



# **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**5<sup>th</sup> Session**

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**17<sup>th</sup> Assembly**

## **HANSARD**

**Thursday, March 6, 2014**

Pages 4225 – 4252

**The Honourable Jackie Jacobson, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

## Members of the Legislative Assembly

### Speaker

**Hon. Jackie Jacobson**

(Nunakput)

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**Hon. Glen Abernethy**

(Great Slave)

*Minister of Health and Social Services*

*Minister responsible for*

*Persons with Disabilities*

*Minister responsible for Seniors*

**Hon. Tom Beaulieu**

(Tu Nedhe)

*Minister of Human Resources*

*Minister of Transportation*

*Minister of Public Works and Services*

**Ms. Wendy Bisaro**

(Frame Lake)

**Mr. Frederick Blake**

(Mackenzie Delta)

**Mr. Robert Bouchard**

(Hay River North)

**Mr. Bob Bromley**

(Weledeh)

**Mr. Daryl Dolynny**

(Range Lake)

**Mrs. Jane Groenewegen**

(Hay River South)

**Mr. Robert Hawkins**

(Yellowknife Centre)

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty**

(Monfwi)

*Deputy Premier*

*Minister of Education, Culture and*

*Employment*

*Minister responsible for the Workers'*

*Safety and Compensation*

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*Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and*

*Intergovernmental Relations*

*Minister responsible for Women*

**Hon. Robert C. McLeod**

(Inuvik Twin Lakes)

*Minister of Municipal and*

*Community Affairs*

*Minister responsible for the*

*NWT Housing Corporation*

*Minister responsible for Youth*

**Mr. Kevin Menicoche**

(Nahendeh)

**Hon. J. Michael Miltenberger**

(Thebacha)

*Government House Leader*

*Minister of Finance*

*Minister of Environment and Natural*

*Resources*

*Minister responsible for the*

*NWT Power Corporation*

**Mr. Alfred Moses**

(Inuvik Boot Lake)

**Mr. Michael Nadli**

(Deh Cho)

**Hon. David Ramsay**

(Kam Lake)

*Minister of Justice*

*Minister of Industry, Tourism*

*and Investment*

*Minister responsible for the*

*Public Utilities Board*

**Mr. Norman Yakeleya**

(Sahtu)

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**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Thursday, March 6, 2014****Members Present**

Hon. Glen Abernethy, Hon. Tom Beaulieu, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Blake, Mr. Bouchard, Mr. Bromley, Mr. Dolynny, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Hawkins, Hon. Jackie Jacobson, Hon. Jackson Lafferty, Hon. Bob McLeod, Hon. Robert McLeod, Mr. Menicoche, Hon. Michael Miltenberger, Mr. Moses, Mr. Nadli, Hon. David Ramsay, Mr. Yakeleya

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

**Prayer**

---Prayer

**SPEAKER (Hon. Jackie Jacobson):** Good afternoon, colleagues. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Abernethy.

**Ministers' Statements**

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 52-17(5):  
CANCER INITIATIVES**

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Mr. Speaker, cancer rates have increased slightly over the last few years. Even one case affects dozens of people. Cancer sharing circles have been held in Fort Good Hope, Fort Resolution and Fort Liard to share information, facilitate dialogue and inform the development of local action plans to address this important issue. The cancer sharing circles showed us that we need to do more work on the services available for cancer patients and their families. Our smoking and drinking rates remain too high, and further improvements are needed with regard to healthy eating.

We have a number of initiatives that prevent cancer, including nutrition programs and anti-tobacco campaigns targeting schools across the NWT. We have made a lot of progress in our fight against cancer. We are able to better treat it, and through early screening and detection, more and more people are surviving this disease.

Mr. Speaker, cancer is a complex disease with many risk factors and causes. People want help in understanding cancer rates and how to lower their risk. Later today I will table a new report on cancer in the NWT over the 10-year period 2001-2010. This report examines the rates of new cancer cases, deaths due to cancer, ethnicity, stage of cancer at the time of diagnosis, and screening programs.

Key findings in the cancer report indicate that cancer rates in the NWT have increased very little over the 10-year reporting period.

The cancer report will help us address gaps in the system. It will be part of a new comprehensive and

culturally relevant strategic plan to reduce cancer in the NWT and improve patients' quality of life. It shows us that we need to promote cancer screening and prevention under the leadership of the chief public health officer.

Communities will continue to be key to our approach. We will continue to work with them to raise cancer awareness, improve access to cancer screening, and support individuals and their families throughout their cancer journeys. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. Beaulieu.

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 53-17(5):  
MACKENZIE VALLEY WINTER ROAD**

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Mr. Speaker, the Mackenzie Valley winter road continues to serve our territory as a seasonal solution to community resupply and economic development. Today this road is more important than ever as industry prepares to tap into the enormous resource potential in the Mackenzie Valley.

Increased traffic along the Mackenzie Valley winter road due to industry activities means increased maintenance requirements for the Department of Transportation. During this time, the safety of the travelling public is the department's first priority.

Mr. Speaker, education, awareness and outreach are important to fostering a safe environment. The Department of Transportation seeks to ensure that commercial vehicles are prepared for the unique conditions of winter road travel. A document entitled The Mackenzie Valley Winter Road System 2013-14: Safety and Reliability for the Public and for Industry has been distributed for this very purpose and is available on the DOT website. This document provides commercial carriers with speed limits, vehicle regulations, contact numbers for emergencies and road reports, and detailed maps for their travels.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Transportation works closely with industry to ensure the needs of both parties are met. Pre-operation meetings have been held with carriers to review safety measures. This winter a contribution agreement with ConocoPhillips provided funding toward the

construction of ice bridges and road maintenance along the route south of Norman Wells.

The presence of highway patrol officers along the Mackenzie Valley winter road continues to help enforce safe driving behaviour through conducting commercial vehicle inspections. For next year, the department is proposing to hire additional highway maintenance supervisors and highway transport officers to respond to higher traffic volumes. This will provide additional monitoring and enforcement resources to ensure the continued safety of the travelling public.

Mr. Speaker, over the past decade the department has constructed 36 permanent structures at major stream and river crossings throughout the Mackenzie Valley corridor. These bridges, which increase the winter road's reliability and stability, are located on the alignment of the proposed all-weather highway. We would also like to note ConocoPhillips have contributed \$400,000 to the winter road.

Corridors for Canada III, the department's federal infrastructure funding plan, proposes additional funding opportunities for improving the Mackenzie Valley road.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Transportation asks drivers to respect the posted speed limits when travelling on winter roads. Drivers should ensure they are well prepared by checking road conditions via the department's website.

We wish residents safe and efficient travel for the remainder of the winter road season. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Blake.

### Members' Statements

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON GWICH'IN SNOWMOBILE TRIP AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This afternoon I wish to mention to the Assembly that over the weekend, February 27<sup>th</sup> to March 3<sup>rd</sup>, a very memorable trip took place in Fort McPherson. Fourteen snowmobiles with 18 travelers left Fort McPherson to Curtain Mountain, which is about 170 miles into the Yukon from Fort McPherson, traditionally known as Moses Hill.

The late Chief Johnny D. Charlie travelled extensively in his early years back and forth to Old Crow, Yukon, where the Charlie and Tetlich family originally came from. Later in his life, he travelled by snowmobile with the younger people, teaching them about the importance of tradition, showing them significant landmarks, and speaking to them

about leadership and respecting the land and all it has to offer.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the group of travelers that went on the four-day voyage, breaking trail through the creeks, travelling through the overflow, climbing the LaChute Mountain and setting tents in the evening.

It's a tough life living on the land, Mr. Speaker. The people of Fort McPherson make an effort each year to keep this trail open just to make sure the Vuntut Gwich'in people of Old Crow and the Tetlit Gwich'in people of Fort McPherson can see each other and spend family time together.

