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Friday, February 18, 2011

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**The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker**

**Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories**

Members of the Legislative Assembly

Speaker

Hon. Paul Delorey

(Hay River North)

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Mr. Tom Beaulieu

(Tu Nedhe)

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(Frame Lake)

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(Weledeh)

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*Minister responsible for the*

*NWT Power Corporation*

Mr. Norman Yakeleya

(Sahtu)

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**PRAYER 5943**

**MINISTERS' STATEMENTS 5943**

109-16(5) – NWT Community Government Infrastructure Achievements (R. McLeod) 5943

110-16(5) – Education Week (Lafferty) 5944

111-16(5) – Minister Absent from the House (Roland) 5944

**MEMBERS' STATEMENTS 5944**

Cultural Awareness Training (Yakeleya) 5944

V-Day North Campaign to Stop Violence against Women and Girls (Bisaro) 5945

Early Childhood Education (Hawkins) 5945

Apprenticeship Program in Small Communities (Beaulieu) 5946

Management of Health Authorities in the NWT (Ramsay) 5946

Program to Support Dene Hand Games (Menicoche) 5947

Mine Training Society (Abernethy) 5947

WSCC Pain Compensation Policy (Bromley) 5948

Devolution Agreement-in-Principle (Krutko) 5948

**RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY 5949, 5965**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 5949**

**ORAL QUESTIONS 5950**

**REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON THE REVIEW OF BILLS 5965**

**MOTIONS 5960**

35-16(5) – Successor Strategy for the Aboriginal Skills and

Employment Partnerships Program (Abernethy) 5960

**CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS 5966**

**REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE 5977**

**ORDERS OF THE DAY 5977**

**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**

**Friday, February 18, 2011**

**Members Present**

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

The House met at 10:01 a.m.

# Prayer

---Prayer

**SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey):** Good morning, colleagues. Welcome back to the Chamber. Orders of the Day. Item 2, Ministers’ statements. The honourable Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Robert McLeod.

# Ministers’ Statements

## MINISTER’S STATEMENT 109-16(5): NWT COMMUNITY GOVERNMENT INFRASTRUCTURE ACHIEVEMENTS

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I’m pleased to share with Members the infrastructure achievements of community governments in the Northwest Territories. Community governments are important partners for the Government of the Northwest Territories as we work towards achieving our goals of this Assembly.

Beginning in 2005 with the federal New Deal for Cities and Communities and then in 2007 with the GNWT’s New Deal for NWT Community Governments, community governments began receiving funding to invest in their own infrastructure priorities. While not all community governments have advanced at the same pace with this new funding, we have seen impressive results in many areas and we should all celebrate these success stories.

Community governments are now investing in core municipal infrastructure, including upgrades or construction of new roads, improvements to solid waste sites, and upgrades or construction of new office buildings and fire halls. Aklavik, Behchoko, Colville Lake, Fort Liard, Fort Providence and Kakisa are examples of community governments who have chosen to make their infrastructure investments in these areas to provide enhanced programs and services to their residents.

Using a wide range of infrastructure programs offered by the Government of Canada over the past five years, community governments have been able to invest heavily in water and sewer infrastructure,

solid waste sites and energy savings projects in community public buildings.

Most recently, nine of our community governments took advantage of Canada’s Infrastructure Stimulus Program by undertaking 10 different projects throughout the Northwest Territories, of which four are already completed.

Most of these community governments decided to join forces to leverage funding under the Building Canada Plan to upgrade water treatment facilities in order to meet the Canadian Guidelines for Drinking Water Quality. To the community governments of Fort Good Hope, Fort Liard, Fort Simpson, Inuvik, Jean Marie River, Lutselk’e, Trout Lake and Wrigley, I extend my congratulations on your success in this area and for improving the quality of drinking water for the residents in your communities.

I believe that it is important to also note that while our community governments are not only delivering on important infrastructure needs, they are doing so in an environmentally conscious manner. In Fort Good Hope, the community government decided on a high-efficiency heating system and building insulation package in their community office complex, and in Dettah the new community complex includes a high-efficiency wood pellet boiler.

Finally, I would like to highlight some of the projects community governments have completed to support health and well-being of their residents. In Tulita, the youth will now be able to swim in their above-ground pool. In Gameti, they are now enjoying their new recreation centre. In Enterprise, the new community centre has meeting rooms, recreational and fitness facilities, and many other features to keep the young and old busy 24 hours a day. In Paulatuk, the youth are enjoying their new youth centre. In Ulukhaktok, the residents are utilizing their community centre. Fort Providence and Fort Resolution chose to upgrade their arenas, while here in Yellowknife the soccer players and other users are enjoying the new fieldhouse.

We are very proud of the success that community governments are achieving as important infrastructure projects are completed. Municipal and Community Affairs will continue to support community governments as they address their priority needs and we look forward to continuing to work with community governments as they bring forward new projects that reflect the needs and priorities of residents.

Mr. Speaker, the funding that the Government of the Northwest Territories provides to community governments for their infrastructure priorities helps us achieve our vision for sustainable, safe and vibrant communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

## MINISTER’S STATEMENT 110-16(5): EDUCATION WEEK

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. February 21st to February 25th marks Education Week. This is an important time of the year when we celebrate the academic achievements of students across the Northwest Territories and also recognize the many educators who support and strengthen our educational system.

Since last September I have had the pleasure of hosting forums in various regional centres as part of the Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative. Through these forums, I have met incredibly talented youth. These bright students have courage and determination and are committed to not only for their own futures but the future of others by building a stronger North. I am honoured to share the stage with them at the forums and appreciate the knowledge they continue to bring to discussions.

Some of the youth have shared stories of the people they turn to for support and to rely on. Teachers are often among those identified and Education Week is a great time to acknowledge their efforts. The Northwest Territories Teachers’ Association Thank You for Making a Difference annual campaign is all about students recognizing their teachers. The Teachers’ Association gets nominations from students from all over the Northwest Territories who want their teachers recognized for the difference they make in their lives. All our teachers deserve our gratitude for everything they do. I congratulate everybody who received nominations and those receiving Thank You for Making a Difference awards.

Mr. Speaker, learning doesn’t start nor stop when you walk into or out of the school. Learning is a lifelong journey that includes the family and the community. Education is a shared responsibility, and by working together we can help our students receive the education that they deserve.

This Education Week the department is challenging all residents of the Northwest Territories to take part in the Thumbs Up campaign and identify ways that they can help support the education system. It is about recognizing how each of us is doing a good job and also listing ways that we can continue raising the bar even higher, Mr. Speaker. Residents can get their Education Week package at the regional Education, Culture and Employment centres or from their community school.

Mr. Speaker, we are achieving success on this Assembly’s goal of healthy, educated people and I encourage the Members to join me this week in celebrating the contributions of many people across the North who are helping us to get there.

In closing, I would again like to thank the teachers and educators across our Territory who commit so much of themselves so their students can be successful. I also want to thank our partners in the communities, the Aboriginal governments, the industries, and Aurora College, who continually work to improve education and training opportunities for our people. Finally, a big thanks to our many students for their commitment to bettering themselves while challenging us to better ourselves too. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

## MINISTER’S STATEMENT 111-16(5): MINISTER ABSENT FROM THE HOUSE

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to advise Members that the Honourable Michael McLeod will be absent from the House today to attend the Western Transportation Advisory Council meetings in Vancouver. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Roland. Item 3, Members’ statements. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

# Members’ Statements

## MEMBER’S STATEMENT ON CULTURAL AWARENESS TRAINING

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It’s important that we run a government that serves the people. Mr. Speaker, to do that, we need to be aware of the culture that we’re living and working in.

In the Sahtu region, this government has many employees who really need to know about our culture. I don’t know why there are no cultural awareness programs for territorial government employees. We have them for teachers and they’ve been very successful. They are proper both for the teachers and in the communities. It’s a very simple program to implement, Mr. Speaker.

I propose that we make it mandatory for government employees working in the region to learn about the culture of that area. The program should include traditional activities and some basic language skills. This should be done properly, in a one-week program. People in the communities should be involved in it. This would have added advantage to helping government employees meet people from around the region, learn from one another and build relationships and work together. Most importantly, a cultural language program will help improve our government services.

I am not raising this issue out of the blue, Mr. Speaker. Last May 18th, the Deputy Premier stood up in this House and made a good promise. Mr. Miltenberger gave us his word that the Department of Human Resources would have a cross-cultural awareness program developed, including an on-the-land component, available to all GNWT employees by the end of the fiscal year. Time is running out, Mr. Speaker, and we have not yet seen that program going out in the Sahtu region or anywhere else. I know the Minister of Human Resources is part of this department’s plans for a Brilliant North. The action plan states that cross-cultural awareness training will be rolled out this year. I look forward to seeing that happen, especially in the Sahtu region. I expect local people to be involved in the training plan and teaching our way of life.

I will be asking the Minister of Human Resources questions about this training program at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

## MEMBER’S STATEMENT ON V-DAY NORTH CAMPAIGN TO STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Domestic violence is all too prevalent, Mr. Speaker, but domestic violence involving women and girls is an area that is especially concerning. The NWT is not immune to domestic violence, unfortunately. We are reminded on a daily basis of incidents that have occurred in one or more of our communities. Most of them report violence against women. Not only does the violence have an impact on the victim, but the offender’s actions affect everyone around the victim, children most often, but other family members and friends are also impacted by the trauma. They all must continue to deal with the impact of the violence as the victim struggles to recover physically and mentally and as they try to assist and provide support to the victim.

There is also potentially the trauma of a court case. Often the stress on the victim is too much and they turn to drugs and alcohol to deal with it. That creates another vicious cycle and children again bear the brunt of the resulting damage.

As a government, we provide resources to assist the victims of family violence, and shelters are the most visible and noticeable result of our funding. Some of our communities have shelters for women and girls, but many do not. That is something which must change, Mr. Speaker.

As we have heard earlier this week, there exists worldwide an organization called V-Day which strives to create awareness of violence against women and girls. The NWT Chapter is called V-Day North, and for four years now volunteers have been highlighting this issue and creating awareness through public events. There will be three events this year. The first is a live comedy event tomorrow night. The second is the screening of a documentary film which will be held February 28th, and the third is a play that will take place March 10th, 11th and 12th. Each event has a minimal entry fee of $10, I think. Most of the proceeds are donated to NGOs here in Yellowknife, with 10 percent going to fund shelter programs in Haiti. Those two NGOs are the Alison McAteer House and the Centre for Northern Families, both of which provide shelter and support for women and children fleeing violence.

On behalf of them and V-Day North, I encourage everyone to attend one of the V-Day events coming up. A small contribution from each of us will have a huge impact on these two shelters and their clients. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

## MEMBER’S STATEMENT ON EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to speak about the importance of early education and how I believe that ECE should support junior kindergarten in our future years.

The GNWT has two strategic initiatives in this area. One provides funding for the languages initiatives that supports local language programming for preschool children and the second provides some assistance to regions to assist early childhood providers. In Yellowknife, preschool programs and preschool bilingual programs are offered on a fee base. There is also a program at the Yellowknife Catholic Schools for children who, for various reasons, are referred by the community agencies that need the extra assistance and need a head start.

Last summer Yellowknife Education District No. 1 offered a short summer program, without fee, to support pre-kindergarten students. Mr. Speaker, from all indications that I have been told, this was a significant success and a great head start for those kids rolling into kindergarten. These are valuable initiatives I believe we need more of.

I support universal junior kindergarten in the NWT. Mr. Speaker, at a UNESCO World Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education, the key message was that education is essential for development and there is no better place to set development on the right track than in the first few years of a child’s life.

It is clear that a child’s life chances often play out well before the first day in school. By providing junior kindergarten, we can help to level that playing field and to ensure that every child has a solid foundation that literacy can be built upon. By reaching all children earlier, they will find they will be better served and can find problems and identify them, if necessary, and that need support such as eyesight, nutrition and the ability to play. Mr. Speaker, this gives the system the ability to tap into resources early, and as we all know, early intervention is the key to overcoming struggles of that nature.

Mr. Speaker, we all support universal education through many messages we talk about here, but we must ensure that there’s a level playing field for all our children, and it begins at junior kindergarten. Mr. Speaker, accordingly, these students who receive early education and a solid foundation in literacy and numeracy, these adults go on and become more productive citizens in our lives. Mr. Speaker, they turn out to be true, real contributors.

Mr. Speaker, finally, the UNESCO director general says this is the greatest investment in a child’s life.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I’ll have questions for the Minister of Education later today.

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

## MEMBER’S STATEMENT ON APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

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

Mr. Speaker, today I would like to speak about the Apprenticeship Program and its impact on small communities. In our small communities we have to bring trades personnel in to do work on our units and on our buildings. This is due to the lack of trades personnel at the community level.

Mr. Speaker, this is not to say we have no tradespeople at all, we do have a few, but much more is needed. For now, every tradesperson in a small community should have an apprentice working with them. In a community such as Fort Resolution and Lutselk’e, we have many skilled people that can do carpentry, plumbing and even electrical, but for the most part they are not certified and they need to be certified tradespeople in order to take advantage of the opportunities that are available to them within the community and the mining industry. This is another way of putting people in the small communities to work.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this government has to do all it can with all of the departments working together to plan and organize all the work necessary at the community level. Mr. Speaker, the deferred maintenance alone in the GNWT buildings is over $300 million, not to mention any new construction our industry needs. With all of this work needed in our government, our government must coordinate itself, led by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, to take advantage of this, seize the opportunity to train and certify people and continue the work on the government’s objective to create a society that’s independent and self-sufficient.

Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is the small communities have the human resources needed to do the labour on these projects in the communities and around the communities. This government must find a way, find the money and develop policies to help people in the small communities sustain their economy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

## MEMBER’S STATEMENT ON MANAGEMENT OF HEALTH AUTHORITIES IN THE NWT

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I’m going to speak today about the management of health authorities in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, this issue is nothing new to anyone sitting here today. I and other Regular Members have been asking the government the entire time I’ve been here for a better way to fund and manage our health care system. Mr. Speaker, the government continues to take the easy way out when it comes to dealing with deficits at the authorities. They continually throw money at it through so-called one-time funding requests or through supplementary appropriation.

Mr. Speaker, let me recap one-time funding and appropriations to authorities: 2002-2003, $3 million; 2004-2005, $2.2 million; 2006-2007, $2.9 million; 2007-2008, $4.9 million; 2008-2009, $25 million; for a total of $38 million. Most of the trouble it would seem at the Stanton Authority started after the board was disbanded in November 2002. In April 2003, then Health Minister Miltenberger issued a press release where he stated it is important that Stanton Health Authority have a fully functioning board to provide leadership and direction to the organization. Mr. Speaker, here we are eight years later and still no board at Stanton. The red ink continues to spill and the government has no answer to the management and financial control over our health care system.

Mr. Speaker, you would think that for a government that is on very shaky financial footing, that we would have taken steps to get financial control back from the authorities. Mr. Speaker, what we should do immediately is collapse all authorities, establish advisory boards in each region, establish one board of management for health and social services with balanced regional representation. We must get financial control back. It will lead to more seamless and effective management of the resources we do have, the mobility of health care professionals, equipment and the provision of services will improve under one board.

Mr. Speaker, this is something the government must act on, and while we’re doing this we should also address the issue of the employees at the Hay River authority, include them once and for all in our system.

