social Programs has reviewed Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Veterinary Profession Act; Bill 2, An Act to Amend the Dental Auxiliaries Act; and Bill 3, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2010.

The Standing Committee on Social Programs wishes to report that Bills 2 and 3 are ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole and Bill 1 is ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole as amended and reprinted. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Item 14, tabling of documents. Mr. Abernethy.

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table a motion put forward by the Elders Parliament on the Supplementary Health Benefits Program. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I believe the document was already tabled yesterday. The Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

# Tabling of Documents

## TABLED DOCUMENT 35-16(5): PACKAGE OF DRAWINGS BY FORT SIMPSON STUDENTS REGARDING THE JOHN TSETSO MEMORIAL LIBRARY

**MR. MENICOCHE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned earlier today, I wish to table a package of drawings of Fort Simpson students age nine to 11 years old. Mr. Speaker, through their words and colourful drawings, the students share their thoughts about what they enjoy about the John Tsetso Memorial Library. Mahsi cho.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Mr. Ramsay.

# Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

## BILL 7: AN ACT TO AMEND THE ELECTIONS AND PLEBISCITES ACT

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Friday, May 14, 2010, I’ll move that Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Elections and Plebiscites Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Item 17, motions. Item, 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Tabled Document 4-16(5), Executive Summary of the Report of the Joint Review Panel for the Mackenzie Gas Project; Bill 2, An Act to Amend the Dental Auxiliaries Act; and Bill 3, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, with Mr. Abernethy in the chair.

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

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** I would like to call Committee of the Whole to order. On our agenda we have Tabled Document 4-16(5), Executive Summary of the Report of the Joint Review Panel for the Mackenzie Gas Project. What is the wish of the committee? Mrs. Groenewegen.

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

---Carried

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** 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. Abernethy?

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee 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. Abernethy. A motion is on the floor. Do we have a seconder for that? Mr. Yakeleya.

---Carried

Item 22, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

# Orders of the Day

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Orders of the day for Thursday, May 13, 2010, at 1:30 p.m.:

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

* Motion 7-16(5), Referral of Tabled Document 30-16(5), 2010 Review of Members’ Compensation and Benefits

1. First Reading of Bills
2. Second Reading of Bills
3. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

* Tabled Document 4-16(5), Executive Summary of the Report of the Joint Review Panel for the Mackenzie Gas Project

1. Report of Committee of the Whole
2. Third Reading of Bills
3. Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Thursday, May 13, 2010, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 3:42 p.m.