Traditional livelihood is special to all of us in the North. It's a means of survival and the more we invest in cultural trips such as this, the more we are encouraging our youth to take pride in going on the land, hunting, fishing, trapping and gathering.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and Members for supporting our efforts on keeping our cultures alive. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON 'RECYCLE MY CELL' STUDENT CHALLENGE

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is a program called Recycle My Cell, which is Canada's national recycling program for mobile phones and cell phone accessories. I know a few people at least who would like to recycle my cell phone, but actually it's still working quite well.

Today I would like to recognize a Hay River school, Princess Alexandra School, that was recently announced as the winner of the 4<sup>th</sup> National Recycle My Cell Student Challenge. In collaboration with the 2013 Waste Reduction Week in Canada, the challenge invited students from kindergarten to post-secondary to collect as many old wireless devices as possible, including cell phones, smartphones, wireless PDAs, pagers, accessories and cell phone batteries.

More than 140 Canadian schools from across the country participated in the 2013 edition of the challenge. The schools collected more than 3,500 wireless devices along with some 200 kilograms of wireless accessories and batteries.

The school that collected the most wireless devices in each participating province and territory based on student population received a \$500 donation to support the school's green initiatives.

The 13 winning schools in the 2013 Recycle My Cell Student Challenge were schools from cities clear across Canada including larger centres such as Calgary, Montreal, Charlottetown and Winnipeg.

It is exciting to see Hay River on this impressive list of schools and the students and staff at Princess Alexandra School can be proud of the work that they have done taking on this challenge and receiving the notable recognition of being one of the small number of winners of this program is a huge accomplishment.

The goal of this program is to inform Canadians about the environmental and social ramifications of wasteful practices with a take-action message to empower all Canadians to adopt more environmentally conscience choices.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in extending congratulations to Princess Alexandra School and to the residents of Hay River who participated by dropping off their used cell phones and accessories. Their efforts have been encouraging and I trust all of us will be prudent in disposing used equipment in an environmentally friendly manner. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Mr. Dolyunny.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT SOLE-SOURCED AND NEGOTIATED CONTRACTS

**MR. DOLYUNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to address the detailed reports in the tabled report on the GNWT contracts over \$5,000 in the 2012-2013 budget year and the response to my written questions received on February 25, 2014, by the Minister of Finance.

I have said on more than one occasion that we are dealing with an antiquated, outdated and ultimately unconstitutional negotiating and sole-source contracting policy with this government. It's abundantly clear that the taxpayers are holding the bag in its shortfalls.

I have always said the devil is in the details. With that in mind, let's examine the results of my inquiry that pay credence to my statement of fact.

Fact: of the approximately \$300 million in GNWT contracts, negotiated and sole source contracts represent 29.7 percent or approximately one in three contract dollars to the tune of almost \$100 million.

Fact: we spend \$36.9 million in sole-source contracts, almost half of this number is change orders.

Fact: alarming still is the total dollar amount in change orders of over \$34 million, which accounts for 11.4 percent of all contract dollars.

Fact: of over the \$34 million in change orders, about 59 percent of this overage is attributable to negotiated and sole-sourced contracts.

So, what is to be made of all these facts? Clearly, something has to give in how we approach our contracting environment in the Northwest Territories. Legally, expecting the taxpayer to pick up the tab of \$34 million in change orders when companies fail to live up to their contractual and binding obligations should be something of a good debate in this House. However, in reality, this government is facing a debt wall and wall of worry, especially with the recent admittance of over \$38 million in miscalculation of our personal and corporate tax revenues.

If the Minister of Finance wants to find ways to mitigate this department's taxation revenue faux pas, the answer is right under his nose, which is modernize this government's negotiated and sole-source contract policy and do away with taxpayers picking up the tab in overall GNWT contract change orders.

In other words, make companies accountable. Yes, Mr. Speaker, it is that simple. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dolyunny. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. Nadli.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ALEXANDRA FALLS TRAVELERS' CHOICE AWARD 2014

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alexandra Falls was recently named one of the top three waterfalls in western Canada by Ehcanada.com Travel and Adventure. This on-line travel magazine and blog selects its annual Travelers' Choice Award winners based on the number of travelers who visit the waterfalls and contribute to the blog.

Ehcanada.com gets over two billion contributors per year and they gave Alexander Falls and Twin Falls Gorge Territorial Park rave reviews. Tripadvisor.com also gave the park a five star rating.

Mr. Speaker, Twin Falls Gorge is what we call a destination park, and with good reason. It is the first park, travelers reach when they drive into the NWT on Highway No. 1, also known as the Waterfall Highway. Visitors posted on-line descriptions of the spectacular scenery, excellent camping facilities and well-maintained and accessible trail system.

The park has three main areas located along the Hay River just off the Mackenzie Highway linked by a beautiful and dramatic trail, the Alexandra Falls day-use area, the Louse Falls full service campground and day use area and the Escarpment Creek group campsite.

Each one is well marked with road signs going north from the 60<sup>th</sup> parallel at the Alberta-NWT border or south of Enterprise. The features of all areas are easy to access and enjoy. Visitors of all walks of life express enthusiasm for the Alexandra Falls day use area's large RV-friendly parking lot,

picnic spots, fire pits, grass lawns, ready firewood, trails, viewing benches, kitchen shelter and interpretive signs highlighting the culture and traditions of the Dene people and features of the surrounding ecosystem.

Dene storyteller Doug Lamalice, a member of the K'atloodeeche First Nation and the Aboriginal Tourism Champions Advisory Council, offers walking tours in the park, taking visitors on a special journey through the history and culture of the area.

Twin Falls Gorge Territorial Park is an ideal destination for anyone looking for road-accessible outdoor adventure and incredible scenery, whether it's for a day trip or a longer stay. I encourage the GNWT to use this national recognition of Alexandra Falls as one of Canada's top waterfalls to enhance the promotion of the Twin Falls Gorge and tourism throughout the Deh Cho region. Let's make this coming park season the best one yet. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PUBLIC INPUT ON THE MANAGEMENT OF TERRITORIAL LANDS AND RESOURCES

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I listened with interest last week as the Minister for the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations informed us, in a Minister's statement, about the signing of a number of agreements. I would like to congratulate the Premier and the government on the progress made and the accomplishment that these agreements represent. It has been a lot of hard work by all parties, not just the government.

The Premier's statement highlighted the Intergovernmental Agreement on Lands and Resource Management and mentioned that government will be meeting with, discussing with, and hearing from Aboriginal residents about lands and resource management through their governments who have signed that Intergovernmental Agreement. It will, as stated by the Premier, "...let us build the best possible land and resource management policies and practices together and share ideas for legislation and policy covering our respective lands and resources."

I applaud the cooperation evidenced by this agreement and I look forward to many more years of that cooperation and working together, but... There's always a but, eh? My but is this: I am concerned for our non-Aboriginal NWT residents. Will there be an opportunity for them to provide the same kind of input to government as the GNWT cooperates and meets with our Aboriginal governments?

In his statement, the Premier quoted the Wildlife Act and the collaborative work that took place during the consultation on that act. He has to be aware; it was obvious at the time that there were some serious concerns expressed by non-Aboriginal residents during the consultation and negotiations around the Wildlife Act, that the opportunity for input into that process was lacking for them. To give the GNWT credit, an avenue basically acceptable to all was eventually established.

But my question is this: Will the GNWT set up the same type of representative group to allow for consultation and input around the management of our lands and resources? Yes, I know, the government tells us all the time that the GNWT represents all NWT residents. I've heard it many times. But to be truly represented, if we, as the Premier stated, want the best possible management of lands and resources, the best policies and practices, then the government must find and develop an avenue for non-Aboriginal residents to have meaningful input into that process. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON REVIEW OF DEVOLUTION OF LANDS AND RESOURCES LEGISLATION

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday at noon we historically marked the first public review of the Northwest Territories bills related to the devolution of responsibility of lands and resources from Canada to our government. More history will be made next week with the passing of third reading of these bills and others.

The Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning reviewed three bills: the Reindeer Act, the Archeological Sites Act and the Surface Rights Board Act. Like all devolution legislation, these bills have to mirror the existing federal legislation just as the GNWT will mirror the administration themselves after April 1<sup>st</sup>.

The committee's review was thorough, but limited. Usually committee can improve and amend the bills it considers, typically after holding public consultations and seeking advice from the public. In the case of the devolution bills, we could not amend them because then they would not mirror the current federal laws as per our Devolution Agreement.

I want the public to know that we are listening. It is not lost on us that they want changes. We cannot change these bills today without jeopardizing devolution, but we will be able to change them once they become territorial law. Speaking with constituents, I know that they understand this.

In some ways the colonial type of distant government of our lands and resources in Ottawa will now be closer to home on April 1<sup>st</sup> of this year. We can make northern decisions with northern tools to address northern priorities.

I was very pleased during the committee's public hearing on Wednesday that the Premier committed to a public process for reviewing and understanding the devolution legislation soon after it passes. Involving all of our Aboriginal partners is critical.

Along with a lot of my MLA colleagues, I am focused on the future of our lands and resources under our own laws. I look forward to improving a management system that really works for our people and protects the lands and waters.

Later today I will have questions for Mr. Premier. Thank you very much.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MEDICAL TREATMENT OF FORT GOOD HOPE CONSTITUENT

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My Member's statement is about an incident that happened in Fort Good Hope and it will talk about a few things.

A young lady was struck by a skidoo, which at the time had four people on it. It was considered a hit and run incident and at the time when she was hit, she was transported to the local health centre where she was assessed.

It wasn't until a few days later that she was finally medevaced from Fort Good Hope to Yellowknife for treatment. So the question is: Why two days waiting in Good Hope when she was hit by a skidoo?

When she finally arrived in Yellowknife for treatment, she was told the incident shattered her leg. The question is: Why did it take two days to be transported to Yellowknife? Due to the delay in the medical treatment, she was told now that her leg was infected and she now had to be medevaced to Edmonton. When she got to Edmonton her doctor told her that she was very lucky to be alive and asked why they didn't medevac her from Fort Good Hope to Edmonton. Even from Good Hope to Yellowknife she did not have an escort, but from Yellowknife to Edmonton there was an escort available. She actually requested an escort from Fort Good Hope, but the health centre denied that request.

Today she's unable to walk due to the incident. She's on medication. She's asking for help from the health centre and she has these questions that as an MLA here to represent her she wants to know what's going on with the health centres, the local travel and what's going on with the safety of young

people driving snowmobiles all over the place. There are a lot of questions and she's crying out for help. Actually, when she called my constituency office, she was crying on the phone as she was giving her story. Thank you.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ELIMINATION OF POVERTY TRAPS IN THE INCOME SECURITY SYSTEM

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I continue looking at our income security system by seeking ways to avoid the creation of poverty traps. In my last two statements I described how Charles ended up in a system that leaves him struggling to feed his family and that pulls him back down every time he tries to make a bit of money on his own. Charles is not a real person, but we all have constituents, family members and friends in such situations.

The experiences of Charles and his family lead to obvious recommendations:

1. We need a realistic definition of a poverty line based on the actual costs of living in each community. It is obvious from the number provided by Nutrition North that the amounts defined by income support are too low to keep a family out of poverty. The Housing Corporation did some good work on this when they created three zones based on the cost of living.
2. We should not claw back payments and income from people living below the poverty line. Therefore, we must stop clawing back GST rebates, child tax credits and other payments that are intended to help people out of poverty.
3. We should encourage people living below the poverty line to earn money on their own and support them through a zone of income above the poverty line. As people start to become self-supporting, we should then gradually reduce income support instead of clawing back up to 85 percent of their earnings right from the start. Again, the Housing Corporation has done some good work on this with their graduated rent scales.
4. Treat people who apply for income support the same way we treat people who fill out their taxes. Ideally, we should use the same tax forms. This would make the whole process less stressful and reduce the burden on our own staff.
5. Don't require people to hit rock bottom before we help them. It is much more costly to help lift people out of poverty when they have absolutely nothing left than to prevent it in the first place.

6. Focus special effort on children and in particular on single parent families. Yesterday the Minister of ECE implied that Charles should just get a job. Single parent families are doing the most important job I can think of, looking after their children. If we want anything to be different 30 years from now, we need to provide our children with stable homes.

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MR. BROMLEY:** We spend a lot of time and money dealing with the symptoms of poverty: \$5 million approved just yesterday to top up payments for child placements outside the NWT, child protection orders resulting from neglect, high rates of alcoholism. These are all symptoms of poverty. We need to deal with the root cause itself: poverty. Substantive changes in income support such as those suggested will yield returns on such investments through savings in education, health and social services and corrections, and enhance economic activity.

I will have questions.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The Member for Hay River North, Mr. Bouchard.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PROPOSED HAY RIVER SCHOOL EXCHANGE

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last night the community of Hay River had another meeting about the school swap. This one was at the Ecole Boreale with the parents, teachers, some students and some residents of Ecole Boreale, and as well, some regular members of the public.

The people there indicated that they did not support the swap. They felt that Ecole Boreale was going to get a benefit, but they didn't want to see that benefit on the backs of other students in the community. The other reason that they didn't support the idea is Ecole Boreale has ownership to that school. They've been there since the school was created. That is their school. The students indicated that, the parents indicated that, as well as a lot of the staff. Our government has to understand that Hay River does not support the school swap.

As well, I know some of my friends here from Yellowknife do not support the school swap in Yellowknife as well. Our government has to find the funds to do the expansions to the French schools sooner than later.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Moses.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON 2014 'WALK TO TUKTOYAKTUK' FITNESS CHALLENGE

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and recognize the hard work and efforts of the NWT Recreation and Parks Association. From January 7<sup>th</sup> to March 4<sup>th</sup>, residents of the Northwest Territories participated in the event, The Walk to Talk Challenge. With records this year, we had 102 teams participate, and out of the 102 teams that participated, 73 had actually made it to Tuk, and I understand there were other teams that did make it but didn't have their times submitted on time as well.

The grand total of kilometres that were logged was 207,808 kilometres.

---Applause

Now, to put it into perspective, the circumference of the earth is just over 40,000 kilometres, so, really, NWT residents collectively walked around the earth circumference five times. Good job. Way to go to the NWT residents and way to go to the NWTRPA for putting this on.

I have a couple more stats to share here. The hours of walking equaled 48,918 hours of walking. On average, each participant accumulated 245 minutes of weekly exercise. Now, the Canadian physical activity guidelines suggest that each individual at least put in 150 minutes weekly in some type of activity. NWT residents went above and beyond that and put in 95 more minutes weekly, so good job to them.

I just want to make note that this program happens during some of our coldest and darkest months of the year, when some people might be going through depression, might be suffering from Seasonal Affective Disorder, so this program gets people out, active and healthy.

I would just like to take this opportunity to thank the NWTRPA for their ongoing hard work, dedication and commitment to the health and active lifestyles and well-being of the residents of the Northwest Territories. I would also like to congratulate all teams and all residents who participated in this great program. Good job and way to go. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Moses. Item 4, reports of standing and special committees. Item 5, returns to oral questions. Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 7, acknowledgements. Item 8, oral questions. Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

### Oral Questions

#### QUESTION 229-17(5): MEDICAL TREATMENT OF FORT GOOD HOPE CONSTITUENT

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Health and Social Services. I spoke about the young person who was hit by a skidoo and I wanted to ask, after she was taken to the local health centre and assessed, it was only after two days.