Mr. Speaker, I’m at a loss as to why this government has not acted on this matter and somewhere around the next corner there lurks another supp, I am sure. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

## MEMBER’S STATEMENT ON PROGRAM TO SUPPORT DENE HAND GAMES

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

The community of Wrigley has really excelled at Dene hand games over the last three years. I am very proud to speak about that today, proud that they have a strong cultural belief system, they practice it and support each other and their youth. The Dene hand games is one of our strongest cultural experiences for the Dene of the NWT, on par with drum dancing, which we all love.

I believe our government should be supportive of this and provide resources to support the Dene hand games. We must make efforts to support and sustain this. As you know, we have spoken many times. Our small communities have limited fundraising abilities and low employment rates, yet in the community of Wrigley the energy and dedication of the residents, the band office and parents make it possible to travel and participate at hand games tournaments throughout our North and even in northern Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, the Wrigley hand game players have always done well wherever they go. They have requested assistance from our government, but we have no programming for this. The communities are not asking for full sponsorship, only a contribution to assist them in travelling for this important cultural activity. The band offices support it, the parents support it, the people support it and our government must support it.

We have a successful Youth Ambassador Program and I believe we can have a cultural ambassador program to support this. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

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

## MEMBER’S STATEMENT ON MINE TRAINING SOCIETY

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the last seven years the Mine Training Society, which is a partnership between industry, Aboriginal and public governments, has been training Aboriginal Northerners so that they can obtain long-term, meaningful and well-paying jobs in the mine and mine services sector. The Mine Training Society was originally an initiative of the Government of the Northwest Territories. It started 15 years ago as an adhoc committee put together by the Minister of Education of the day, Charles Dent, along with the Chamber of Mines, Diavik Diamond Mines, Yellowknives Dene First Nation and Indian and Northern Affairs. Together they began the process of community-based training for Aboriginal Northerners, which led to the creation of the Mine Training Society.

In 2003 the Mine Training Society, with support of the Department of Education and Indian and Northern Affairs, developed the Northern Mineral and Industrial Skills Strategy. This strategy resulted in the Mine Training Society becoming one of the first of nine Aboriginal Skills and Employee Partnership, or ASEP, agreement holders with Human Resources and Skills Development in 2004.

The Mine Training Society has been working with ASEP since 2004. Since that time it has worked with its partners to train over 900 people, of which 600 have obtained employment in the mine and mine service sector. Using funds from ASEP in the amount of about $16.8 million, the Mine Training Society partners have invested an additional $18.6 million in support of training. This further partnership investment has been used to support the development of best practice programming like the Underground Miner Program as well as purchasing infrastructure support for Aurora College, such as the underground mine simulator that is housed at the Yellowknife Campus.

Mr. Speaker, organizations like the Mine Training Society are a necessary component in the economic development of the Northwest Territories. By focusing on the creation of a skilled Aboriginal workforce for the mine and mine service sector, the Mine Training Society is facilitating economic opportunities for residents in many of our small communities throughout the North. It is imperative that we see the continuance of this organization as a unique partnership of industry, Aboriginal governments and public government. It produces measureable and very tangible results for the North.

Mr. Speaker, later this afternoon I will be speaking to the motion before the Legislature regarding the Mine Training Society and the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnership program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

## MEMBER’S STATEMENT ON WSCC PAIN COMPENSATION POLICY

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In February 2009 I told this Assembly about a Weledeh constituent who is taking on the Workers’ Compensation and Safety Commission. I’ll update you today on his progress.

The basis of this dispute is the fact that while workers can receive compensation for the psychological pain resulting from injuries, WSCC practices doesn’t allow compensation for physical pain. Psychological pain settlements are made according to a written standard which rates severity. I have read the policy. There may be a provision for a physical pain standard to determine compensation, but WSCC has not developed a standard and does not allow physical pain claims.

My constituent believes this is wrong. For three and a half years now, despite the severe pain and debilitation caused by his injuries, he has fought to have this changed. He’s mounted his case with savvy determination and minimal legal assistance. Recently he took his case to the NWT Human Rights Commission for a ruling on WSCC’s position. In their recent decision, the Human Rights Commission agreed to refer the matter to adjudication. We now await the adjudication hearing.

Throughout this struggle my constituent has repeatedly stated his determination to go on, not just for himself but for all injured workers who have been denied the compensation for pain as well as psychological injury. My constituent has also had to negotiate bottlenecks holding up current benefits. For example, I recently had to intervene so that my constituent no longer has to buy his medication out of pocket and await WSCC reimbursement. Sometimes out of work or with no money for medication, he has had to borrow from family for lack of a mechanism to send the bill directly to WSCC.

Mr. Speaker, I can’t overstate my admiration for this amazing and dedicated man, and gratitude for the opportunities I have had to help him out in small ways. The adjudication will be coming shortly. If it succeeds, I expect to see the WSCC reviewing the complete list of all those who’ve been turned down for pain compensation, and a WSCC action plan to pay complete compensation to these injured workers. Mahsi.

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

## MEMBER’S STATEMENT ON DEVOLUTION AGREEMENT-IN-PRINCIPLE

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Treaty 11 has been around for some 90 years, since it was signed in the summer of 1921. Mr. Speaker, the reason for the land claim settlement was because of the discovery of oil in and around Norman Wells. In order for the government to allow industry or people to move into the Northwest Territories and obtain the right to that oil, they had to have a treaty signed with the First Nations people in the Mackenzie Valley, which included the Treaty 11 area that went all the way to the Beaufort Sea.

Mr. Speaker, the whole reason for treaties some 90 years ago was to open up the North to allow a legal transfer to take place between the indigenous people of the Northwest Territories, the Government of Canada and the Dominion of Canada to allow for that to take place.

That is no different than what we’re talking about here in regard to devolution between the Government of the Northwest Territories taking powers from the federal government and imposing that right over indigenous people in the Mackenzie Valley like they did some 90 years ago. But since then, Mr. Speaker, the people in the Northwest Territories, the Dene and Metis people, have woken up to the reality that they have rights that have not been implemented under their treaties, especially in the area of lands and resources and the management of those lands and resources in the Mackenzie Valley, and that’s what we call the modern day treaties.

In those modern day treaties it’s pretty clear that they have the right to lands and resources, not only ownership rights but the rights to royalties and any revenues that flow from those additional Crown lands outside the lands they already own.

Mr. Speaker, the federal government and the Government of the Northwest Territories has treaty, Constitution and land claims obligations that are entrenched in Section 35 of the Canadian Constitution. What’s happening here in the Northwest Territories, Mr. Speaker, is pathetic. We are leaving out one of the largest landowners in the Northwest Territories from a fundamental process, by exclusion, by ignoring them and not taking them seriously and allowing them due process, hearing them out, giving them the resources so that they can have the meetings they need to discuss the issues that are before them. Because they make waves, they’re pushed off the table and they’ll sign with anybody that’s on our side and agrees to everything that we’re telling them, but not deal with the people who are impacted by this decision.

At the appropriate time I will have questions to the Premier on why the Dene people have been excluded from this process.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

# Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Although not a constituent, it’s my great pleasure today to recognize an old colleague -- and I don’t mean old in age, but a colleague I worked with quite a long time ago at Sir John Franklin School -- Mr. Ed Jeske. With Ed up there is Vivian Squires, who will soon be the new executive director for the Yellowknife Seniors’ Society.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I’d like to recognize a few people in the gallery today. Ms. Denise Yuhas, a very successful businesswoman and one of the best constituency assistants in the business. Bonnie Lynch, one of our northern trained and very capable nurses; and Ms. Theresa Beaulieu from Fort Smith as well. Welcome to the gallery.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess my recognition of visitors in the gallery will sound a little bit like déjà vu thanks to Ms. Bisaro. I too would like to recognize Mr. Ed Jeske. He’s a very well-known and wise, respected constituent. Accompanying him, as Ms. Bisaro had mentioned, is the lovely and charming Vivian Squires, who has just returned as the executive director to the YK seniors. Welcome to them both.

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

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I’d like to recognize a few people joining us in the gallery today on behalf of the Mine Training Society: Hilary Jones, the general manager, Rachelle Beaulieu, Marilyn Hardisty, Jessica Enzoe Riddle, and Kelly Arychuk, the chair.

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

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don’t get to do this very often but today I would like to recognize my granddaughter, Julianne Groenewegen, in the visitor’s gallery. I’d also like to recognize my very long-serving constituency assistant, Wendy Morgan, who is also in the visitor’s gallery today.

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

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I’d like to welcome any Weledeh residents and I’d also like to recognize the Mine Training Society folks and Jane Arychuk, head of our Aurora College campus here, and, of course, my long-time and old-time mentor Ed Jeske and his accompanist Vivian Squires.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bob McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I’d like to recognize a constituent of Yellowknife South, Ms. Kelly Arychuk. I’d also be remiss if I didn’t recognize a long-time hockey supporter, minor hockey, senior hockey, old-timer hockey, the only guy I know that has an arena named after him -- I’m sure he would have brought his cow bell in if security would have let him -- Mr. Ed Jeske.

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

**MR. MENICOCHE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I’m pleased to recognize Marilyn Hardisty in the gallery here today, a former resident of Jean Marie River. Welcome.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. If we’ve missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to the Chamber. I hope you’re enjoying the proceedings.

Item 6, acknowledgements. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

# Acknowledgements

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 11-16(5): GRAND OPENING OF CHIEF T’SELEHYE SCHOOL IN FORT GOOD HOPE

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I’d like to acknowledge the recent grand opening of the Chief T’Selehye School in Fort Good Hope. The official celebration began on January 14, 2011.

I’d also like to thank the people who made this happen. My appreciation to Minister Jackson Lafferty and to the Government of the Northwest Territories. Congratulations to the community of Fort Good Hope, especially to the parents, teachers and the community.

Chief T’Selehye was a strong leader, and may the school produce more such leaders in the future.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

# Oral Questions

## QUESTION 483-16(5): DEVOLUTION AGREEMENT-IN-PRINCIPLE

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Premier and is in light of my Member’s statement and specifically the lack of consultation that seems to be taking place between the Dene leadership.

I’ve received a phone call from Billy Erasmus, who put a formal request into the Government of the Northwest Territories to host a Dene leadership meeting, which includes all the Dene leaders throughout Denendeh, regarding the Mackenzie Valley on this issue that are before us on devolution. The Dene people are the ones that are most impacted by this decision and we do have treaty obligations, whether it’s from the old treaties 8 and 11 or the modern day treaties.

I’d like to ask the Premier what it’s going to take for this government to assist those groups to get to the table, have their issues put forward, and when are we going to hear them out so we can understand where they’re coming from by allowing these meetings to take place.

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

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I must take exception to the manner the Member raised in his Member’s statement about how this government has been pathetic in reaching out. The fact is, during the life of this government, the 16th Assembly, we set up the regional leaders approach that had all the regional leaders, presidents, grand chiefs at the table to help set the discussion about what we share and how we do work and things. At the table we also recognize that we’re not always going to agree on subject matters that come forward.

In fact, this agreement-in-principle that the Member is referring to bring people back to the table on, if you look at chapter 4, the general provisions of the devolution agreement, from 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8 all talk about Aboriginal rights and interests and how this government and the federal government and the parties that sign onto this would work in ensuring that those rights are protected throughout the Northwest Territories in this devolution process.

Aside from that on the specific question of support for Aboriginal governments, we have supported Aboriginal governments by providing funding directly to the regions to take part in devolution discussions.

Further to that, the meetings in the Sahtu, for example, we have supported those meetings with funding, along with attending those meetings and will continue to do that.

**MR. KRUTKO:** As we all know, all groups are not part of the Northern Leaders’ Forum which some groups are not taking part in. Yet the Dene leadership forum includes all the Dene leadership throughout the Northwest Territories, which allows them to have that discussion among themselves for those groups that are not part of the Northern Leaders’ Forum but do take part in those discussions.

I’d just like to ask the Premier, since he made a reference to the wording in the agreement under the land claims agreement, which is protected under the Canadian Constitution, it’s pretty clear that the Government of the Northwest Territories shall involve the Aboriginal governments in developing implementation of a northern accord agreement on oil and gas which is negotiated in accordance with the element of the land claims agreement. I’d just like to know, if you have a constitutional agreement which clearly stipulates that you shall involve them, and then on one hand you’re saying, well, if you’re not at the table, you can’t talk, I’d like to know what we’re going to do to have an inclusive system that includes First Nations leaders to have that discussion either amongst themselves to develop their positions and bring them forward so the Government of the Northwest Territories and the people of the Northwest Territories can see exactly what the First Nations positions are.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** The process we have used has been absolutely inclusive. In fact, it’s through the modern treaties, as the Member has referred to them as, the land claims and self-government discussions and the ones that are in negotiations that set up the regional leaders process.

Every one of the regions has been a part of that process. It’s been at those regions, those regional leaders, the grand chiefs and the presidents that have said they’re the decision-makers that affect their claims and the people they represent, not the Dene Nation national chief. So we’ve worked with those regional leaders through this process.

In fact, through the Northern Leaders’ Forum, which is a side to the regional leaders table, Mr. Erasmus asked to be a part of that and I took it to the regional leaders. They accepted that he could be a part of that process as an observer, because, again, they held that right to be the decision-makers. So we’re working with the decision-makers.

This agreement-in-principle, clearly with the involvement of those who wanted to be at the table and chose to be at the table helped with the wording in this around those protections, and about the sharing of authorities, and about the resource revenue sharing piece. These are included in this agreement-in-principle that we’re working on and going forward towards negotiations on, because we had involvement in the early days and we’ve left it open to come to the table and be a part of those decisions, be a part of that discussion and help set the future course of the Northwest Territories.

**MR. KRUTKO:** I’ll try to get back to my original question. Will the government consider funding the meeting coming up next week between the Dene Nation and the Dene leadership so that they can basically develop their position, see exactly what their issues are, and format that discussion and make their positions clear to the people of the Northwest Territories and the Government of the Northwest Territories?

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** The groups have been involved from the earliest days, right from 2002 forward up until the protocol work we were doing. All groups were involved in that. We looked at the request from the Dene Nation, reviewed it to see how we could look at doing this work and reaching out, and the decision was to work with the regional approach that we put together at the start of this Assembly and we’re continuing to do that. We have contacted the Dene Nation and informed them our approach will be with the regional and community leaders.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again I’d like to ask the Minister, there’s been a lot of push by the Premier to go community by community. I think before you do that, you’re undermining the Aboriginal leadership by doing that and not recognizing that they are elected officials with just as much authority as we have. I’d like to know if we are undermining the Aboriginal leadership without having that dialogue with them first, before we go into the communities. The same thing applies to ourselves as MLAs and Members of this House. What are we doing to get those Aboriginal leaders, show them some respect, and treat them as real leaders in the Northwest Territories and quit ignoring them?

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** The Member continues to stand up in this House and, in a sense, show disrespect to the process that we have put in place through regional leaders. The Member has at least in his mail copies of the letter and correspondence that we’ve sent to regional leaders to say we are working with them going forward with the regional leaders, so the grand chiefs, the presidents and the community leaders, the chiefs from their communities. We’ve invited them to give us times when they would like to meet and discuss how we proceed forward. So we’ve communicated on that behalf and await responses. In fact, we’ve acted on the first response we had from the Sahtu and the door is open for those who want to come forward and have these discussions on how to move forward.

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

## QUESTION 484-16(5): CROSS-CULTURAL AWARENESS TRAINING PROGRAM

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Human Resources. It has to do with the promise that was made last year that Mr. Miltenberger stated May 18th. I want to ask the Minister when the Cross-Cultural Awareness Training Program will be available to all GNWT employees as was promised last year.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister responsible for Human Resources, Mr. Bob McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately he never communicated that information to me. No, I’m just… We have been working diligently on developing a Cross-Cultural Awareness Training Program for the Government of the Northwest Territories. Our 20/20: Brilliant North Public Service Strategic Plan makes cross-cultural awareness and diversity awareness a priority for this government. We developed a framework agreement that promotes exactly that and we’ll be rolling it out in the new fiscal year, 2011-2012. Thank you.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Minister when the department rolls out this cross-cultural training program, when, I guess, is the time frame in terms of dates as to when he thinks that it will be delivered in the Sahtu region.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** We’ve awarded a couple of contracts so that we can develop a Cross-Cultural Awareness Training Program that can be delivered. We are working with communities and we are also involving Aboriginal governments, those that are willing to participate. We’ve written to all of them and invited them to participate. We also will be tendering and awarding another contract to develop a training curriculum framework for our e-training component of this cultural awareness program. My expectation is it will be early, probably the summer of 2011. Thank you.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Speaker, can the Minister inform me and inform the House if the ground-roots people from the Sahtu region, in terms of their unique cultural way of living, are involved in part of the cross-cultural awareness training the same as the Gwich’in or the Akaitcho and the other diversity cultures in the North here. Is the Sahtu involved?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** As I said, we have written to all of the Aboriginal governments inviting them to participate in the development of the cross-cultural awareness training. I would have to check to see if the Sahtu government has responded in the affirmative. But we are also developing a guide that would outline the training on the land or experienced-based training that’s available out there, and my expectation is that our Cross-Cultural Awareness Program that will be developed will involve people in the regions and elders and so on. Thank you.

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

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. From experience, sometimes we find that some people are very well-expertised in putting together training programs, but they still don’t get it in terms of them facilitating or delivering a cross-cultural or any type of training program. How will the people in the Sahtu be in the forefront of actually teaching the program or putting the program together in terms of this cultural training that would be greatly received, hopefully, by the GNWT employees?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** The contract has been awarded and we’ll address those issues. Our expectation is that all new employees that are new to the North, new to the government, will undergo the cross-cultural awareness and diversity-awareness training. Thank you.

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

## QUESTION 485-16(5): UTILIZING TRAINING AND APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. In my Member’s statement I spoke of apprenticeships in the small communities and how this government should try to take advantage of the Apprenticeship Program and to try to get some deferred maintenance requirements done. I mentioned that across NWT and GNWT buildings, there is a deferred maintenance backlog of over $300 million.

I want to ask the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment: does the Minister know what the deferred maintenance requirements for each community are? Thank you.

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

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Those are the areas that we need to explore with each department. Each department has their own mandate. They have their own goals and objectives to deal with the communities, whether it comes to apprenticeship or training on the job at the community level and also employment. So we need to gather that information. I can definitely share that with the Member as well. Mahsi.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Mr. Speaker, I’m trying to get the appropriate department, I guess, to start looking at employment rates. It’s very difficult to kind of place this issue, like the Minister responded, on one department. I’m also trying to find some sort of champion, I guess, from Cabinet to be able to lead something like this. Again, I want to ask the Minister if he knows, if the Minister or the department knows what industry needs for the demand of trades personnel are in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mr. Speaker, we do have data. We’ve conducted a survey in the past and we also have an MOU with the mining industry and they’ve identified how many apprentices will be required, how many positions will be required, training programs and the local employment. Just recently the Rio Tinto Diavik, they’ve hired on I believe it’s nine additional apprentices. That’s above and beyond what they’ve committed to. So kudos goes to the team. But others, the corporations and the bands have identified what’s going to be required in the next five to 10 years down the road. We do have the information on that and we are working with that information as we develop a plan to move forward on identifying budget, within the budget, to allocate that funding specifically to the communities such as Fort Res and Lutselk'e in the Member’s riding and other communities as well. Mahsi.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** That’s good news, Mr. Speaker. It sounds like there’s been some activity with the industry. Now, in as far as the department themselves go, the department of Housing, Public Works, MACA, ITI, and their needs for work to be done, just any sort of work that has to be done, most of that type of work, when there’s contracts and so on, there’s a requirement for trades personnel to be on-site. I’m wondering if the Minister has discussed any sort of plan with departments such as Housing, Public Works, MACA and ITI in as far as the need for trades labour goes for their work. Thank you.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mr. Speaker, there’s always an ongoing discussion interdepartmentally, whether it be MACA, PWS, Housing, and within our Education department and other departments, as well, that may require whether it be apprentices or training on the job, and we do what we can as the department to assist in those areas because we do have the funding allocated under apprenticeship and an on-the-job training as well. Mr. Speaker, I’ll continue to work with those departments and strengthen the working relationships that we have and identifying those key areas of interest that are out there in the Northwest Territories and in the communities that we need to push for. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Your final supplementary, Mr. Beaulieu.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, that’s positive. I think that’s in the right direction. There seems to be some good planning, I guess, going on for future needs and I’m talking about trades, although I’m ultimately trying to get some apprenticeships. Will the Minister commit to developing an overall plan for trades and apprenticeships, for both, to address the total needs of all trades requirements in the NWT including government and private industry? Thank you.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** That definitely is part of the plan within Education, Culture and Employment. We need to have short-term and long-term plans as well. Just identifying some of the key areas in the Member’s riding, we’re happy to share that information on the 18 journeypersons in Fort Res mostly in the heavy equipment operators, three journeypersons in Lutselk'e, carpentry, heavy-duty mechanic and housing maintenance, and also two registered apprentices in Fort Res. Those are just, I think, a start for us and we need to identify those key areas working with the departments and also the corporation, the band council at the community level and also the community government. We need to identify what is required at the community level and we are more than willing to work with the communities in developing those key areas as well. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

## QUESTION 486-16(5): CENTRE FOR NORTHERN FAMILIES

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services and focused on the Centre for Northern Families which has obviously, according to the news, found itself in a fairly desperate financial situation. Mr. Speaker, the Centre for Northern Families obviously plays a big role in our city here and in society in general across the Territories in helping women who find themselves in dire situations, women and their children. I am wondering, Mr. Speaker, beyond the stabilization supports and modest funds that are provided to NGOs delivering critical services, what progress has the Minister made in helping to get the centre squarely back on their feet. Mahsi.

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

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Member knows, the Department of Health has been working with Education, Culture and Employment to review the situation and come up with the options. I do not have the most recent information. I have asked the staff to look into that and I will get back to the Member. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I am certainly aware that the department has been working with them, but this work hasn’t resulted in any progress. That is a huge disappointment. I have a specific question.

The Minister committed to providing a secondment from GNWT some years ago now, I believe, to actually assist this important NGO to get back on their feet. Has this been done? If not, when will it be done? Mahsi.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Mr. Speaker, that was one of the options that I was discussing with Education, Culture and Employment. It should be noted here that ECE and Health are a joint funder and supporter of this program. I know that the staff had been working with the organization. I will update the Member. I have asked for the information, I just don’t have it in front of me. Thank you.

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

**MR. BROMLEY:** Mr. Speaker, thanks to the Minister’s commitment there. I look forward to that information, but I can say that it hasn’t been done yet. That is again a huge frustration and so much for interdepartmental efficiencies that supposedly have been worked on. I am wondering, Mr. Speaker, given that, again, the role this NGO plays is critical and we continue to have people go missing when they are released from the hospital, the Centre for Northern Families ends up being the last stop of last resort. It is really critical to get this result. This has been going on for years now. Will the Minister commit to getting that resolved before the end of this term? Mahsi.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Mr. Speaker, we do have an agreement here that that organization has an important function to deliver and it is an important part of the spectrum of services that we provide for the homeless and those who need our support in the community, not just for Yellowknife but for many people that come to Yellowknife. But the Member is also aware that we have had long-term structural issues with the financial situation of that organization. We have been working, the department and ECE. I just do not have the most recent update, but I will commit, once again, to follow up on that and see what our options are. Thank you.

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

## QUESTION 487-16(5): FAMILY VIOLENCE ACTION PLAN

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I talked a bit about family violence and particularly violence against women and girls in my statement. I would like to follow up with some questions to the Minister of Health and Social Services about the Family Violence Action Plan. The first phase of the Family Violence Action Plan is done. We are now into phase two. I would like to ask the Minister some questions on the progress of this plan. One of the goals and a component of a goal is to increase funding to two shelters with their own buildings to compensate for O and M costs that are not experienced by other shelters. The deadline for that or the timeline on that was October 2008. I would like to ask the Minister whether or not that evaluation has been done and, as a result, whether the increased funding has actually occurred. Thank you.

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

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact, it was. The increase in funding did happen. The increase was as a result of the recommendation from the action plan. The increase was provided under the Shelter Stabilization Enhancement Funds.

I have sat with the operators of shelters in Hay River and other communities. They have thanked us and the government for enhancing the funding. It was also part of the action plan that recognized that there are only five shelters in the Territories and that there are a lot of communities where we needed to support families and victims of family violence and it was for that reason that in 2010-11 five non-shelter region projects were funded, one in Fort Providence and then Fort Liard, Fort Simpson, Norman Wells and Behchoko. The program included prevention and outreach educational workshops, the implementation of community-based awareness campaigns and the hiring of a community services coordinator to assist victims. Mr. Speaker, yes, we are moving under that plan. Thank you.

**MS. BISARO:** Mr. Speaker, thanks to the Minister for that summary. I appreciate that the department is providing funds and that they are doing what they can to develop shelter services in other communities beyond where they actually have bricks and mortar. It is something that we absolutely have to do. If it is a priority for this department to make sure that shelters are running and are actually operational, I have to go to Mr. Bromley’s comments about the Centre for Northern Families. This centre is struggling. If it is a priority for this government to provide shelters and make sure they work, why is it the Minister can’t seem to get the Centre for Northern Families on a stable financial footing? Thank you.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that we are talking about... While lots of clients of the Centre for Northern Families, have to do with victims of family violence, the Centre for Northern Families is funded in a different way and they serve also different clientele.

I can assure the Member that, under the action plan, a number of things have been accomplished. We have conducted a territorial attitude survey on violence. A territorial family violence consultation was held under this action plan. We have also developed a training program called Supporting Northern Women, a Northwest Territories shelter worker training program which has been delivered in all shelters.

The existing family violence shelters outside of Yellowknife have been better funded and stabilized, and services have been enhanced in communities where there are no shelters. Protocol development has happened in Yellowknife and Sahtu. We have funded YWCA on Child Recovery Program for children who witness abuse. We also have developed a video on non-violence, a strength-based community inquiry, and a lot more work has been done to research and develop a program for men who use violence.

Also, I would like to advise the Member that evaluation of the first five years of the Protection Against Family Violence Act will be completed by March. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will try to be short. Maybe I should sit down. No.

I would like to thank the Minister for that summary of all the wonderful things that we are doing, but it did not go to my question. If it is a priority for this government to make sure that shelters are funded, then why is the Minister not making sure that the Centre for Northern Families is financially sustainable? They are funded differently and that is the problem.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, the Centre for Northern Families has a unique challenge that the Department of ECE and I have been working on. We are committed to working with the organization and to support the organization to the extent possible. Thank you.

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

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My last question has to do with a part of the action plan which talks about a community consultation in Inuvik to develop a strategy for the implementation of changes that are required, and the timeline on that was February 2009. Can I ask if that is done?

**HON. SANDY LEE:** I am aware that a lot of work has been done and is being done on that, so I will follow up to be able to confirm that to her, seeing as it’s going back to 2009.

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

## QUESTION 488-16(5): SUPPORT FOR TRADITIONAL DENE HAND GAMES

**MR. MENICOCHE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to follow up on my Member’s statement where I mentioned that the community of Wrigley is travelling for hand games and supporting an important cultural aspect of our Dene heritage. I’d like to ask the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment what kind of support is out there in his department that could support the initiatives such as this.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Within the traditional and cultural activities, and pertaining to that is also language, we provide over $12 million specifically in those areas. The funding is allocated to the school boards, as well, and at the community level to deal with the cultural preservation and promotion of the culture. The money is available in that respect. It is a group that deals with the funding as well.

When it comes to hand games tournaments that are happening in almost every region, there have been a lot of requests that have come to our attention. We always refer them to the community level, the school boards or cultural agencies that we work with.

**MR. MENICOCHE:** It has been the case where they have been turned down with their requests and they have had to fundraise on their own. Especially for a small community that has little or no income, it’s very hard to fundraise. They did manage to support their culture and I’d like to ask the Minister if we can design some type of programming or be flexible with our program to include hand games cultural activities just to get people travelling around.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** This could be part of the discussion. We haven’t heard much in the regions. The forum on Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative, that is part of the cultural preservation, as well, and deals with the language. This could be part of the discussion that we will have with the group. As we move forward where we could, identifying within the $12 million I’ve already identified, maybe we could work with that. I need to get some feedback from the language expertise at the community level that we deal with at the forum.

**MR. MENICOCHE:** Sounds like some hoolay for the specific initiative. I’d like to ask the Minister if he can look in his department at the different types of programs to see what can fit to support this type of initiative. It’s very important to the community of Wrigley, very important to all our communities in the North, and interactions amongst the different communities is something that we should support as a government.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** One thing that we can possibly look at through the Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative is the training aspect where we’ve had some requests in the past for training. We’ve provided in-kind contributions. This is an area we could possibly look at. But when we talk about the huge regional hand games tournament, it’s very difficult to put money towards that where it’s much broader. We want to focus on the youth that are getting involved in the hand games demonstration, hand games training. That’s an area we could probably explore.

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

**MR. MENICOCHE:** I’m certainly glad that the Minister is looking to the youth aspect of it. I think that’s a huge component of what’s happening in Wrigley.

Can I also ask the Minister if he can work with the Department of ITI? I know that we sponsor hand games at the Olympics and national events. Just an extension of this and that’s what the communities want. If we’re funding it anyways, can we bring it home? Can we bring it to the small communities?

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Whether it be the tournaments, the Vancouver demonstrations -- and we’ve sponsored those participants to be at the function to demonstrate what the hand games are all about so we can show the world -- those are areas we can sponsor through the GNWT as a whole that we’ve done.

With respect to the Dene hand games in various regions, in the past those organizations have been very successful conducting those events with or without the help of organizations or sponsors. Like the Member has stated, they have raised money. This is an area especially with the youth that I like to focus on those areas.

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

## QUESTION 489-16(5): EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member’s statement I talked about early childhood education. UNESCO says early childhood education is defined by the years of birth to eight years old. They believe that it makes a remarkable difference on the brain development of young people if early education is offered early in the beginning of school years, before the traditional time of grades 1 to 4.

I would like to ask the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment what his government and department can do to help support schools that wish to offer junior education programs.

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

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. We do currently provide funding to the school boards but it is at their discretion if they want to provide pre-kindergarten throughout the summers as the Member has alluded to. Last year this was successful. It was their own initiative. It wasn’t our department saying they should have that. We provide funding for that, but this could be also part of the Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative because it covers all areas of the Northwest Territories, the students, and junior kindergarten has been an option that’s been identified through that venue. There is ongoing discussion. We still have two more regions to attend. I’m sure this will be part of the discussion as we move forward.

**MR. HAWKINS:** The problem with the Aboriginal Student Achievement Program, although it’s a fantastic program, it doesn’t fit all the students. I’m talking about programming that school boards can offer for all students.

We have schools that are presently taking on this role of junior kindergarten and I think it’s a significant advancement of the education of a young person and giving them the right start. Would the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment investigate the opportunities on a proposal basis trying some pilot projects of funding junior kindergarten?