Do you know any reasons why it took two days to get her medevaced out of that community?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister of Health, Mr. Abernethy.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have been briefed on the situation. I would be happy to have a conversation with the Member, but I'm not prepared to speak about an individual or her individual case here in the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Speaker, on the medical travel, is that common practice when somebody is seriously injured in the community in the Northwest Territories that it takes a couple days to medevac the person out? Is that in the policy?

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Mr. Speaker, medical travel and medevac are two different policies. With respect to medevacs, obviously we want to get the individuals out of the communities and to appropriate care in as timely a manner as possible. There are obviously some situations where timing might be affected, but we do attempt to get individuals out as quickly as possible.

Once again, I would be happy to talk to the Member in private about the individual case. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you. I'm just looking at the situation here for a medevac. Quickly as possible is probably two days in this situation to get this young lady out in a life and death situation. Then when she gets to Edmonton, the doctors give a different assessment. Are the assessments communicated with communities when there are serious incidents like this? Are these doctors notified and saying, get this person out as quick as possible? In this case it was two days.

What type of situation is there with the health centres when a situation is an emergency where the person needs to get out as quickly as possible?

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Mr. Speaker, it's difficult to answer the questions without getting into the specifics of the individual and I'm not prepared to speak about the individual case. If an individual is injured in a community, usually the community health nurses will be in touch with the Stanton

emerg if that's the particular location where a doctor is available and where somebody needs to go to.

We are moving forward with Med-Response, which is actually a program that will give all the health centres and all the communities direct access to a physician who will then help coordinate medical travel and expedite the process where appropriate. That system goes live on April 1<sup>st</sup> and we're looking forward to that system. Once it goes live, I would love to invite the Social Programs committee to come to the location where it is and meet the staff and look at the types of services we're providing. But it will improve this type of response in the future, recognizing that there are always outside influences, such as weather and other things, that could possibly affect medical travel.

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

**MR. YAKELEYA:** I look forward to the review of the medical travel in this situation. It has certainly failed her in this case here.

I want to ask the Minister, is it a policy when a patient from any community requests an escort in this type of situation, is an escort then automatically granted or is it within the power of the nurse to deny the medical escort for a patient?

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you. Once again, medical travel and medevacs are different things recovered under different policies. We are currently doing the review, which I've talked about a number of times in this House, on the Medical Travel Policy and I look forward to sharing those results and that progress with Members as we move forward.

With respect to medevacs, we are currently out for an RFP. The RFP closed last week and we hope to have a provider for air ambulance in the coming while here, but when it comes to medevacs, the ability to have an escort could be dependent on a number of things, plane sizes and all these types of things. So the answer isn't immediate and it isn't an immediate yes. Thank you.

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

#### QUESTION 230-17(5): ELIMINATION OF POVERTY TRAPS IN THE INCOME SECURITY SYSTEM

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to follow up on my Member's statement with questions for the Minister of the social envelope today, Minister Abernethy. The Minister has been working hard on an Anti-Poverty Strategy and more recently an Anti-Poverty Action Plan. The strategy and plan are based around five pillars.

Could the Minister explain which pillar addresses the poverty traps that are built into our income

security programs that I've been talking about for the last three days? Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister of Health, Mr. Abernethy.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have the Member's comments and I appreciate his perspective. I agree that we need to do more to support the individuals, to break down the barriers to keep them out of poverty. We do have five pillars: children and family support, healthy living and reaching our potential, safe and affordable housing, sustainable communities and integration of services. I think all of these combined start addressing the issues. Maybe not to the degree the Member would like to see. Clearly, some more work is necessary and I'm happy to work with the other Ministers on the Social Envelope Committee to try and break down some of these barriers to benefit all of our residents and keep them out of that poverty trap that the Member continues to refer to. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I appreciate the Minister's openness here. I know the Minister has stated that he's committed to eradicating poverty and I believe him and fully support this goal. But I'd like to know, how will we know we have reached that goal? The income support system traps people in an income zone that does not even provide people enough to eat.

Will the Anti-Poverty Action Plan develop a definition of a poverty line or perhaps a poverty zone, income zone, that will allow us to know what we are aiming for? Mahsi.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you. I've had that discussion, that exact discussion with people all over the Northwest Territories, including on Cabinet and Members themselves and members of our original action team that put together the framework. I'll have that discussion with the group that's actually working on the territorial action plan, as well, but the feedback I get on a regular basis is how do you truly define poverty, and I hear that that's what the Member is asking us to do, but many individuals who might fall under what one person might consider a poverty line don't feel like they're living in poverty. It's about an ability to live life to its fullest, depending on the expectations of the individual.

So it may be really complicated to come up with that true definition. If the Member has something in mind, I'd love to hear it. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you. I think there are a lot of people out there that could make suggestions that are caught in these poverty traps, but I'll take the Minister's offer and work with him on that.

I know the Minister and I have the same goal here, so I hope he takes these points as constructive and friendly suggestions.

Would the Minister commit to including the six recommendations I made this morning on income support in the anti-poverty work that he is doing? Mahsi.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** I have a copy of the statements that the Member made today and I'm happy to take it to the Social Envelope Committee of Cabinet to have some further discussions. I'll also share it with the working group that we have working on the territorial action plan and we'll continue to have those discussions. I'm not committing to necessarily doing these things, but I think it's important to have the discussion and finding a way to get to the same goal that the Member and I share. Thank you.

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

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Minister. I don't claim to have all the answers. A critical look is more than fair.

This morning the Minister was on the radio talking about child protection with the greatest source factor being neglect. Does the Minister share my assessment that child protection issues and many of social, health and corrections issues are actually symptoms of families living in poverty, and investing in poverty reduction will address this underlying cause saving us money in the long term?

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** The Member and I were both on the review of the Child and Family Services Committee in the 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly, and that was one of the clear recommendations, and we believe that. I still believe that is one of the key findings of that review that we did and is one of the reasons that I've worked hard on the Anti-Poverty Action Plan and the Anti-Poverty Framework. I continue to champion for the territorial development of a territorial action plan. The answer is yes, I think we can do better in that area. This morning I talked about neglect on the radio and that we need to move forward with some fundamental change on how we're providing supports to families to avoid having children apprehended.

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

QUESTION 231-17(5):  
REVIEW OF DEVOLUTION OF LANDS  
AND RESOURCES LEGISLATION

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Earlier in the day I mentioned in my Member's statement about devolution and some of the legislation that this House will be passing. Mr. Premier committed to a public review of the devolution legislation starting soon after it's passed or after April 1<sup>st</sup>.

Could he describe how he expects the process to unfold so that the public knows what to expect?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Premier, Mr. McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The honourable Member will be very pleased to know that we've already started that process. We have started a process of informing the public, educating the public with a media blitz whereby we are putting inserts about devolution in the media outlets, and as we go forward, once we know devolution will, in fact, happen on April 1<sup>st</sup>, we will expand that so that we can have more interaction with the general public.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** The Premier has done well to engage the four Aboriginal groups. How does the Premier prepare to propose to involve the other Aboriginal governments, especially the Dehcho and the Akaitcho regions, in the review process?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** We are having active discussions with the other Aboriginal governments who have not signed on as of yet. Our objective is to have 100 percent of the Aboriginal governments sign on. The federal government has indicated that their financial contributions will cease after one year, but as a government we will welcome the Aboriginal governments that have not signed on yet. Preferably, our objective is within a year, but I think it will be a standing offer.

We have in place with the Dehcho, a working group of senior officials with oversight provided by myself and the grand chief of the Dehcho First Nations, and I think we're making very good progress. We're both going through our different processes to do the due diligence and we're hoping that we will be able to do the same thing with the Akaitcho Government.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** I'm pleased to hear progress on the Dehcho and Akaitcho fronts there.