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Again the Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiatives focus is on the sector of what’s happening within the education system. I’d like to find out the results of that discussion at the forum. That gave us guidance as we explore different areas. Whether it be junior kindergarten that the Member is referring to within the schools in the Northwest Territories during the summer as an option, those are the areas that we will likely explore once we get the Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiatives finalized and then recommendations will come out. It does reflect overall on the department as well.

**MR. HAWKINS:** The Minister keeps pointing at the Aboriginal Student Initiative but it doesn’t fund non-Aboriginal students. I’m referring to junior kindergarten for all students. I see them as all students that we should give a good chance to at the beginning of their early education years. Does the Minister, in his leadership of the Department of ECE, see a way that all students could be funded under this initiative, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal?

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** All students are funded. We provide funding to all the school boards, and at their discretion they can provide various programs as they have done in the past, like last year for example. So we do provide funding for all students.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That’s not quite correct because the Education Act says that students aren’t funded unless they’re age five by the end of the school year. They are not counted under funding per basis. The issue is drawing in early children who can use the literacy and numeracy development over the long haul on those early years. Would the Minister look at and consider the position and proposal that I’m putting forward, which is redefining the act or redefining the mandate of the department that can provide junior kindergarten by accepting those students as students and funding them?

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** This is, as I stated, the Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative is a great strategy that’s out there and is getting a lot of positive feedback from the community members. Again, it’s for the whole Northwest Territories. It will reflect on how we deliver programs in the Northwest Territories on the education factor, whether it be junior kindergarten or other areas. It will give us some guidance within our department to move forward on various initiatives.

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

## QUESTION 490-16(5): MAXIMIZING NORTHERN EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week and earlier this week there’s been a lot of talk in the House about northern students, particularly in the areas of nursing, teaching and social work, and the grad placement programs that are in place. I believe these programs are funded out of a fund called Maximizing Northern Employment which is part of Human Resources. I’m wondering if the Minister can confirm whether that funding is going to continue to exist in 2011-2012 and where that funding comes from. Is it federal or GNWT funding? Are there any plans to cancel the program in the future or is it fairly secure at this point?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. The honourable Minister responsible for Human Resources, Mr. Bob McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Maximizing Northern Employment program still exists, I’m happy to say, and I expect it will continue for some time. We’ve had this program for quite a few years. It’s gone through a few iterations but it’s probably one of the most successful programs that we have. It provides students and graduates with work experiences within the government. We have three principal programs within the Maximizing Northern Employment program: the Graduate Internship Program; the Graduate Placement Program, which is focused primarily on teachers, nurses, and social workers; and of course the Summer Student Program. My expectation is that we’ve been very successful so it’s going to continue for some time.

**MR. ABERNETHY:** To the Minister, thank you so much for that response. I think it’s important that people know that this program is going to continue to exist. I know there are a lot of people who are accessing this program who are very pleased with the supports they’re getting. Could the Minister tell me how much the program is and how it’s administered within the Department of HR?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Human Resources administers this program and some of the programs are funded by Education and Health and Social Services. We work very closely with those programs. In total we spend $1.85 million for the Maximizing Northern Employment program. Just to give you some of the details of what makes up the Maximizing Northern Employment: the Graduate Internship Program has $1.3 million; the Graduate Placement Program for teachers, $125,000; Graduate Placement Program for nurses, $640,000; Graduate Placement Program for social workers, $200,000; the Summer Student Program Progressive Experience Program for non-health students is $200,000. The total is $1.8 million, of which the Department of Health contributes $1.04 million.

In addition to that we spend $594,000 to support the Graduate Placement Program and $110,000 to promote the program, and approximately $2.6 million to place the graduates and students. Thank you.

**MR. ABERNETHY:**  It’s a great program and thanks for that information. The last question I have relates to some questions that were asked earlier this week and last week. A lot of this program depends on some promises that were made by a previous Premier, that all northern graduates in teaching, social work and nursing would be guaranteed an offer of employment. Is this government still committed to that promise and can the northern graduates in nursing, social work and teaching continue to expect that they’ll have some support to obtain employment in the Northwest Territories upon their graduation? Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** For both nurses and teachers, this government guarantees an offer of employment to all northern graduates. I should also indicate that if a job offer has been made and it has not been accepted, then we consider the guarantee as being fulfilled. Thank you.

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

## QUESTION 491-16(5): MITIGATION PLAN FOR HEALTH AUTHORITY DEFICITS

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the years I’ve been here I’ve witnessed this government, through one-time funding and supplementary appropriation, handing over $38 million to deal with the deficits at the health authorities around the Northwest Territories, Mr. Speaker. Again, I think that’s a very disturbing way to manage our health care system here in the Northwest Territories. I’d like to begin by asking the Minister of Health and Social Services what is the plan going forward to try to mitigate the deficits at our health authorities. Thank you.

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

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We should first of all be clear that when we make a one-time infusion of cash, it’s very program specific. For example, I think medical travel is one that receives the most one-time funding due to the fact that that program goes over budget by demand.

Mr. Speaker, we are, as a system, working now with the understanding that deficits in our health authorities are not deficits to those health authorities but it’s a system-wide deficit. Many authorities right now are experiencing a deficit and we want to address that by changing the system and changing the way we manage our health care system as a system.

I can tell you that there are a number of major factors that we have determined to contribute to the system deficit: physician programs, medical travel, unfunded benefits, pension buy-backs, overtime and relief for essential services, and Canadian Blood Services, which has gone through the roof over the last number of years.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to note that we are leading a number of initiatives and reviews to address this as a system. We are looking at a business process redesign, we are undertaking a medical travel review, we are also doing a physician review, health services administration review and extended health benefits review. Mr. Speaker, we believe that this outcome of this work underway will inform us and give us a set of decisions that we would have to make. Thank you.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Mr. Speaker, the Minister, the factors that she talks about today are factors that have been around since the day I walked through these doors in 2003. I mentioned, in my Member’s statement, Minister Miltenberger back in 2003 saying the board would be re-established at Stanton. There’s no board there today. This is eight years later. Mr. Speaker, in the Minister’s response she also didn’t mention whether or not the government is going to look at a new governance model for how we manage health care here in the Northwest Territories and the system-wide governance. Can the Minister answer that question? Thank you.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Yes, governance model review is underway, and I’ve indicated that in Committee of the Whole. It may be that we would have to decide on whether we should have one authority or not, but that’s something that we have to have more discussions on and we have to work with the authorities and do consultation with the community-at-large.

We should be mindful of the fact that that is not necessarily a silver bullet. We are aware of other jurisdictions where they have collapsed the boards and done all kinds of things in that regard without necessarily saving, I think.

I know the Member keeps saying that this has been going on for 10 years, but I have to tell you that this is the first time where myself, as the Minister, and the department and the management is looking at this as a system-wide challenge that we have to address in a systematic way. We have consent and input from our chairs across the boards who are looking at it in the right direction. We have all the medical directors of all the authorities working as a group to come with the solutions, because when you’re talking about reforming and changing the way the physicians deliver their services in a system and in an effective and efficient way, we need to have the doctors on board. And I can tell you that that’s the first time that we have them on board.

There are lots of players at stake here in managing the health care. This is a very complex issue. Mr. Speaker, I disagree with the Member that we’re talking about the same old issue in the same way. We’re making lots of progress in many different ways. Thank you.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Mr. Speaker, the Minister is right; it might not be a silver bullet, but we have 42,000 people here in this Territory and we really have to ask ourselves whether we need eight authorities in the Northwest Territories to deliver health services to 42,000. Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Minister, now she tends to downplay the issue with the deficits. Mr. Speaker, the information I have has an accumulated deficit, and she wants to call it system-wide. It’s system-wide of close to $19 million come March 31st of this year. Mr. Speaker, going to March 31st of 2012, that system-wide deficit is expected to grow to close to $36 million. That’s an alarming figure. It’s something the Minister has to address immediately. I’d like to ask her how she’s going to do that. Thank you.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** Surely, I don’t believe at any time, as the Minister of Health, have I ever downplayed the deficit situation in our health care system. That’s what occupies my mind as the Minister and my fellow Members on Cabinet. This is something that’s in the forefront of all Health Ministers in all jurisdictions. The entire country and the world is under pressure to address our health care funding needs.

Mr. Speaker, I could tell you that in ’09 and ’10 our system deficit was $14.685 million. We project this year that the system deficit will be reduced by about $4 million to $5 million. That’s as a result of just relentless and just yeoman’s work that our managers at Stanton, and medical directors, and Beau-Del, and the chairs are working to see how we make system-wide change. The easiest thing for us, not easy but the short-sighted way would be to reduce services or just do an across-the-board 10 percent reduction or something. That’s not acceptable. We are changing the system and we are seeing results, and our forecast for this year is much less. I think people would agree that they have not seen any lessening of services, which is what they expect us to do. They expect us to change the system for the better, without affecting their services. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. Your final supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess, being a Member of the Legislature, I’m entitled to an opinion, and in my opinion the Minister has done nothing to address the deficits at our health authorities across the Northwest Territories and if we go by the numbers that have been provided, we’re looking at a $36 million system-wide deficit come this time next year. The question I had to the Minister was what are we going to do about it. I’d like to ask the Minister, the final question that I have, Mr. Speaker, is in the transition into the next government -- we’ve got six and a half months here -- is governance of the health authorities and how we manage health care here in the Northwest Territories going to be front and centre on the transition plan to the next government? Thank you.

**HON. SANDY LEE:** There’s one thing that hasn’t changed, which is that for the last 10 years, well, I guess, not 10 years, the last three years the Member asked me about problems with deficits and he always says the same thing, that nothing is changing, when a lot of things are changing. Mr. Speaker, I just want to say that, more specifically, the system deficit that we had last year was $14.685 million but we are expecting about $11 million system deficit for this year. That is a huge progress. I think credit should be given where credit is due, because our management is working very hard to make long-term changes and Foundation for Change action plan is one of them.

Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in Committee of the Whole when the Health budget was before the committee, we are moving the governance model, and one board for the entire system could very well be an option that we would have to discuss as a transition. Thank you.

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

## QUESTION 492-16(5): EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to go back to questions for the Minister of Education regarding early education opportunities. I am concerned that the Minister is missing my point. He does talk about the Aboriginal student achievement program that is focused in on helping Aboriginal youth. I want to make sure that it is crystal clear, I absolutely support that program and I think that is a great beginning for lifelong learning. Mr. Speaker, my concern falls on sort of the broader policy of how we help students at the age of four in the early education program, the junior kindergarten. Mr. Speaker, what does the Minister of ECE suggest for an option for that second group or half of the population that is unfunded? Thank you.

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

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I am glad the Member is supporting this very important Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative. This is a very important piece of work that is before us as a territorial government and also my Department of Education, Culture and Employment. What I am referencing is the information that is being gathered from across the Northwest Territories will guide us as we move forward in the next step. What the Member is referring to is part of the process, the discussion that is ongoing. We have heard on junior kindergarten at that level, as well, in the forums. Mr. Speaker, this is a guiding principle that will lead us to a successful initiative. I am looking forward to that. This particular discussion that we are having here today will be part of that discussion as well. Mahsi.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Mr. Speaker, I don’t have to educate the Minister on the facts that kindergarten wasn’t once funded and then it was only funded half time, and as we all know now, it is funded full time, Mr. Speaker, thanks to past Education Ministers.

Mr. Speaker, is it the intent of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment to work towards supporting junior kindergarten? Thank you.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mr. Speaker, I am not sure how I can get around this. I did commit in the House that this is part of the process of the new initiatives that are coming up. I do support the students in the education system 100 percent. Definitely, again, I have to reiterate that Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative strategy will guide us through that venue. Mr. Speaker, we will do what we can because this is the voice of the Northwest Territories. It would have handprints of the people of the Northwest Territories. It is not coming down from the top down as the face-to-face meeting and getting their direction, feedback and suggestions. That is the way we should be working. Mahsi.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Mr. Speaker, I am glad to hear the Minister say 100 percent he supports those students, so I guess it would be a very clear answer if I asked a question. Does that mean the department is going to work towards funding these students? Thank you.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mr. Speaker, again, we support our students across the Northwest Territories through the education boards that we fund on an annual basis. It has been very successful to date. Again, it is at their discretion to allocate funding, if they wish to, on pre-kindergarten, whether it be during kindergarten in various areas that they want to pursue. They have been successful to date. I must commend them on that. They continue to pursue those initiatives. We support them, as well, because we provide funding. We have to work with that. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister is correct that school boards can divert funding to specific education programs that they feel that obviously fall under the Education Act or a good stewardship of the money, et cetera, under their board guidance, but, Mr. Speaker, would the Minister be prepared to work towards developing a pilot program that can help develop or foster these junior kindergarten programs to ensure that early education is enshrined in our childhood development very early on and demonstrates the commitment of the government to ensuring kids have a great start in education? Thank you.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mr. Speaker, again, that process is before us. I will be informing Members of the update on that. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Time for oral questions has expired. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to opening address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

# Motions

## MOTION 35-16(5): SUCCESSOR STRATEGY FOR THE ABORIGINAL SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM, CARRIED

**MR. ABERNETHY:** WHEREAS the Government of Canada created the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnerships (ASEP) program in 2003 to increase Aboriginal participation in the Canadian workforce;

AND WHEREAS the ASEP program has been a major success in the Northwest Territories, the Yukon and Nunavut in moving Aboriginal Northerners from social assistance, unemployment and underemployment to full-time, well-paying jobs;

AND WHEREAS the Mine Training Society, Building Inuvialuit Potential Society and the Dehcho First Nations have used $21.5 million in contributions from the ASEP program to assess, train and facilitate employment for Aboriginal Northerners;

AND WHEREAS the partners of these three organizations represent industry and Aboriginal governments;

AND WHEREAS the Government of the Northwest Territories participates, financially supports and contributes to the good works undertaken by these three organizations;

AND WHEREAS the partners of the Mine Training and Building Inuvialuit Potential societies and the Dehcho First Nations have invested an additional $24.3 million of their own resources to match the investment under the ASEP program;

AND WHEREAS the work of these three organizations has resulted in over 900 Aboriginal Northerners obtaining full-time northern employment in the mining, transportation, construction and petroleum exploration sectors;

AND WHEREAS the ASEP program has had a significant positive impact on the economic development of the Northwest Territories;

AND WHEREAS the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnerships program is to come to an end on March 31, 2012, with no commitment for a replacement program;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Monfwi, that the 16th Legislative Assembly strongly urges the Government of Canada to announce the successor strategy to the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnerships program immediately, to ensure that the partners can continue to train Aboriginal Northerners for employment in the mining, transportation, construction and petroleum exploration sectors.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to raise this motion strongly urging the Government of Canada to develop and announce a successful strategy for Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnership program, also known as ASEP. This will ensure that local partners like the Mine Training Society, Building Inuvialuit Potential Society and the Dehcho First Nations can continue to train Aboriginal Northerners for employment in the mine, transportation and construction and petroleum exploration sectors.

The federal government created ASEP in 2003 to meet a very real need specifically to increase Aboriginal participation in the Canadian workforce. When initially established, ASEP had a five-year program life. Under existing Treasury Board rules, the program can only be extended once, and up to five years. Recognizing the value of this program, the federal government did extend it to its maximum of 10 years. Unfortunately, as indicated under their own rules, they cannot extend it again as it is currently structured. Unless the federal government develops and implements a successor strategy, the value added to our economy through ASEP will be gone on March 31st, 2012. By way of this motion, the 16th Legislative Assembly is encouraging the federal government to announce and fund its successor strategy for this highly effective and important program.

Mr. Speaker, precedents already exist. For example, the Aboriginal Human Resource Development Program offered by the federal government was reworked and announced as the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy. So it’s been done in the past. I’d like to see ASEP, one of the Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, or also HRSDC’s most successful programs be worked under a comprehensive successor strategy similar to the program that I just mentioned.

Mr. Speaker, why is ASEP important to the Northwest Territories? Mr. Speaker, the federal government, through HRSDC, has invested approximately $22 million into the Northwest Territories since 2004. These dollars are matched by industry, Aboriginal governments and the Government of the Northwest Territories, through the departments of Education, Culture and Employment as well as the Department of Transportation, for a total investment in the Northwest Territories of approximately $24 million. Of the 36 ASEP partners across Canada, three of them, the Mine Training Society, Building Inuvialuit Potential Society and the Dehcho First Nations, are located here in the Northwest Territories and they’re dedicated to northern works.

ASEP operates on four principles. The first principle is that ASEP is a practical program that’s getting tangible results. Mr. Speaker, in the Northwest Territories, 900 Aboriginal Northerners have obtained full-time northern employment in the mining, transportation, construction and petroleum exploration sectors. These are tangible results in the Northwest Territories. We need these partners to continue doing their important work in the best interests of all residents of the Northwest Territories.

The second principle is that ASEPs are generating revenue for the federal economy. Mr. Speaker, more than 6,600 Aboriginal people have found long-term sustainable employment as a result of this program. By increasing the levels of Aboriginal education, workforce participation in parity with non-Aboriginal Canadians, Canadians’ gross domestic product could increase by up to $401 billion by 2026. In addition, the net savings on social assistance, justice and housing could be $95 billion in Canada over the next 20 years. This will clearly generate revenue for the federal economy. This is true for the Northwest Territories as well. Local employees working in local industry allow dollars to circulate within our economy rather than heading directly to our southern jurisdictions. The longer the dollars circulate within the Northwest Territories, the greater the positive spinoffs are here at home.

The third principle, Mr. Speaker, ASEPs are building capacity and leaving legacies. Partnership building underpins the ASEP model, Mr. Speaker. Within the Northwest Territories, ASEP partners have developed relationships and strong partnerships for industries located throughout out Territory. This has helped facilitate a win-win for industry and Aboriginal communities throughout the Northwest Territories, helping to fill labour and skill shortages, increase knowledge, skills and abilities with communities, and address longstanding examples of disparity and Aboriginal student outcomes.

Mr. Speaker, ASEP has, and will leave, a legacy in the Northwest Territories. ASEPs are filling labour shortages with Canadian talent. Mr. Speaker, ASEPs help Canadian industries meet business needs. This is clearly evident here in the Northwest Territories as well. We can see it in our communities. Increasing education and education-specific employment in First Nations communities will result in greater productivity in the Northwest Territories. This will lead to increased tax revenues, reduce government expenditures for programs aimed at improving standards of living, providing adequate health care and preventing crime.

Mr. Speaker, ASEP is also in line with the 16th Legislative Assembly’s vision of strong individuals, families and communities sharing the benefits and responsibility for a unified environmentally sustainable and prosperous Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, ASEP is good for Canada. ASEP is also good for the Northwest Territories. It must continue. I hope that Ottawa is listening to us today and that between now and March 31, 2012, they develop and announce a successor strategy for the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Program to ensure that northern organizations like the Mine Training Society, like Building Inuvialuit Potential Society and like the Dehcho First Nations and their industry partners throughout the Northwest Territories and Canada can continue to train Aboriginal Northerners for employment in the mining, transportation, construction and the petroleum exploration sectors. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. In November 2010 I went to Ottawa to meet with Minister Finley to talk about the federal government’s plan to continue the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Program. At that time, Mr. Speaker, she did not make any commitments.

Minister Finley explained that the federal government was focussing on the implementation of the federal framework for Aboriginal and economic development. Mr. Speaker, this framework includes the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy. The focus is on demand-driven skills development and fostering partnerships with private sectors.

There are seven assets, organizations or agreements with Aboriginal governments in the Northwest Territories. The Aboriginal Skills and Partnership Fund, this funding is intended to complement asset funding to support specific projects. The establishment of a new regional economic development agency for the North, CanNor. Both the Mine Training Society and the federal government are also undertaking respective evaluations of the ASEP funding. It will be important to see the results of these evaluations to determine the actual impact of ASEP funding in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, officials from the Department of Education, Culture and Employment have contacted the Government of Nunavut and also Yukon. To date, the other territorial governments have not been approached by their respective ASEP partners, unless they did just recently, to lobby the federal government for their successor model and have not taken any initiatives related to continued ASEP funding. However, Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to developing Aboriginal people, improving their partnership in the labour market.

In addition to being a partner in ASEP agreements, ECE invests in several programs and initiatives aimed to improve Aboriginal participation in the workforce, including Aurora College, ALBE, trades, labour market training, certificate, diploma and also degree programs, apprenticeship and occupational certification and also labour market programming. We are also working with the three diamond mines and ITI on an MOU for northern workforce initiatives. The MOU working group is currently looking at strategic options for mine training in the Northwest Territories. The department also works with labour market stakeholders, including industries and asset partners through regional training committees.

Mr. Speaker, we will continue to work with labour market partners in the Northwest Territories and our colleagues in Yukon and Nunavut to ensure Northerners have access to training opportunities that lead to employment.

Mr. Speaker, I support the motion to call on the Government of Canada to announce a successor program to ensure that the NWT organizations working in partnerships and involved in training can carry on the great work that has been taking place in the Northwest Territories. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. To the motion. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

**MR. MENICOCHE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise saying I will be supporting this motion today.

When there is uncertainty, nobody is very comfortable, especially when it comes to the Mine Training Society and their efforts to move forward. There are many, many success stories out there. I have a niece, Ms. Tyra Moses, who is an outstanding story. She has done very well out there and we’ve got many, many other success stories out there in the North. We must continue that. We must exert every effort to support our young people, people that want to get into mines and want to get into training.

Once again, I commend the Mine Training Society. I believe that we do have to send a message, a united voice, to Ottawa, that March 31st is around the corner and that we need some certainty. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. To the motion. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am totally in support of this motion. I haven’t had many dealings with the Mine Training Society and I haven’t had dealings with any of the other organizations receiving ASEP funding, but the dealings that I have had with the Mine Training Society have been very positive. My experiences have shown that they are a highly successful organization and, as has been mentioned, they’ve used the federal dollars they have received to leverage matching funding for their partners over the years.

The partners have matched $16.5 million or so with $18.7 million since the inception of the program in September 2004. There are eight partners and I’d just like to mention them because I think they are contributors to the success of the program: Tlicho Government, Lutselk’e Dene First Nation, North Slave Metis Alliance, Yellowknives Dene First Nation, BHP Billiton, De Beers Canada – Snap Lake, Rio Tinto – Diavik Diamond Mines, and GNWT Education, Culture and Employment.

The Mine Training Society as well as leveraging funding has adapted their programs and their training over the years to adjust to the needs of our economy and a changing work environment. As was mentioned I think by Mr. Abernethy, they have contributed hugely to providing skilled labour to the diamond mines that are looking for that skilled labour. They have provided employment after training for almost 600 Aboriginal Northerners and that doesn’t include the other organizations using ASEP. Right now the Mine Training Society is experiencing a huge interest in the Underground Miner Training Program. I think they’re probably going to have intakes for quite some time to come, in order to take advantage of all the interest that’s out there.

I believe that we absolutely need to get an extension to this ASEP federal funding. I know that the same program can’t be extended but a replacement program can be devised and can be put in place, and this government must do everything that it can to ensure that funding for NWT organizations is put in place.

It’s been mentioned that it sunsets in March of 2012. That gives us about a year. I have to urge our government, especially ECE, and I’m very glad that Minister Lafferty is in support of this motion, but we have to begin to lobby and negotiate with the federal government to get the ASEP program re-profiled and brought back with a new name.

This funding helps our residents to be successful and contributing members of our society and it provides lasting benefits to our communities. It also helps our economy, and that’s been well stated by Mr. Abernethy. We cannot afford to let this program sunset without a replacement. I think it will have extremely negative effects on all of us.

I urge all Members to stand in support of this motion. I certainly will be.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. To the motion. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

**MS. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don’t think I need to repeat all the comments I’ve heard today but I will say that this program is certainly the most successful Human Resources and Skills Development Canada program that I’m aware of.

I want to mention, though, that I did send a letter on the 4th of February to Minister Finley highlighting some of the points we’ve heard today repeatedly and the amazing amount of evidence provided in support of this program. I urge all Members to send such a letter, perhaps accompanying a copy of this debate and the motion, and I want to again say that I will be supporting it. I don’t think I need to urge Members to support this motion.

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

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would be supporting this motion and I would ask that the Minister takes a strong message and this government takes a strong message to Ottawa in terms of supporting the northern people, especially in the areas of construction, mining, industry, tourism, hydro development that the North here is reaping with the wealth of resources. We need to invest strongly into our northern workforce.

This motion brings our people together from the North and the government needs to hear that on this issue we’re upfront and we’re united. We’ve seen from the Minister of Industry in terms of the imported workers that we’re getting from the South to work here in the Northwest Territories. Certainly people in the North want the jobs and the training and this is one example where things are going well. We’re not too sure where Ottawa is sitting in terms of continuing its funding.

All people in the Northwest Territories will benefit from this program. For example, in my region there is a mining company just at the border of the Northwest Territories and Yukon with the intentions of putting that mine into production. They’re going to invest close to a billion dollars. This is Selwyn Resources. We need people in the Northwest Territories to work there. This would be a benefit to the people of the North. We would work closely with the Mine Training Society to help train these people for positions so they can go to work in the mine.

Also, about a month ago I was in Tulita and they had MGM, an oil company, that’s drilling close to Tulita and they’re hoping they will strike oil. That would also produce more jobs in our communities and just in our region here.

I wanted to let this Minister know, the government know that you can go down with this motion and ask the federal government to put in a strong program for the people of the Northwest Territories, give them some incentive to invest into the people in the North.

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

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too will be supporting the motion today and I‘d like to commend the Mine Training Society and all their partners for all their efforts over the years. I’d also like to thank Mr. Abernethy, the mover of the motion, and Minister Lafferty for seconding the motion that’s before us today. I’d be very pleased to support that.

The future of the Northwest Territories is going to be in the area of resource extraction, transportation infrastructure, and construction. We need to ensure that a program can replace this very successful program. We need to encourage the federal government to come up with a way forward so that we can have our young people take the steps necessary to get the training to participate in what I believe is going to be a very bright future here in the Northwest Territories. Opportunities are out there and we need to ensure that we allow our young people every opportunity to get jobs and to look after themselves and lead meaningful lives in this Territory.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too will be voting in favour of this particular motion. I believe if you listen very carefully to the membership here, the Members all speak in favour of the motion and you’ll notice, listening carefully, that you’ll hear the strong support for the Mine Training Society in that there is acknowledgement for the work that they have done over the many years.

I truly believe in supporting educational opportunities that support Northerners, allowing them to get on their own feet. It’s almost like a helping hand as opposed to a help out, an education, as I’ve always seen it that way. We’ve got to get people the resources so that they can do things themselves and this is the type of initiative that allows them to get those opportunities on their own to improve their individual lives. As I often say, it’s not just their lives they’re improving, they’re improving the base of their family’s lives and their children’s lives going forward.

The training offered at the Mine Training Society has created independent people. I believe that’s not just good for those people, it’s good for this government. I hope that the government would recognize that when they communicate this message to the federal government, that we’re allowing Northerners to continue to be independent, to be able to fulfill those dreams and destinies, the hopes that they have for their future. I believe strongly that the Mine Training Society has brought new hope and opportunity for over 900 individuals who may not have had that hope before the society was developed and the mine training was provided.

As I said earlier, this does not just improve 900 individual people’s lives, it improves over 900 families. That’s a component that’s critically important to me and that I always believe in.

Ottawa has often seen the North as its breadbasket, whether in the past or present and I can definitely tell you in the future. They always see the resources of what the North has to offer it. I would hope they would recognize the resource in the people that we can train to be self-sufficient. Because they depend on our economy roaring and if we get the oil and gas or mining training industries up here, it’s always a struggle to employ people who have the qualified skills to do so. This program through the Mine Training Society speaks to that need and certainly, again, allows people to take those opportunities.

I need not lecture anyone in this House about, you know, I’ve been here almost eight years and it seems like whenever we get something good going, something exciting, and it has a great thrust, there always seems to be a sunset looming over a particular program. I would hate for that to be the case for this initiative. I think the timing of the motion is probably of an excellent time as it rolls in, because this motion gives the Minister a year to work on a replacement to the program and this initiative.

In closing, I want to say that I feel strongly that the contribution of these individuals who have improved their lives will bring new opportunity not just to the North but to the communities and, as I’ve pointed out, to the families. The Mine Training Society has built a strong reputation to getting Northerners skilled for jobs that are in significant demand in our Territory and our industry. With that, as I mentioned, I will be voting in favour of it.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. To the motion. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too will be supporting the motion. I think it’s very important. I have stood up in the House many, many times to talk about the low employment rates in the communities. The GNWT has responded to provide an employment program that’s gone into our base that will continue on. A program such as that could support this program, and these programs could work together and be very positive for the economy in the small communities. Obviously I support it.

I think also not only the employment but all the positive aspects that result from people being employed, people being trained for employment, and any long-term employment has positive impacts on the cost of living across the small communities when people are able to access cost of living items because they have income. Also the cost to government, I think a program such as this supported by other programs of the Government of the Northwest Territories saves on all kinds of things. The cost of social services should go down. The cost of income support should go down. The cost of health should go down. The cost of housing should go down. All of those things are also a factor when we support an initiative such as this.

We’re also supporting ourselves, the GNWT, and we can see far-reaching places in the GNWT where we will save money and make life better for the people of the Northwest Territories.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. To the motion. I’ll allow the mover of the motion some closing comments. Mr. Abernethy.

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank all of my colleagues who spoke in support of this motion. It’s great to see Members on both sides of the House in support of such an important motion.

The ASEP program is a nationally managed, opportunity-driven and project-based program that promotes increased participation of Aboriginal people in major economic developments. It achieves this through a collaborative approach of Aboriginal, private sector, and provincial and territorial partnerships. The program supports multi-year training strategies developed by Aboriginal organizations and industry employers leading to long-term, skilled jobs for Aboriginal people in existing and emerging economic opportunities.

The ASEP program has been a major success in Canada and the Northwest Territories, the Yukon and Nunavut. It moves Aboriginal Northerners from social assistance, unemployment and underemployment to full-time and well-paying jobs. The successful strategy will ensure that this level of partnership and success has an opportunity to continue.

As I’ve said, by way of this motion we are strongly urging the Government of Canada to develop and announce a successor strategy for the ASEP program, which will ensure that our local organizations, in partnership with local industry, can continue to train Aboriginal Northerners for employment in mining, transportation, construction and petroleum exploration sectors. I hope Ottawa is listening.

I also request a recorded vote.

## RECORDED VOTE

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. The Member has requested a recorded vote. All those in favour of the motion, please stand.

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Mr. Abernethy; Mr. Menicoche; Mr. Ramsay; Mr. Beaulieu; Mr. Hawkins; Ms. Bisaro; Mr. Yakeleya; Mr. Lafferty; Ms. Lee; Mr. Miltenberger; Mr. Roland; Mr. McLeod, Inuvik Twin Lakes; Mr. McLeod, Yellowknife South; Mr. Krutko; Mr. Bromley.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those opposed to the motion, please stand. All those abstaining, please stand. Results of the recorded vote: in favour, 15; opposed, none; abstaining, none. The motion is carried unanimously.