Just with respect to the bills, are there any significant restrictions on amending the devolution laws, and if so, what are they and what are these limits?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** For the bills that are passed and given assent to by this government, this government has the authority to deal with them like any other legislation. Obviously, our expectation is that we should at least let them run, have us implement them so that we can get them going. We said we always want a seamless transition, and we recognize that we have some very important responsibilities so that we have to work with the people and also with the third parties and the other Aboriginal governments that are out there so that we can have some certainty and we can have some due process. But the way this government works, any legislation that we have, this government can change it. Obviously, there's due process for doing that as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Premier has indicated that he's already doing a public awareness campaign, but just in terms of a public review, I know there are many bills and, of course, I don't expect for them to review them all, but after April 1<sup>st</sup> when would the Premier begin a more extensive public review process? Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Obviously, when we discussed this we talked about involving Aboriginal governments. I know that committee also has some ideas of who should be involved. We will take all of those ideas and work with committee to come up with a process that would be acceptable to the majority. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Member for Range Lake, Mr. Dolynny.

QUESTION 232-17(5):  
SOLE-SOURCED AND  
NEGOTIATED CONTRACTS

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, like many residents, am concerned with this government's antiquated negotiated and sole-source contracting policy and how the taxpayers are forced to be holding the bag of its mismanagement. The recently tabled response to my question on GNWT contracts over \$5,000 does raise awareness of this concern. My questions today are for the Minister of Finance.

Can the Minister comment why taxpayers were forced to pick up the tab of \$34 million in the GNWT contract change orders in 2012-2013? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Change orders often result from when you're doing major renovations and things are uncovered during the course of a project that were not anticipated or seen by anybody, including engineers or the architects or the people doing the project management. It's all tied into required work to complete the project according to the schedule and according to the agreed to project plan. All the capital plan is funded with taxpayers' dollars, as are our O and M budgets for the most part. Thank you.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Mr. Speaker, the negotiated and sole-source contract policies were designed years ago when there were all but a handful of Aboriginal companies and they wanted to build capacity in the Northwest Territories. Today we have well over 500 with the same mandate.

Can the Minister indicate to the House why the government has not tried to modernize this policy? Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** In fact, there were changes in the last government, I believe. Thank you.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Mr. Speaker, this is news to me. I have not uncovered those changes.

The issue of companies dealing with market saturation or market economy is all too real in many jurisdictions of our territory, yet the negotiated and sole-source contract policy makes no mention of such.

Can the Minister of Finance indicate by what policy this government judges when a market is oversaturated with competing Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal businesses and still grants a negotiated or sole-source contract? Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** In the last government there were changes made to BIP and to the Negotiated Contracts Policy which we follow. We also have criteria that we use that are part of that policy. As well, in the North we have had agreements in the past in terms of agreements with the Aboriginal governments when it comes to contract use and allotment in their areas. So the issue of market disruption and the issue that the Member referred to as saturation, I'm not quite sure what the Member considers market saturation with Aboriginal businesses, but we try to consider all the variables. Thank you.

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

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have no problem explaining my term of saturation with the Minister in his office, but my fourth question is: Will this Minister commit to the House that the negotiated and sole-source contract policy will undergo a robust review by Cabinet, by committee and the public during the life of the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly? Mr. Speaker, a simple yes or no will suffice. Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** It's difficult to just say yes or no to an extensive array of questions the Member just presented. What I will say is this with regard to his last question, if there is an interest from committee, we're going to be starting the business planning cycle for the next budget year, '15-16, and if it is the wish of committee, we would be willing to fully discuss and review whatever policies any committee wants to during that process. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Moses.

QUESTION 233-17(5):  
ACCESS TO GNWT  
HUMAN RESOURCE FILES

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did request some concerns from constituents back home regarding some of the HR practices being presented to people who want to get into the workforce and also with some members that want to access some of their HR files.

I want to ask the Minister of Human Resources what is the policy for any GNWT employee, current or past, that would like to access their Human Resources personnel files. Is there a policy and how does one go about accessing them? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Moses. The honourable Minister of Human Resources, Mr. Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The process is current or former employees of the GNWT wishing to review their files have access to them. They are able to go to a Human Resources office where their file is contained and they are able to review their file with a human resources officer. They are free to look at their entire file if they wish to do so. Thank you.

**MR. MOSES:** Most recently, I heard that we had some GNWT employees who were trying to access their file and were told they had to go through ATIPP and pay the fees to access their own personnel files, which I believe under the UNW Agreement they have the right to look at their files.

If so, when did this practice come in, GNWT employees now having to pay \$25 to access their own personnel files? Is that something new that HR has implemented and when did it occur? I'm sure committee hasn't heard anything on that, so I would like a little more information on that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** As I indicated, if the employee then wishes to have a copy of the entire file or is asking for the entire file to be given to, say, a lawyer or something, for that process the entire file will be copied to the employee through an ATIPP request. Thank you.

**MR. MOSES:** Just moving on with more of these human resources issues that have come to my attention, when we're trying to get casual employees into the workforce, in some cases the individuals have to go through a criminal records check and there's a cost to that. Most recently, I've heard when people are seeking employment with the GNWT, when they are filling out their forms and applications, now they have to look for a Commissioner for Oaths to sign off on the new forms.

I just want to know if the Minister would look at waiving those fees or if there is a process and how we can get this done a lot quicker? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** The Department of Human Resources has many employees who are a Commissioner for Oaths. We are able to provide the signatures or signed documents for people who are looking for employment or need some documents signed in front of a Commissioner for Oaths free of charge by our employee who are commissioners. Thank you.

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

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regards to signing off on these forms, if the Commissioner for Oaths is not available to sign it off or they might be working or out of town – some communities don't have too many of them – it seems that an easy fix to this may be to have someone in the Human Resources department sign off on these forms.

Could the Minister look at developing a position or giving someone in the Human Resources department authority to sign off on these? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Commissioners for Oaths are trained by the Department of Justice. They are given the circumstances under which they sign off on statements or declarations by various individuals. I'm positive that if a person is to receive the required training from the Department of Justice and recognizes the responsibilities and knows the responsibilities of signing off declarations under all circumstances, then we would work with any communities or any groups of people who wish to try to get a commissioner to sign off on documents. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Blake.

QUESTION 234-17(5):  
PARKING ISSUES AT  
MOOSE KERR SCHOOL

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week I did a Member's statement on a parking lot for Moose Kerr School. I have some questions for the Minister of Public Works.

I would like an update on what's been happening with the need for parking at Moose Kerr School. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have any recent updates on the parking lot at

Moose Kerr. I know that we have passed information on to the department and we had asked for some information. So as soon as the information is available, I can pass it on to the Member. Thank you.

**MR. BLAKE:** When can the community expect to see a parking lot in place at Moose Kerr School?

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** I don't know what date or if there would be a parking lot at the school at this time. I have indicated to the department that it appears as though the community feels, for safety reasons, that there should be an area where individuals are able to pull off of the main road in order to pick up their children. So, that's something the community considers a priority and we are taking a serious look at it.

**MR. BLAKE:** As I mentioned in my statement, the community is very concerned about the safety issues that traffic has on that facility.

Would the Minister commit to having a parking lot in place for this coming fall? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** I would certainly like to get some feedback from the department if there are any detriments on putting a parking lot at the Moose Kerr School in Aklavik. If there isn't any and the money is there, I do believe it is part of maintenance. We'll take a look at it for sure. Thank you.

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

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That sounded like a yes. I'd like to ask the Minister, was that a yes? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** I certainly am committed to having the department work with the Department of Education to put a parking lot at Moose Kerr School. It appears to be a priority for the community and we'll work with the community to try to make it happen as soon as possible. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Bouchard.

QUESTION 235-17(5):  
MACKENZIE VALLEY WINTER ROAD

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the Minister of Transportation some questions about the Mackenzie Valley road. He had a Minister's speech about it today, and last week I was asking questions on the maintenance of the road.

My first question for the Minister is: What is the current status of the Mackenzie Valley road? Is it closed to nighttime only or have we been able to keep it open all week?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. Minister of Transportation, Mr. Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Due to the current temperatures, all of the ice roads that are in our system are currently under normal operations.