---Carried

Item 18, first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to return to item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills.

---Unanimous consent granted

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

# Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills (Reversion)

## BILL 15: AN ACT TO AMEND THE FIRE PREVENTION ACT

## BILL 18: AN ACT TO REPEAL THE SETTLEMENTS ACT

## BILL 19: MUNICIPAL STATUTES AMENDMENT ACT

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to report to the Assembly that the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure has reviewed Bill 15, An Act to Amend the Fire Prevention Act. The committee wishes to report that Bill 15 is now ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole. Thank you.

I wish to report to the Assembly that the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure has reviewed Bill 18, An Act to Repeal the Settlements Act. The committee wishes to report that Bill 18 is now ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole. Thank you.

I wish to report to the Assembly that the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure has reviewed Bill 19, Municipal Statutes Amendment Act. Bill 19 clarifies the process in making bylaw petitions, establishes guidelines for making municipal grants, and makes other miscellaneous amendments. The committee wishes to report that Bill 18 is now ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Bills 15, 18 and 19 will be moved into Committee of the Whole for consideration. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to go back to item 5, recognition of visitors.

---Unanimous consent granted

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

# Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery (Reversion)

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I’d like to take this opportunity to recognize two Pages in the House from the community of Tsiigehtchic representing the Paul Niditchie School: Vanessa Lennie and Jacob Gardlund. I’d like to thank them for their hard work all week and hopefully they had fun here, but more importantly, get an insight into what consensus government is all about. Again, I’d like to thank you for taking in the Page Program and wish you all the best as you travel back home. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. If we’ve missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to the Chamber.

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; Tabled Document 30-16(5), 2010 Review of Members’ Compensation and Benefits; Tabled Document 38-16(5), Supplementary Health Benefits – What We Heard; Tabled Document 62-16(5), Northwest Territories Water Stewardship Strategy; Tabled Document 75-16(5), Response to the Joint Review Panel for the Mackenzie Gas Project on the Federal and Territorial Governments’ Interim Response to “Foundation for a Sustainable Northern Future”; Tabled Document 103-16(5), GNWT Contracts Over $5,000 Report, Year Ending March 31, 2010; Tabled Document 133-16(5), NWT Main Estimates 2011-2012; Tabled Document 135-16(5), Response to the Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the Review of the Child and Family Services Act; Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Social Assistance Act; Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Conflict of Interest Act; Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act; Bill 20, An Act to Amend the Evidence Act; Minister’s Statement 65-16(5), Devolution Agreement-in-Principle, Impact on Land Claims and Protection of Aboriginal Rights; Minister’s Statement 88-16(5), Sessional Statement, with Mr. Krutko in the chair.

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

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** I’d like to call Committee of the Whole to order. In Committee of the Whole we are considering tabled documents 4, 30, 38, 62, 75, 103, 133, 135; Bills 4, 14, 17 and 20; and Ministers’ statements 65 and 88. What is the wish of committee? Mr. Beaulieu.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Committee wishes to continue with Tabled Document 133-16(5), NWT Main Estimates, 2011-12, and deal with the Housing Corporation.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Is committee agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Okay. With that, we’ll take a short break.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** I’d like to call Committee of the Whole back to order. Prior to the break we agreed that we will continue on with the NWT Housing Corporation. At this time I’d like to ask the Minister if he will be bringing in his witnesses. Minister Robert C. McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, I would.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Sergeant-at-Arms, escort the witnesses in.

Mr. Minister, for the record, can you introduce your witnesses.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have with me today, to my right, Mr. Jeff Polakoff, president and CEO of the NWT Housing Corporation, and Mr. Jeff Anderson, vice-president of finance with the NWT Housing Corporation. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Welcome witnesses. We’re on page 5-47, executive, operations expenditure summary, information item. Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to ask the Minister how successful have they been in implementing their policy on negotiating contracts with the local communities in terms of putting houses in the communities. I know some places they go through the tendering process and some they have negotiated some of the work that the local contractors have. I want to ask the Minister if it’s been a successful approach or it gets complicated if you have other needs in the community that even questions are negotiated procedures.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Housing.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We do get requests for negotiated contracts and we look at a few factors when we determine whether we’re going to follow through with the negotiated contracts. One of them, obviously, is the number of contractors that are in the community. If there are other contractors that have an opportunity to bid on the work if it goes public or if they’ve also submitted a request for a negotiated contract, we look at that. We look at past performance. If we’ve negotiated a contract before and the work and the timeliness of it has not been up to par, then that’s another factor we take into consideration.

Negotiated contracts are a way for a lot of the smaller communities especially to build capacity and what we’re finding and what we’re encouraged by is that some of the contractors in the smaller communities now have the capacity and the capability to bid on public tenders. But we continue to review each request as it comes in. Obviously, with the new building season coming up this summer we’re already starting to see some activity on that front and we’ll review them on a case-by-case basis. Thank you.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Certainly communities do look towards an opportunity to negotiate contracts when there’s support there for them to do so. Also, Mr. Chair, that some of the communities, when the packages do arrive in the communities, sometimes not all materials are in the packages and sometimes it’s difficult to get them in on a timely basis. Sometimes that hurts the contractor. It’s really nobody’s fault, it’s just the way some things are handled. Some of the contractors that I have spoken to who negotiated some of the work had said that some of the materials are not there to build a house or are missing, so they have to wait until it is ordered and go through a number of steps before it actually arrives on site. I hope this is looked upon when they are asked again if they are asking to negotiate another unit with Housing. I know there are other factors that the Minister has indicated to the House here in terms of seeing if there is a possibility if they can negotiate or they go to a tender process.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, if materials and packages arriving in the community were ordered by the NWT Housing Corporation, then it would be our responsibility to ensure that we have the replacement material in there as quick as possible. The contractors would have an opportunity to be reimbursed or compensated by the Housing Corporation, especially if it is our fault the material is not there in time. However, if it was a supply ship direct and the contractor was responsible for getting material, then it would be the contractor’s responsibility. If it is the Housing Corporation’s responsibility, then we would take all steps to ensure that we get the material there quickly and the contractor is compensated for down time. Thank you.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Chairman, the Minister is correct in terms of the responsibility once the materials are...who takes care of the materials. Sometimes it seems to be something of a glitch in my region where materials were ordered but not all materials are in the package. It seems to happen in several other communities. That raises a concern in terms of getting material, especially for ours where roads are only during the winter months, two months out of the year and the rest you have to fly material. It gets quite costly. I am glad to hear the Minister saying that other contractors are going to be compensated, that it is not their responsibility to have the materials.

I want to ask the Minister in terms of negotiating the work to the communities. It is quite difficult and challenging for some of the communities. If the negotiated contract is something that could be real each year in terms of looking at some of the difficulties that the communities have, because sometimes Housing really does a lot of work to improve its relationship with the communities. Sometimes it is very difficult for communities to meet the expectations of Housing, because it comes down to dollars in terms of the operation. Sometimes they want to do well. It just becomes very difficult for them to perform. It becomes an automatic you can’t have a negotiated contract in this community because it has been done before and it doesn’t do any good to people who want houses in the community. Sometimes it comes to a standstill.

That is what we don’t want to do. We want to build relationships with our community with Housing. Sometimes that is the only economic opportunity coming into the regions and communities. The people who come in and win the tendering process, especially if they come from outside of the community, outside the region, there are people coming from Hay River and Inuvik who are bidding in the Sahtu who are winning contracts, but the price is not very high to pay labour. They expect us to work for those types of dollars. We get complaints on both sides. On the other hand, they put houses up pretty fast. You are damned if you do and damned if you don’t. It is really difficult. At the end of the day, we want to see where our communities can benefit.

I think I will leave it at that. I know the Minister has other cases like this around the North. I guess what I want to look at is how do we do as much as we can to support the local businesses that have the capability, the resources.

I talked earlier about this young guy who is just finishing school. He wants to be an electrician. He is a really good electrician apprentice, if you could call it. He is working every day. He comes home and talks to his mom. The contractor is happy with him. He said this young guy could be a real good electrician if he can get to school if we had an apprenticeship program where he would work within the local housing association or somewhere in that area. These are things that we need to look at, I guess.

I know Housing has money just to build a house. I’m not too sure we have a real good comprehensive package that would create a career for some of these young workers in our communities such as drywalling, painting and framing. Right now the mandate is for the Minister to put houses on the ground. Whoever does them, you have to put houses on the ground. Sometimes the other mechanisms are not there to support some of the communities’ other initiatives that might be out of the mandate of the Housing Corporation. That is where MLAs get a lot of calls and saying, what can we do to help our communities? I will leave it at that, Mr. Chairman.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, obviously it would be our preference to use as much local labour as possible. Some contracts have been negotiated in the past. In some cases it may have been a project management issue where the project wasn’t done on a timely manner. Unfortunately, that hurts the local development corporation that they may have partnered up with. We continue to look on a case-by-case basis. They come forward, the good case where they may have different project management teams in place, then we would obviously have a look at it.

For those that want training, like the young person that you are speaking of, if they prove that they are quite capable workers, then it would be to the benefit of the general contractor who wins the contract to use local sub-trades where we can, and that would cut his costs down and would give people in the community an opportunity to work.

I say again, and I have said this publicly a few times, I am really encouraged by the capacity of a lot of our small town contractors to start bidding on some of the work. In one particular case, a gentleman asked for a negotiated contract, but they had the capacity to compete in an open market. For that reason we turned it down. The contract came out. This particular person won it and he won it for more than it would have been negotiated, so he obviously benefited from it.

We will still continue to try working as best we can with communities to try to utilize as much local as possible. There are some contractors from some of the larger centres that win some of these contracts, but the local contractors would have a preference to 5 percent or something like that. There is some built in, we call them, incentives but there are some built-in margins for local contractors that are bidding on work in the community. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. We are on page 5-47, executive. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I refer to the activity description for the executive. The executive office works collaboratively with GNWT departments and agencies on government-wide strategies and numerous joint initiatives to further advance policies and programs to meet the needs of NWT residents. It also collaborates with community and government partners in addressing housing needs across the NWT.

Mr. Chair, the Centre for Northern Families houses some of the most desperate clients we have from across the NWT, yet they find themselves in a very dire financial situation threatening their viability. They provide a critical service, yet the Housing Corporation is charging them $54,000 per year and they have had to pay market rent for over a decade. There’s a severe disconnect here in the executive, Mr. Chair, a key NGO providing critical services that the Housing Corp is charging big money to for their basic space needs.

I’d like to know from the Minister -- and I note that this is not a mortgage that they’re paying, this is just a monthly lease payment -- given that they’ve already probably paid for the building at least once, and given the clear responsibility, can the Minister identify an opportunity to either offer this NGO a considerably reduced rent or simply sign the building over to them to help with their services and sustainability? Does this budget provide that flexibility? Mahsi.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Housing.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, the building which the Member speaks of, the folks that are leasing the building do have quite a good rate right now. They’re about $7.45 a square foot where the market is around $23. There’s still a fair amount of money that’s owing on the actual mortgage itself. This is one of the first times that I’ve had the opportunity to review this. I’ve just been getting an update on my briefing and my briefing notes. So it’s something that I’ll commit to the Member that I’ll have a discussion with my senior officials about. We’re looking at probably a half a million yet left owing on the building. So that would be quite a substantial sign over, if we were to consider it. But I will commit to the Member that I’ll have a sit down with the senior officials and discuss any ways possible that we can maybe help the group out.

I will point out there that they are, and always have been, very current with their lease obligations and understanding that they have some other expenses on top of that, but I’ve made the commitment to the Member, and I will have a discussion with senior officials and I’ll keep the Member up to date and seek his input. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I appreciate the Minister’s commitment there very much. I’d like to again stress I read the department’s words, the Housing Corporation’s words that they’re going to work interdepartmentally. This is clearly an interdepartmental issue and I don’t think the Housing Corp should be expected to do this on their own. This should be a government-wide approach to resolve this situation and this would be a great way to do it. The Housing Corporation could provide the leadership. Mahsi.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** I have committed to the Member that we’ll have the discussion and I’ll follow up with the officials on a number of other situations like this that we have out there. There’s opportunity to maybe have some discussions with my Cabinet colleagues and see if there are ways we can be a little more accommodating. I will commit to the Member that I’ll undertake that. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Okay, we’re on page 5-47, executive, information item, operations expenditure summary. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Moving on to page 5-49, information item, Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have one question on this page. I note the mortgage principal and interest payments are $9.065 million and I understand from the previous page, middle of the page, that this is on a mortgage of $56.3 million. Is that correct? Am I reading that correct? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Anderson.

**MR. ANDERSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is correct. The $9 million is the annual payment that we incur on the $56 million. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I’m rather startled by that. Does the government get a very penalizing interest rate compared to any corporation or individual that I know of in Canada? I would say at a 6 percent interest rate we’d be looking at over $5 million per year on the principal. What could the interest rate possibly be to result in this situation, which means by 2038 we will have paid four times the value of the loan? Could I at least start with the interest rate? Thank you.

**MR. ANDERSON:** The interest rate on the various debts that we have range anywhere from about 2.78 percent all the way up to 19 percent on some of the projects that we have, but the important factor is that this payment is also cost shared by the federal government. So the net cost to the GNWT on the $9 million is about $1.4 million. The rest is funded through the federal government. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** That resolves any concerns I had. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you. Okay, we’re on page 5-49, information item, finance and infrastructure services, operations expenditure summary. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Moving on to 5-50, information item, finance and infrastructure services, grants and contributions. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Moving on to page 5-52, again, information item, 5-53, information item, programs and district operations, operations expenditure summary, Mr. Abernethy.

**MR. ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. In the Minister’s opening comments he talked about a lot of the good things that the Housing Corp were doing and clearly a lot of good work is being done there and a lot of progress in the last couple of years. The Regular Members had a lot of concerns from the beginning, but I think a lot of progress has been made. One of the areas that I’ve been asking about is flexibility in our programs, things like PATH and CARE and whatnot. In the Minister’s opening comments he did indicate that there is some flexibility and some alternate intake dates for some of these programs. I was wondering if he could give us a bit of information on that. Like, for instance, is PATH going to have more than one intake or is it limited to one intake? Which programs are going to have more than one intake compared to the ones as compared to how they exist now or previously?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Housing.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We have targeted secondary intakes in a few of the communities where we didn’t get as many applicants as we wanted to for some of the units that we have on the ground. So with some of the vacant HELP units, for example, if we had one community where there may be four or five left even after the first intake, we’re trying to have a secondary intake for those particular communities so we can allocate those houses and then, failing that, we go into converting them into public housing units. Thank you.

**MR. ABERNETHY:** That’s great and I think that’s going to help a lot, but what about programs like PATH that are encouraging people to outright buy their own homes? I had a constituent who had a concern about the fact that there was only one intake and she didn’t know what the market looked like so she didn’t apply, and I think I’ve shared that information with the Minister. In scenarios like that where markets do fluctuate in some of the larger centres, alternate intake dates or even two intake dates a year would have significant value in assisting some of these people just because the timing doesn’t always work out for one intake. Has there been much thought about increasing secondary intake dates for things like PATH?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** I would encourage most people to try to apply even if they don’t think the market is right, because they do have a length of time where they’re able to look for a unit. So if they were to get their application in right away.

Going back to the Member’s original question, though, it is part of the evaluation that we’re looking at and we see there may be some opportunity to maybe come back with a second intake for programs like PATH and that. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Next I have Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to start off by asking just for clarification on the Apprenticeship Program. I don’t believe I have that quite right. I wonder if the Minister has the information handy on how many apprentices we have and are planning to have during this budget’s fiscal year and if we happen to know off hand what the current apprentices areas of expertise are.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have 15 apprentices within the Housing Corporation and more specifically at the LHO level at this particular time. We do have plans for bringing on 10 more. As for the types of trades that they’re in, we have a fairly extensive list and what I can do is I can get the staff to provide a copy to Members that gives the location and specific trade they’re in. It goes from housing maintenance servicemen, which we find we need a lot in the communities, carpenters, oil burner mechanics, we have a few plumber/oil burner mechanic apprentices. That covers them all. We’ll be able to provide a list to Members of communities and specific trades.

**MR. BROMLEY:** That sounds great. I appreciate the Minister providing that information. I think this is a great program, as I’ve said before. We need to have these apprentices out in the communities where the need is greatest.

I want to follow up on the detail I sort of flagged in my general comments. There is $925,000 identified in ECE for creation of job opportunities in our communities, small and rural communities specifically. I am going to assume that there’s a pretty good match with our housing programs in the communities there. Again, I see this as an opportunity for the Minister to strike out in a new way to, in a cross-departmental approach, engage with this opportunity by providing some of the job opportunities which are a goal of ECE and I think this government as a whole within the context of public housing. There would be some challenges. I’m the first to admit in doing things a new way, they’re going to be front-line and have to do the policy work and explore what liabilities are and then deal with those liabilities, if any, and so on. I see a real opportunity, and many have. I think many of my colleagues and perhaps even the Minister has considered the opportunities we have in so many public housing clients who are unemployed but able bodied, to at the same time put them to work in a valuable way both to themselves and to society and to the goals of government, in this case both ECE and the Housing Corporation.

Could I get a commitment from the Minister to thoroughly explore and ideally identify and put in motion some action to start exploring and looking at the operational possibilities of this sort of new approach?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** We’ve been very fortunate through the Rural and Remote Communities committee that they’ve identified some money for apprentices and we’ve been able to take some on and we’ve been able to retain them and add more on.

I take the Member’s point that as far as using able-bodied people in the communities. In some communities the LHOs have been very good at putting a lot of people in the community to work. You hear some cases where they’ve used them to maybe take apart an old building. I will commit to the Member that I’ll have discussions with my colleague, the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, to explore possible ways that we can use the money that was identified through training, the $925,000 that the Member mentions. We’d be more than happy to use some of that money if we were able to bring on more apprentices and offer more training in the communities.

I see that throughout my travels in some of the communities where they do a lot of the local maintenance work themselves, the local renovation work themselves, and they bring on a lot of people from in the communities. I know one community in particular had brought in a drywaller to teach some local people how to do the proper taping and painting. There are those opportunities, and I will commit that as a corporation, working in conjunction with ECE, we’ll explore all the possibilities we can to make sure we get a lot of our... I agree with the Member that we need to get our able-bodied people in the communities to work and if there are opportunities for us take a lead in that, then I’ll commit to that.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Again, I appreciate the Minister’s commitment there. I believe he does see opportunities there and kind of understands what I’m getting at here.

As I’ve said, I really support the Apprenticeship Program and I think we have opportunities that would sort of be a precursor to apprenticeship. It could be fairly modest maintenance programs for housing, ways to reduce housing costs. Like I mentioned, gathering wood for the distributed heating system and working with ENR, who is actually active putting distributed energy systems out there and so on, to deal with some of the costs that the Housing Corporation is carrying but in ways that serve our broader goals of educating and slowly building up skills and ultimately generating apprentices and so on. I think the Minister heard me and I appreciate that.

I guess my last question on this page, I notice quite a reduction under program delivery details in the order of 10 to 50 percent for most of the regions there. Am I correct in believing that this must be due to the reduced infrastructure program being planned for this year?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Anderson.

**MR. ANDERSON:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Canada Economic Action Plan funds ran out at the end of March and that’s, for the whole organization, about $27.6 million that comes off the table in our delivery for next year. That’s why you see the reduction.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you. Next I have Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Yakeleya, Mr. Menicoche and Mr. Krutko. Mr. Beaulieu.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am just not sure if this is exactly the same question that Mr. Bromley asked, but I wanted to have a little more information on the reduction of CARE and CMHC repair programs. I recognize that maybe the CMHC repair programs are just simply not getting the money from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Overall, I notice that the CARE has gone from about $2 million to almost $4 million to over $8 million and back down to under about $5.6 million. I just want an explanation as to why the repair budget for homeownership was taken down that much.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We did have quite a spike in the amount. It went up to $8 million and that was as a result of some of the federal investment that we were using. It is down to $5 million. We are trying to refocus some of our resources into the repair side of it because we see that as one of our biggest needs right now. I think our overall infrastructure budget for this year is, like, $28 million. Yes, about $28 million. That’s going back to our historical levels that we’ve had before. So we’re trying to refocus some of our priorities into the CARE side of it.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** I’m seeing a drop there. For the $8.5 million, does it look like this year for 2010-2011 ending March 31, 2011, if the entire $8.5 million will be spent on home repairs?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Anderson.

**MR. ANDERSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, as I mentioned a few minutes ago, the Canada Economic Action Fund was reduced by about $27 million overall. About $9 million of that reduction relates to the programs that the Member is talking about. That’s why we’ve had a significant reduction here for next year.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Does that include the CMHC programs? I’m wondering if those are aside from the overall reduction. I’m wondering if the CMHC money comes separately, as far as CMHC repair programs go, as indicated in this book.

**MR. ANDERSON:** Yes, as I mentioned, there was a $9.6 million reduction from the infrastructure initiative, but we do have some more money set up where we received for the extension of the Affordable Housing Funds from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. That brings it up by about $1.4 million. That slightly offsets the $9 million I mentioned before.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Can the department or the Minister tell me if this reduction will impact people in the community trying to get repairs or if for the most part people applying for repairs are being approved? Provided that they’re eligible, of course. Will there be instances where people will be told that we can’t do your house because we don’t have enough money? That’s my question.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To give the Member some comfort, we do plan on allocating resources to all those who have been approved. If somebody is approved, they won’t have to worry about us telling them that we have no money.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you. Next I have Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to ask the Minister about the monitoring and delivering of programs in the communities or the housing needs in the communities. Is that also in the same category as being the needs of the people in the house? Is there someone from Housing going around to the elders in the communities to assess what type of household support they need?

I know there are a couple in my region that need bathrooms that would work for older people. They have some bathrooms that need to be adjusted for the elderly. I know that the Minister of Housing works with Health and Social Services, but they go into a house, they look at what’s needed and then, after that, nothing happens. I’ve been getting a couple of phone calls that this is the case with some of the older people who have a hard time with some of the household furniture in their houses. Is this a priority for housing, to fix some of these units up for our older people that are in our housing?

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

**MR. POLAKOFF:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The last year it became pretty apparent that through the application, we could provide better communications regarding the application process, particularly as it relates to repairs for seniors. With that in mind, what we’re planning on doing for the next intake process is having a targeted application process where staff would be meeting with seniors in communities on a community-by-community basis as required and outlining what the criteria is as well as what the benefits can be from applying for repair programs and providing better communication to the seniors on what’s available to them. In addition, we also anticipate that we can achieve some cost savings by, perhaps, bundling some of the maintenance requirements of seniors on a community-by-community basis and accessing trades through this bundling process. So that’s anticipated for the next intake this coming year. Thank you.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** The district staff are very hardworking people and sometimes they come into the community and they see a lot of people and sometimes it’s more than their time on the ground there. So sometimes they see a few people and then have to go, you know. These people that work at the district office, I know they put their hearts into their work, they’re good people, and I want to say that when they come in, I’m hoping that they would have someone there with them that would help them, because the other staff from the local housing authorities are pretty busy, so when they come in to see the people, they say to this old lady or this old gentleman, you need a new toilet or you need a new tub, you need to get it fixed, and then they leave. But then nothing happens for a month or two. It’s still very hard for the old people to take a shower or a bath. It may not seem very much for us young people, but for the old people it’s a real concern. We know their heart is to fix it and get it done.

Now, Mr. Polakoff was saying that if we missed them, then they have to wait for another intake. I guess what I’m asking in my request is to have someone dedicated from the district office just to look after the seniors, because you’ve got one person coming into Tulita or Good Hope, that person is pretty busy going house to house with applications and asking questions. And you know next time, well, they have to leave or sometimes the people are not in town, they’re in the bush and there’s nobody there. Like in Good Hope where they went to see this elder. This elder, part of his life is on the land. How come this person didn’t know that this old man was on the land with his wife? We’ve got to have some kind of communication that’s really strong in terms of saying to our elders that someone needs to work with them more strongly. That’s why I keep advocating for someone within the Housing to have an elders position to look after our elders on everything with housing. For us young people my age it’s okay, but especially for the elderly people we need to really work with them a little more strongly in terms of the services that we are doing for them.

I want to ask again with Housing here, what Mr. Polakoff is saying, having someone dedicated to explaining to them the application, because some of them get turned down because of land tenure. The Minister and I had an exchange yesterday in terms of sometimes an application doesn’t make it through because of some other issues. I’m just thinking that we need to have a little more consideration for our older people. That’s who I’m speaking for. I’m thinking about this older lady in Tulita who has a real hard time to take a bath, just to lift her leg over the bathtub there. It’s hard for her, but nobody’s doing anything to fix her bathtub. And that’s only one. There are many across my region that are in that situation.

I certainly support the workers going in there. Their intentions are good. There’s only so much money dedicated for each community and so there are a lot of needs that need to be met in my region. I want to ask Mr. Minister about taking care of the older people first. At the same time, he’s got to juggle how to take care of the other people. However, I’m speaking now for just for the old people on this one issue here. I want to just give a chance for the Minister to make a comment on my comments here.

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

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I think Housing goes to great lengths to try and accommodate all our seniors and try to help them out as much as we can. If you look at the public housing portfolio, seniors over 60 don’t pay any rent, so that helps them out quite a bit. We have the Senior Preventative Repair Program. We have the Seniors Repair Program. I have even offered, as we have folks go into the communities, to have someone accompany them that speaks the first language in the community so the seniors are better able to understand some of the programs that we offer. We ask people -- and this would apply to everybody -- if they need something done to their house, you know, they’d have to give us a call and then when our people get in there they would go and see them.

I would have to follow up on that, but I’m sure our staff folks in the regions make it to every place that makes an inquiry or wants someone to come have a look at their house or possibly filling out an application. We have had cases where we’ve helped seniors even though it wasn’t the intake period. There were some emergencies that needed to be taken care of. I think Housing is very respectful of our seniors and our seniors’ needs, and I think we go to great lengths to try and accommodate our seniors in the Northwest Territories as much as we can.

The communication part of it, we will let them know when we are coming into town and when we’re able to take applications. If they were to phone the district office and say I’m going to be out of town, then maybe some accommodations could be made, but it works both ways. I think we’ve been doing that lately, is publicizing when we get into town and when the application process is. I know during this past application process in October, from what I’ve seen and what I’m reading in the papers and reading signs in the community, it was well advertised, so we had a fairly good uptake. But, I mean, I can assure the Member and all Members that we take looking after our seniors very seriously with the NWT Housing Corporation, and I think we’ve proven that in the past and we’ll continue to work closely with and for seniors in the future. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Next on my list is Mr. Menicoche.

**MR. MENICOCHE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I just want to go over a couple of things that I mentioned in my opening comments. Most particularly what’s troubling for me in my last tour was that there is no seniors program specifically designed for seniors. It really came to light on a couple occasions where there’s one senior, he had a broken furnace, he had a broken hot water tank, so we asked the Housing Corporation about emergency repairs and it turns out that he is probably like many other people throughout the North where he has exhausted all programming areas that the Housing Corporation has, like CARE, RRAP or ERP. He used every known program that is out there to help repair his house and now he has to use his old age security to pay for much needed repairs to his furnace, which is up and running. I don’t believe the hot water tank was, but, like I said, this may be a typical situation. I know that before, we did have a seniors home repair subsidy especially for these types of situations. The Minister can correct me, but I don’t believe it was a one-time access either. This is about small, little repairs that elders and seniors need in small, remote communities. In larger communities, if you just have to replace a filter or a pump, it is easy to do, but in the smaller communities there is a cost of transportation, and timing becomes an issue too. Then there will be additional freight costs if there is an actual charter that had to be done to fly someone in to do the repair.

I believe it had worked well. I don’t know when the Seniors Repair Program existed or why it was cancelled, because I had been educating elders and seniors in the past few years and I am supportive of them, but the response I get is thank you very much for the inquiry, but we don’t have a specific seniors program. They are going to have to file an application with everybody else under these other programs.

I think we only have one senior kind of related program. I think that is when they help clean the furnaces annually, which is a good program. I certainly would like to see more of it. Our seniors should not be relegated to the rest of the population. I believe that we should have a seniors home-specific repair program. I look forward to working with the department, if we can do something about that and move towards that.

Another thing about district operations that I believe will be helpful, I really have faith in this appeal process that will be undertaken on April 1st. The Minister said April 1st is the deadline. It would be nice to see some programming detail about that, as MLA, or perhaps he just has to send it over to the Social Programs committee. I certainly would like to see a mechanism on how it would work, especially addressing old arrears, Mr. Chairman. That is a concern.

Many of my constituents are applying for programming based on arrears, which is a guideline and a policy that they cannot access certain programs unless they address those arrears. The mortgage repayment plan is a very great idea. Some people do get behind and fall into arrears. Here is the opportunity to refinance it and reprofile it. There are some cases, I think actually there are many cases where the constituent or the client is actually disputing work that had happened or work that didn’t happen, value for work, construction techniques and they are of the mind that I am not paying until this is resolved, but now it is 15 years old. How do we go back that far and give them a fair hearing, Mr. Chairman? How do we give them a fair place for them to speak their case? I have always said that they are stating their case to the person that told them no in the first place. I don’t believe that is very fair. I believe that they deserve to be heard. The facts should be put on the table, access to as much information as they can and really give this appeals process a good go, because that is all the constituents are asking for. I would like to see what kind of mechanism there is to address a wrong if indeed the appeals process does feel they are wrong. My thinking about it is that if they had $15,000 worth of work 10 years ago and there really was the case that only $7,000 got done, but on the Housing Corporation’s books it shows $15,000, how do you address that? I believe the constituent believes, as well, I don’t mind paying for $7,000 worth of work, but my bill says $15,000, Mr. Chairman. So how do they address that? That is just one example of how I believe that appeals system can work and it is going to be independent as well. They really have to have an independent way to look and see how they best address their concerns, Mr. Chairman. With that, I will give the Minister an opportunity to respond on those two issues there. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Minister McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, the Member is correct when he talks about the senior and I will respond to Mr. Yakeleya’s concern about the seniors and how I feel we go to great lengths to make sure our seniors are well taken care of. We do run into some cases. We do hear a case here and there. I think for the most part within our seniors we have across the Northwest Territories, a lot of those are living in their own homes. I think we look after them quite well.

The Member mentioned the preventative maintenance program and talking about all the number of programs that a particular individual had access to over the years and to hear that there is still a furnace issue or there is still a maintenance problem in the unit. I would have to follow up on that and see why someone that would access every program would still be needing maintenance.

Having said that, there is still an opportunity for the preventative maintenance. It is up to $2,000 for minor maintenance work around seniors. Seniors are also able to qualify for care. If there was some work that needed to be done to their unit to make it a little more handicap friendly, it would fall under this particular program. We go to great lengths.