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you. In the Minister's statement he talked about ConocoPhillips and industry participating in the road construction. I'm just wondering what kind of feedback we're getting with these closures from industry. Are they concerned about the length of time and the early closures of these roads?

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** We are not anticipating early closures. In fact, each year as we build the winter roads they improve. Sometimes it is extreme warm weather for the season and then there could be some problems, but this year we're not anticipating any problems. We have sent out a communique saying that there was a possibility, because we want to give industry as much warning as possible. People don't like to be told things at the last minute. So we like to kind of forecast a bit in advance of what we think we're going to be doing, but at this time normal operations. Cold weather doesn't seem to be an issue. Thank you.

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Mr. Speaker, the importance of these roads is obvious. In the beginning, getting them open and then keeping them open as long as we can is very key. That's the success of the road.

So I guess the question to the Minister is – I also questioned last week about the maintenance – are we continuing to maintain these roads currently or are we shut down on maintenance and letting the weather take its course?

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you. All of the maintenance is contracted out to the various contractors in the area and their job is to keep the maintenance up on the road right up until the time when we determine that the road is no longer open and closed to the public. So we're expecting that the maintenance will continue with normal operations right up until we announce that the road will be closed due to weather. Thank you.

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

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm a little frustrated with those answers about the maintenance because I'm getting a different story from the Sahtu than what the department is giving us.

But I guess my next question is: What is the department's communication protocol? I know the Minister indicated in his speech about the website, but how else is the public to know that these roads are shutting down to nighttime only and eventually when they're getting ready to close? What kind of

information are we giving them and what kind of lead time are we giving that it's going to be shut down within 24 hours or when it's going to be shut down? Thank you.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you. I think the first vehicles that usually quit running on the roads are the heavy traffic when the season changes and the weather gets too warm where we can't maintain the road for heavy traffic, but at this time if any industry looks on the website they will see that if we're talking specifically about the road between Wrigley and Tulita it's at 64,000 kilograms right now and there's one detour that's also marked at Steep Creek, there's a detour. The road access into Deline is at 50,000 kilograms. Tulita bypass is at 64,000 kilograms. Also, from Tulita to Norman Wells the road is open up to 64,000 kilograms. That's the highest rating or weight that we have on the winter road, so all of the roads in the Sahtu seem to be functioning normally. The road from Norman Wells to Fort Good hope is at 50,000 kilograms. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. The Member for Deh Cho, Mr. Nadli.

#### QUESTION 236-17(5):

#### PROMOTION OF WATERFALLS HIGHWAY AND TWIN FALLS GORGE TERRITORIAL PARK

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. Is the Minister aware of the Alexandra Falls recent designation as one of the top three waterfall destinations in western Canada and what is being done to recognize this award? Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Ramsay.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've been getting a lot of accolades lately for our waterfalls here in the Northwest Territories. I know the Member spoke of Alexandra Falls earlier today as well as Virginia Falls. Certainly in the South Slave region with the Waterfalls Route along Highway No. 1, we have a tremendous opportunity to market that award and certainly look forward to if the Member has suggestions or Members have suggestions on how we can enhance and promote that waterfalls route, we'd be happy to hear those suggestions. As far as the department having any specific plans to build upon that award, I certainly will be working with the department to ensure we get everything we can out of that accolade. Thank you.

**MR. NADLI:** I like the idea of trying to build up on the positive. What is being done to enhance tourism in the Deh Cho, including Twin Falls Gorge Territorial Park in 2014, this upcoming season? Mahsi.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you. We have the Deh Cho Connection, which is a partnership with Alberta and British Columbia on the Deh Cho Trail. We continue to build upon that. There's a diamond giveaway on an annual basis and a passport system that folks get stamps along the route. That's one way that we promote the opportunities to camp and visit our parks and attractions in the South Slave part of the territory and also into the Nahendeh riding as well. Thank you.

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you. Will the department work with NWT Tourism to assist their work to promote the waterfalls highway and the Twin Falls Gorge Territorial Park? Mahsi.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you. I'll certainly talk to my officials at ITI and Northwest Territories Tourism to see how we can build upon that accolade for the waterfalls route, Alexandra Falls. We certainly have the attractions, we just have to do the best we can to market those and attract more people here. That's exactly what we're going to do. Thank you.

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

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister had indicated an effort to market some of the wonderful tourism and parks that we have in the NWT. I wanted to get an indication of when we can expect an effort to market similarly to try to promote the Deh Cho Bridge. Are there any plans for that? Mahsi.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you. In my former life as the Transportation Minister I know the Member was very interested in the Deh Cho Bridge, what it meant in terms of tourism opportunities for the community of Fort Providence in his riding. I really do believe that that bridge has tremendous potential to bring tourists to his community and to his riding. Certainly, if there are opportunities to work with the community of Fort Providence to maximize the opportunity to attract people to the riding and to the community of Fort Providence, that's something we're very much interested in. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 237-17(5):  
FUNDING FOR COURT-ORDERED  
INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've been around this Assembly long enough to know that when there are things that are ordered by the courts this government responds accordingly.

I would like to ask the Minister of Finance, do we, as a government, have funds set aside for emergencies, unforeseen things such as a court

ordering this government to build a school. Do we have such a fund?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We don't have an emergency fund but if there is a requirement, as a government, we do the things necessary to comply.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** In the past we have seen unforeseen circumstances such as schools that have burned down, infrastructure that was unexpectedly removed from our inventory. Somehow we have come around to replace such infrastructure, and I would imagine that a similar approach could be taken to finding the money to respond favourably to the court-ordered construction of gymnasiums for these two French schools.

I'd like to ask the Minister, what would be the process for appropriating such funds?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** There would be a request coming forward to the FMB through either Justice or Education, or in this case maybe Public Works. If it's a capital requirement to meet those obligations then we'd be making those decisions based on those recommendations.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** I'd like to ask the Minister if he is aware of any submission that is already prepared or is being prepared with respect to responding to the order to build this gymnasium.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Work has been done by the various departments in anticipation of looking at the impact of the court order and looking at what would be required to comply.

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

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With the support of this Assembly, are this Minister and this government prepared to proceed to respond to this court order without further expense incurred trying to come up with ways to avoid it?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** We have, as a government, been looking at every avenue to try to come to a satisfactory resolution, a compromise that would address both the court order and in some cases look at the surplus in school space that is an issue in some communities, but at the end of the day this issue will be resolved.

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

QUESTION 238-17(5):  
PUBLIC INPUT ON THE MANAGEMENT  
OF TERRITORIAL LANDS AND RESOURCES

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are addressed to the Premier today. I'd like to follow up on my statement and ask him a few questions with regard to the Intergovernmental Agreement on Lands and Resource Management. I recognize that that agreement is between our "public government GNWT and Aboriginal governments." But, as I mentioned in my statement, there is a need for non-Aboriginal residents to have an opportunity to have some input into lands and resource management in our territory.

My first question to the Premier would be to ask him how does Bill 16, which is the NWT Intergovernmental Agreement on Lands and Resource Management Act, what is in that act that will address my concerns and those of my constituents?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Premier.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The whole premise of this government here, its Intergovernmental Council is made up of governments that own land, and together we will manage land in the Northwest Territories. We have this public government structure that has 19 MLAs, and through this process we will represent all of the interests of the people of the Northwest Territories.

**MS. BISARO:** To the Premier, thank you, I guess. I recognize that the belief is that the GNWT represents all residents, and I agree that, yes, the GNWT should do that, but there needs to be an avenue for non-Aboriginal residents to have some kind of input, and I think the Premier should know that there are many times when residents feel that there's a lack of an opportunity for them to provide input into lands and resource management and many other things. The Premier mentions that we have 19 MLAs, and I think he's suggesting that that's the avenue that residents should use.