The one that the Member has said that a person wants to dispute the work that was done on their house, saying that they applied and got $15,000 approval and they got $7,000 work, I would have to follow up on that. That is going quite a ways back, but I would think that there would have been a contract that was let for probably $15,000, so there is obviously a paper trail there somewhere and someone saying that the work wasn’t done right so I am not going to pay, again there is a dispute that the Member had mentioned.

I, too, would say we have technical people go in. They would inspect the work that was done by a contractor if a house was built. They would go in there. They would obviously have to sign it off before we give occupancy. I think there are a lot of cases and maybe there are some legitimate cases out there, but to say that the work wasn’t done properly unless they were a certified tradesperson, maybe it wasn’t done the way they had wanted or expected, but the bottom line it was still done according to the specs that we laid out to the contractor, so our technical people would have had to sign it off. When the clients are given the unit, I would assume that there is also an opportunity when they go through the unit with one of the programs people to have a look at the unit and make sure that everything was done according to specs.

As far as the appeal committee, I can assure the Member that it will be a pretty fairly independent committee. I think we are going to have one person from the NWT Housing Corporation acting as chair of the committee but they will have no voting privileges. It is going to be a fairly independent appeals mechanism committee. We are looking forward to seeing how that rolls out. For folks that question some of the decisions, some of the things that were made in their homeownership units, they obviously have a chance to go through this appeals committee and maybe this would be beneficial to -- and I think I may have spoken to committee about it -- give committee probably a quick update on how we expect this thing to work and how we expect this to roll out. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Minister McLeod. Next on my list is Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, would like to talk on the program side. I think that we have to be realistic that we notice there is a decline in grants and contributions. Again, there is definitely an area of need. We’ve seen the latest survey from 2009 which definitely identifies areas of inadequacy, core need, looking at condition ratings and those different forms. I think that we have to be fair to the process. I’ve had constituents complain to me, saying that it’s not fair that you see the same people getting the same programs over and over and over and they’ve been applying year after year, after year and every year that they reapply their homes are deteriorating more every year. I think we have to find a system that’s fair, transparent, but more importantly, that it really meets the adequacy and the core housing challenges we face in a lot of the communities.

A lot of the houses that we have in our communities were built back in the ‘60s and ‘70s and they are coming into an era where they need major retrofits. I think we have to be realistic that those people require those supports and I think it’s not fair to them that they apply but don’t seem to get the support that the department puts in place.

Again, I think it’s something that we have to be aware of. I’d like to know, do we actually track the core needs by community in regard to the conditions of the houses in those communities and allocate funding accordingly. Thank you.

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

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I’ve said we’ve used those numbers, especially in some of the communities where the need is highest, we’re hoping to use those numbers to use it as a basis for allocating our resources in the future. I think the report came out last year. So this particular year we’ve tried to gear as many resources to some of the communities in higher need. So we’re hoping to be able to take care of some of the repairs that are going on in the community.

One thing I need to point out, Mr. Chair, is we’ve had homeownership units across the Northwest Territories for the last number of years and my understanding of a homeowner is once you were given one of these programs, and I keep meaning to look at the contract because I would have assumed it would say in there that you’re responsible for all the maintenance in your unit. In theory that was very good. What we’ve seen was a lot of the HAP clients, a lot of those that had to build their own units, they’ve looked after their units pretty good because they put a lot of sweat equity into it, but we’re having a lot of people now, we’re giving them units and they’re expecting us to do the maintenance. I mean, we’ll assist where possible, but I think what happened was we started doing a bit of maintenance on units that we had given to clients and then it just became an expectation. So we’re having to live with it now.

You see some clients out there that we never hear from. Their roof may need fixing, but they understand that it’s their responsibility as a homeowner to fix that roof. We work with those that want to apply for a homeownership loan and that where they make a payment back. We have no problem working with folks like that because we have a lot of folks where there’s a forgivable portion of it, but there’s also a portion that they pay back. So we continue to try and work with all those in the communities that need assistance.

Going back to the Member’s original point -- and I kind of went off on a rabbit trail, but going back to the Member’s original point -- we are trying to use the numbers that came out of the core needs survey to allocate our resources to some of the communities that are in most need. Thank you.

**MR. KRUTKO:** I’ll come back to this question, but I’ll ask another one. I think one of the programs especially on the program officer side, it seems like they’re all in the regional centres and I think this might be a perfect opportunity for this government to decentralize some of those positions from the regional districts to the communities that they serve. That’s something that we should consider looking at, because I think in my riding I have two people, one serves Tsiigehtchic and Fort McPherson, the other one serves Aklavik, but they both live in Inuvik. I think that whenever possible if it’s possible that those individuals, if they decide to deliver the programs out of those communities, out of, say, their home community, which could be Fort McPherson or Aklavik or whatnot, and they’re qualified to deliver the programs which are presently in the Inuvik headquarter office, because I think this is a perfect opportunity for the people in the communities to have better access to those program staff. Like Mr. Yakeleya mentioned, they come and go and if you don’t get to see them one trip, you’ve got to wait until the next one.

The other thing is that if they’re in your community, they know who their clients are and they can deal with the on a day-to-day basis. More importantly, ensure that the work that is being approved is actually getting done and they’re there in the communities to actually see it happen.

So I’d just like to know, is that something that the department can seriously consider in regard to moving some of these positions into the communities where you have high numbers of clients, where the work is there, that they can operate and shuttle in between those community programs and the regional centres? If they have to go into the regional office, it’s just a simple two-hour drive down the road, it’s not as if it’s a major expense. We have local housing offices in our communities where they can work out of. We have a community office in Tsiigehtchic where we have a sub-office there that’s not being used. So I’d like to ask is that something that we can look at in regard to decentralizing some of these jobs in the regional operations to communities to run those programs and services.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** There was a community liaison position that was piloted a couple of years ago and I’m not sure if it still exists, but now they’re having the single-window service centres that they’re trying, and maybe this is one area where they can be of assistance to the NWT Housing Corp.

It’s awfully hard to take folks out of the regional office and maybe move them into the communities. I think we might be better served if we were able to utilize the folks in the communities and be in contact with folks in the regional office.

I mean, we’ve seen a perfect example in one of the other jurisdictions of where they tried to decentralize and they had their finance office in one community and their head office in the other community and I think we’ve seen the $60 million result of that. So we need to try to have them as centralized as possible, but I take the Member’s point, though. It would be good to have folks go out to the communities. I mean, I get a list of all the visits that are into each community and we could utilize these pilot projects that are going to be happening. I think those particular folks that are going to be in the community would probably have to have a pretty good understanding of all the programs that are offered through the government, through the NWT Housing Corp. So I think this is one way that as a Housing Corp we can probably take advantage of this and be a part of this single-service window centre that the government is proposing to try to have in the communities. We’ll see how that works. If there’s a need further down the line to maybe have a liaison person, somebody that’s strictly housing, then that may be something we have to have a look at. But it would be awfully difficult to take the regional staff programs officer, for example, and maybe put them in another community that would be their home base. It possibly could work. I mean, I’d have to have a discussion, we’d have to have people that would want to do that. But our programs people do travel around quite a bit, but there’s opportunity to look at something like that and I’ll commit to the Member that I’ll have that discussion with the Housing Corp and we’ll see what we can accommodate. Thank you.

**MR. KRUTKO:** In regard to my original question, I think that we have to be fair here. I mean, sure, we can say, well, we gave them the housing and they’re responsible to take care of it. We didn’t give them the house. In most cases they applied on it, they won it fairly through an application process and in most cases, like you say, these people have lived in these units going on 30 years. After 30 years of living in a unit it is going to require some major retrofits, regardless if its electrical upgrades or mechanical changeovers. That’s when these people need the help. I think that those are the groups that we should be focusing on when you have people that realize that there are energy retrofits that need to take place and that will make and improve the life of that facility. But when you have people getting programs where you have three or four members in a house making over $250,000, I mean, that’s not fair to other people in their community that are applying for programs and can’t get it. Especially widows and people that have children and they are struggling. Yet we seem to have not helped those people that really require the help and yet there’s other people taking advantage of programs and services time after time and not helping the people that really need the help.

I think all I’m asking for is that we seriously... Again, you look at the dollars that have been earmarked for grants and contributions, they’re down by $6 million. We have to realize we have less money now than we had before and we have to make sure that we spend it in the best interest of the public and the people that we serve.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** I hear the Member’s comments and I’ve heard those comments before, where you get some concerns from the residents in the NWT where somebody has accessed a program and they seem to continue to access those programs where somebody that needs a lot of assistance is not getting it.

I hear the Member’s concern with people who apply for these units, they did apply for the units and we gave them the units and there was a forgivable portion, especially the old HAP units. I’ve asked the corporation, just talking to the two Jeffs here, and I’ve asked if we can come up with the information on a lot of the people who had the original HAP houses and how many of those have accessed some of our programs to get the energy retrofits. Once we pull those numbers together, I’ll share it with the Members. I think that will be a good indication of the assistance we’ve provided to a lot of former HAP clients that have been in there for 15 or 20 years. Once we get that information pulled together, I’ll be sure to pass it on to the Members.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Next on my list is Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a couple of questions here with regard to reviews. The first one has to do with the rent scale review which I understand is happening. I thought that we had been advised that it’s about... It seems like it’s been in the works for a year and I’d appreciate hearing from the Minister where that review of the rent scale is at. According to the business plan, it’s supposed to be ready for implementation on April 1st. I’d like to know if that’s still the case. Is the review done yet, I guess is where I’ll start.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Mr. Polakoff.

**MR. POLAKOFF:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The rent scale review, when we looked at the Shelter Review Policy which was approved concurrently and looked at the approach that we were going to be taking with the Shelter Review Policy, because of the integral importance of the rent scale review we felt it would be helpful for us to integrate rent scale review, the final product, into the Shelter Review Policy simply because they are not mutually independent. They rely on each other. There’s been a lot of work done on the information related to rent scale review but we expect that the rent scale review itself will be a component of the Shelter Review Policy which we anticipate should be completed sometime in the early to late summer.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks to the deputy minister, or president, for that information. I’m glad that the Shelter Review Policy has been mentioned. I guess I need to say, first of all, that it’s a little unfortunate that the rent scale review is taking so long. I can understand why it’s being tied in with the Shelter Review Policy, but it is unfortunate that it’s something that Members have been asking for for probably three years now and it’s still not ready to come.

The Shelter Review Policy I fully support. I think it’s something which is long overdue and I think we have many policies with regard to housing that create roadblocks and inhibit people from accessing housing easily and to getting the housing that they need or should have.

I would like to ask about the coordination of the Housing Corporation with other departments when they do this shelter review. I’ve said a number of times in the last while that we need to coordinate our policies across departments, and housing particularly ties in with income support. It ties in with Health and Social Services in terms of parents who’ve had their children apprehended and lose their home because they no longer have their children, they get the kids back and they don’t have a home where they can accommodate the children. There’s any number of situations where the housing policies and/or the policies of another department impact on housing that people need and are trying to get.

To the Minister: what kind of coordination will there be through all departments of the government when you’re doing this shelter review?

**MR. POLAKOFF:** We would absolutely agree with the Member in terms of the importance of housing, but the interrelationship of housing with other departments, we’ve over the last several years worked very closely with our sister departments in ECE as well as the Department of Justice and others. We feel that the Shelter Review Policy has to be very closely coordinated with those other departments that also have a relationship with housing in various communities. The review itself is going to be co-chaired by the Executive as well as by the NWT Housing Corporation. The reason for the Executive taking such a critical role in this is because of their coordinative ability. In addition to the Executive in terms of strategic initiatives areas, is we will also be including staff from the NWT Bureau of Statistics as well as the program review area. It’s anticipated that the end result will be comprehensive and we’ll be looking at the integration in a number of areas, including Health and Social Services, seniors, et cetera.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks for that information. I’m really glad to hear that it’s going to be a broad review. I just would like to also point out that I would hope that the Housing Corporation is going to keep in their sites that their review can have a large impact on those who are struggling with poverty and that it can be tied into our Anti-Poverty Strategy which we’re also working on.

I do want to comment on the need for seniors to have funding to assist them with their homes. It’s been mentioned by a couple of Members already. I think the Housing Corporation ought to seriously consider targeted funding for seniors. Whether it be preventive maintenance or whether it be regular ongoing repairs and maintenance, maybe we can figure out what percentage of housing is seniors housing and target that percentage of the CARE budget only for seniors. I think there needs to be some fund which is specifically targeted for seniors and for repairs to their homes. That’s just a comment.

I have a question in relation to transition housing. I note in the Minister’s opening comments that I didn’t see transition housing mentioned at all. It is something certainly that the Housing Corporation assists with. There are several non-government organizations in Yellowknife which do provide transition housing for clients that need it. I’d like to know from the Minister what kind of support the Housing Corporation provides in terms of transition housing. Is it only bricks and mortar or are there other programs that assist with transition housing?

**MR. POLAKOFF:** In terms of transition housing, the Housing Corporation has provided significant funding to a number of facilities in the past. Probably one of the best examples would be Bailey House. In addition to Bailey House we’ve also been undertaking discussions with the Homelessness Coalition and so on.

I think what I would also point to, and the Member linked it to the Shelter Review Policy and we would agree, there’s an opportunity for transitional housing through the overall housing continuum. I guess one of the things that the Shelter Review Policy is really trying to take a closer look at is the housing continuum that runs from independent living right through to acute care. There’s a number of stops along the way that housing can play a critical role in or that we can achieve partnership with other GNWT departments. That’s really what the shelter review is looking at. That said, the Housing Corporation has undertaken investment in transitional housing.

We also work with NGOs. It’s important to recognize, as well, that NGOs can provide a good source of support in terms of administering things like transitional housing. We anticipate that the Shelter Review Policy will provide some further guidance in that area, particularly as it relates to coordinated policy across the GNWT. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Polakoff My clock shows that it’s after 2:00 p.m., so, recognizing the clock, I will now rise and report progress.

Thank you, Mr. Minister. I will get you to thank your witnesses and, Sergeant-at-Arms, if I could please get you to escort the witnesses out. Thank you. Now I’ll 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:** Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 133-16(5), Northwest Territories Main Estimates, 2011-2012, and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Motion is on the floor. Do we have a seconder? The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

---Carried

Item 22, third reading of bills. Before we go on to orders of the day, I would like to thank all the Pages who have been working for us over the week and doing a great job.

---Applause

Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

# Orders of the Day

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Orders of the day for Monday, February 21, 2011, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers’ Statements
3. Members’ Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Opening Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
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 36-16(5), Joe Greenland Centre

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
* Tabled Document 30-16(5), 2010 Review of Members’ Compensation and Benefits
* Tabled Document 38-16(5), Supplementary Health Benefits - What We Heard
* Tabled Document 62-16(5), Northern Voices, Northern Waters: NWT Water Stewardship Strategy
* Tabled Document 75-16(5), Response to the Joint Review Panel for the Mackenzie Gas Project on the Federal and Territorial Governments’ Interim Response to “Foundation for a Sustainable Northern Future”
* Tabled Document 103-16(5), GNWT Contracts over $5,000 Report, Year Ending March 31, 2010
* Tabled Document 133-16(5), Northwest Territories Main Estimates, 2011-2012
* Tabled Document 135-16(5), GNWT Response to CR 3-16(5): Report on the Review of the Child and Family Services Act
* Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Social Assistance Act
* Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Conflict of Interest Act
* Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act
* Bill 20, An Act to Amend the Evidence Act
* Minister’s Statement 65-16(5), Devolution Agreement-in-Principle, Impact on Land Claims and Protection of Aboriginal Rights
* Minister’s Statement 88-16(5), Sessional Statement

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 Monday, February 21, 2011, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 2:03 p.m.