I'd like to ask him is that the only avenue that he sees for input from residents to this government? What else is in place now to facilitate input from residents to the government?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Obviously, there's more than just this Legislative Assembly. For example, Yellowknife has seven MLAs that people in Yellowknife can just phone and walk to their MLAs' doors and provide input. We also have other avenues. We have committee meetings. We have departments where we consult, and then we consult and we consult on every imaginable kind of policy, and we seek input and then we go back and go back to the committees for their input and then, as a government, we take a position or develop a policy and then we would work with our Aboriginal

governments on the Intergovernmental Council for those matters related to land.

**MS. BISARO:** I just have to say that the Premier mentions a whole host of things that are out there, but committee meetings are, I would say, probably 90 to 95 percent closed meetings and there's no opportunity for public input there.

The Premier mentions consultation. What kind of consultation, and I'm talking about consultation specifically for residents who are not represented by another form of government.

Again to the Premier, is there a mechanism right now that exists so that residents can go to a body other than their MLA, that they can go to a body and they can provide input on a specific issue before all of the NWT?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** This government spends a tremendous amount of dollars on consulting with the general public on any kind of strategy. I could probably list off about two dozen, but I guess the ones that come to mind are the Water Strategy and the forest management, devolution and what have you. We go out and we give everybody the opportunity for input. We go to the communities. We call meetings and we also use the Internet, our website, where we put out information and we seek feedback. There are all kinds of avenues for the public to have input into our policies.

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

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I find it unbelievable that this government is going to go out and consult on every issue that comes before it. There are any number of decisions that are made by Premier and Cabinet on any number of issues into which residents have no input. There is a need for a formal mechanism for our residents to have an opportunity to have input into lands and resource management.

I'd like to ask the Premier, will he consider establishing some sort of a group similar to the Wildlife Act stakeholder group that was set up to handle input from non-Aboriginal residents, and will he consider the same sort of a group for lands and resource management?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** We will find a way to get input from people that have large amounts of land that have some information to contribute.

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

QUESTION 239-17(5):  
ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES  
FOR SAHTU BUSINESSES

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of ITI. I want to ask the Minister, within our settlement in the Sahtu

Dene/Metis Land Claim Agreement, we negotiated chapter 12, I believe, on the economic measures.

I want to ask the Minister in regard to this chapter, what is the interpretation or what we agreed to in chapter 12 with the Government of the Northwest Territories with this chapter to help out the Sahtu business in regard to the economic opportunities.

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

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through the programs and services that ITI provide across the territory and specifically in the Sahtu, we've seen the number of especially Aboriginal-owned businesses increase exponentially in the Sahtu over the past three years. We continue to provide support in this area. Through this budgeting process recently concluded, we've added a business development officer at the Sahtu regional office in Norman Wells and we continue to look for opportunities to work with land owners and business owners and Aboriginal leaders in the Sahtu to ensure that money is available and opportunity is available for those that want to get into business. Thank you.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Speaker, in the economic measures chapter, if there is going to be any type of changes to the policies and programs and services, is there an opportunity that this Minister will then sit down with the Sahtu leadership and discuss the type of changes that could possibly be coming forth or whatever that there's going to be a shift from this Constitution written document?

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** I can certainly look to DAAIR, I suppose, for some guidance. I will be travelling to the Member's riding in April and if there's an opportunity to sit down to discuss these types of things with the leaders in the Sahtu at that time, I would certainly be happy to do that. Thank you.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Finally I get a Minister coming to the Sahtu. I would be interested in sitting down with the leadership and with the Minister. This chapter is very important because of what's happening in the Sahtu. We don't have an all-weather road right now, so it makes it difficult to jump on any type of economic development other than what we have in the short period of a winter road season.

I want to ask the Minister, with this chapter here in regards to any future changes, definitely the leadership would be upfront and involved in discussing what changes possibly may happen with chapter 13.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Mr. Speaker, I certainly look forward to the discussion. With all that is happening in the Sahtu, it is very important that we get on the same page and that opportunities that are there are acted upon and that the investments

are made in the region so that the people of the region can benefit. Thank you.

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

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the communities of Fort Good Hope, Deline and Colville Lake, most of the action right now is happening around Tulita and Norman Wells, so there are plenty of opportunities, but also for the other Sahtu communities. Specifically Fort Good Hope, Deline and Colville Lake there isn't much activity happening there.

With programs and infrastructure that goes into those communities, is the Minister following the intent and the spirit of chapter 13 in working with the communities on any type of infrastructure projects that would be going into those communities?

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Mr. Speaker, we continue to work with the Sahtu Secretariat in the Sahtu. We also work with communities to develop economic plans. We've provided some funding to get people together to discuss economic opportunities in the Sahtu and we will continue to do that. We will continue to work toward that type of activity that currently is taking place in and around Norman Wells and Tulita. We're hoping that that type of activity expands so that there's more opportunity in communities like Fort Good Hope, Deline and Colville Lake. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Blake.

QUESTION 240-17(5):  
GRAVEL STOCKPILING IN AKLAVIK

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to continue my questions to the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. I'd like to ask the Minister – as you know, Aklavik is an isolated community – will the Minister work with the community to stockpile gravel in the community to build a parking lot at the Moose Kerr School?

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

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We'd be more than willing to work with the community; however, at the end of the day, the decision is usually made by the community as to whether they're going to have a gravel haul or not. They will canvas other departments to see if there's need for gravel. You did say Municipal and Community Affairs...

---Laughter

...and I have to get on TV.

---Laughter

So we'll work with the community and they will identify their gravel needs and we'll continue to work with them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. BLAKE:** Sorry, I got mixed up with those two departments, but while the Minister is giving...

---Laughter

I know the community has been planning to stockpile gravel to upgrade their roads in the community, so is the Minister willing to work with the community to ensure that there are funds available for that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** The community does have funds available. They are able to use the money provided through our department. Again, they will work with a number of the other groups. They may check with the NWT Housing Corporation to see if there might be a requirement for gravel. If there is, it will give them a pretty good indication how much they want to stockpile. They, in turn, would sell that gravel to whoever needs it in the community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 9, written questions. Item 10, returns to written questions. Item 11, replies to opening address. Item 12, petitions. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. Mr. Abernethy.

### Tabling of Documents

#### TABLED DOCUMENT 61-17(5): CANCER IN THE NWT 2001-2010

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document, titled "Cancer in the Northwest Territories 2001-2010." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Mr. Nadli.

#### TABLED DOCUMENT 62-17(5): DEHCHO FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP RESOLUTION AND ATTACHMENT

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table Dehcho First Nations leadership resolution and the attachment from the February 4 to 6, 2014, winter leadership meeting held in Fort Providence. The resolution calls upon the GNWT to honour long-standing commitments made in 2006 by the forest management division of ENR to develop regulations and policies in support of the non-timber forest product industry. The resolution insists that these measures be in place prior to the 2014 harvesting season. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Mr. Bromley.

#### TABLED DOCUMENT 63-17(5): INCOME SECURITY FOR ALL CANADIANS – UNDERSTANDING GUARANTEED INCOME

#### TABLED DOCUMENT 64-17(5): THE CASE FOR A GUARANTEED INCOME – LIFTING PEOPLE FROM POVERTY: FAIRLY, EFFICIENTLY AND EFFECTIVELY

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table two documents. The first is called "Income Security for all Canadians." The second is an infographic that has a lot of good stuff in it, called "The Case for a Guaranteed Income – Lifting People from Poverty: Fairly, Efficiently and Effectively." Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Item 15, notices of motion. Mr. Nadli.

**MR. NADLI:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, March 10, 2014, I will move the following motion: now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Weledeh, that this Legislative Assembly strongly recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories take the steps necessary to ensure widespread access to... Sorry, I have the wrong motion, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Could someone get the right motion for Mr. Nadli?

**MR. NADLI:** Sorry about that. Whereas non-timber forest products, including wild mushrooms, can offer wide-ranging health and economic benefits; and whereas, world-wide demand for gourmet mushrooms...

I give notice that on Monday, March 10, I will move the following motion: now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Weledeh, that this Legislative Assembly strongly recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories take the steps... Again, is this the right motion? Sorry.

---Interjection

**MR. NADLI:** It is? Okay. ...take the necessary steps to ensure widespread access to automated external defibrillators or AEDS...

---Interjection

**MR. SPEAKER:** We'll get this sorted out. In the meantime, notices of motion, Mrs. Groenewegen.

### Notices of Motion

#### MOTION 16-17(5): REQUEST TO GOVERNMENT OF CANADA TO EXTEND MAXIMUM TERM OF 17<sup>TH</sup> LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, March 10, 2014, I will move the following motion: now therefore I move,

seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that this Legislative Assembly request the Government of Canada to propose to Parliament an amendment to the Northwest Territories Act that would authorize this current 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly to extend its term to a period not exceeding five years; and further, that the Premier communicate this request to the Prime Minister; and furthermore, should federal legislation be enacted as requested, the Board of Management of the Legislative Assembly propose a bill at the earliest opportunity to defer the next NWT election to October 2016. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

### Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

BILL 20:  
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT  
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES),  
NO. 4, 2013-2014

BILL 21:  
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT  
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES),  
NO. 2, 2014-2015

BILL 22:  
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT  
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES),  
NO. 4, 2012-2013

BILL 23:  
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT  
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES),  
NO. 4, 2013-2014

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, March 10, 2014, I will move that Bill 20, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 4, 2013-2014, be read for the first time.

I give notice that on Monday, March 10, 2014, I will move that Bill 21, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2014-2015, be read for the first time.

I give notice that on Monday, March 10, 2014, I will move that Bill 22, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2012-2013, be read for the first time.

I give notice that on Monday, March 10, 2014, I will move that Bill 23, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2013-2014, be read for the first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Item 17, motions. Mr. Yakeleya.

### Motions

MOTION 14-17(5):  
EXPANSION OF POLICING  
AND NURSING SERVICES,  
CARRIED

**MR. YAKELEYA:** WHEREAS there are 10 communities in the Northwest Territories without resident RCMP officers;

AND WHEREAS there are nine communities in the Northwest Territories without resident nurses;

AND WHEREAS both policing and nursing services are critical to the health and safety of all communities and their residents;

AND WHEREAS the lack of these services has continued for many years despite ongoing pressure from communities and Regular Members to expand them;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Range Lake, that this Legislative Assembly strongly recommends that the government identify at least two priority communities for new nursing and/or policing services and provide those services within the 2014-2015 fiscal year;

AND FURTHER, that by December 31, 2014, the government complete long-term plans, working with community governments and including timelines for implementation, to expand police and nursing services into communities now lacking those services;

AND FURTHERMORE, that the government provide a comprehensive response to this motion within 120 days.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This motion speaks about this government, past governments and the state of our communities. Ten communities in the Northwest Territories do not have a resident RCMP in their community and I happen to represent one of those communities. Other Members also have their communities. But more importantly it talks about nine communities that do not have resident nurses.

In the Northwest Territories, safety and health are very important to our people and we have have and have-not communities in regards to policing and nursing. So, I'm calling on this government to bring forward some type of business plans to look at how we start putting RCMP and/or nurses, because they kind of go together with the new policy, into our smaller communities where communities can enjoy some level of safety and comfort and security like other communities that do have full-time nurses,

full-time RCMP and they can be in the same situation.

We have a two-tiered type of operation, services of communities in the Northwest Territories. I have been asking this government for the last 10 years, and Members who have been here longer, we've got to make a change. We've got to start investing in some of these critical, essential services in the communities with RCMP and nursing.

I'm looking forward to seeing something come forward from this government. So far we have 577 days to the next election. We'll find out if that's going to change in the next couple of days, but I wanted to say that there were many suggestions from this side on who we can work with on this issue and I'm bringing this motion forward, looking for Members to support and work with this government and have this government come forward to say yes, we have a plan, we have a plan in place and we want to. Let's put the smiles of safety and security on those communities without RCMP and without nursing. Let's modernize our communities and say you're important to us, we will do this for you so they don't have to continue to hear all the reasons why they can't do it. Let's do something about that. That's what this motion is speaking to. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. To the motion. I'll allow the seconder to the motion, Mr. Dolynny.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank Mr. Yakeleya for bringing this motion forward. First of all, I want to deal with the elephant in this room and that is why is a big city MLA concerned about a small community issue. This is important to me and it's simple. This motion is an issue of equality, it's an issue of accountability and it's also an issue of class management. I will try to address these three ideologies in support of Mr. Yakeleya's motion.

First of all, equality. Why are we allowing certain communities to be considered a tier 2 or second class to what is considered norm in larger centres in the Northwest Territories? Why should certain residents not feel secure or have access to basic health care needs? It's clear you're tethering on a human rights issue and ignoring the obvious will cost us more in the long run than just doing nothing, and this will cause a great divide of northern unity.

Second is the issue of accountability. Earlier this session the Minister of Justice alluded to the cost of setting up an RCMP service and new committee could run the government approximately \$11 million a community and it would cost us to operate about \$40 million if we were to implement all these communities. Yes, I think everyone would agree this is a costly ask within the shadow of this motion. However, this motion only speaks to the identification of two communities and, furthermore,

that the government complete a long-term plan, work with community governments and include timelines for an implementation program, nothing more.

Finally, I'd like to deal with the subject of cost management. It's clear the cost of set-up of implementation and ongoing operations for RCMP and nursing stations is modest. However, I'd like to equally challenge this government to question the long-term ongoing costs of unneeded medevacs, or on police, bootlegging and other elements of crime or health related issues which are eating away at precious dollars in our budget.

The question of maybe having an RCMP and nurse program could save us money in the long run; we really don't know. So we need, as this motion indicates, a proper cost analysis and incorporate all of our stakeholders so that we can find out whether or not this is truly, indeed, a cost savings.

In the end, this motion speaks to the softer ask of this government to do what is fair and reasonable for all of our communities, especially for their health and their safety. This is why it makes sense for this big city MLA to support this small community motion. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. To the motion. Mr. Menicoche.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much. There is outstanding support from the Yellowknife Members and I want the support from Cabinet as well.

As the MLA for Nahendeh I'm the MLA with the most small communities. Actually, four of my communities don't have the nursing and policing services that this motion speaks about. Most particular, I've been up here time and time again trying to get those same services for the community of Wrigley.

In order to get full Cabinet support I'm going to move an amendment here, Mr. Speaker, that we remove the reference to add to the budget in the 2014-15 year because Cabinet perception is of us adding to the budget we just passed. I think they're almost compelled to vote against something that adds to the budget. So I want Cabinet support and I hope they vote in favour. I know that they're going to be silent on the issue, but I think that by removing this reference to the budget that they won't vote against it.

Also, I encourage Cabinet, as well, because there's room in this year's planning process, which begins around July, August. So for planning for the business plans, I believe by softening the motion, as it were, we can encourage our Cabinet friends to include the policing and nursing for small communities in the business planning.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I've got a motion to amend.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. To the amendment to the motion. Mr. Menicoche.

MOTION TO AMEND MOTION 14-17(5),  
EXPANSION OF POLICING  
AND NURSING SERVICES,  
CARRIED

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River South, that Motion 14-17(5) be amended by deleting the words “and provide those services within the 2014-2015 fiscal year” from the first paragraph of the resolution portion of the motion. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. To the amendment to the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. The motion is carried.

---Carried

To the motion. Mrs. Groenewegen.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the mover and the seconder of this motion for bringing it forward. I spoke to this issue in the House last week. Basically I think it is unacceptable that in the year 2014, with a budget of this government of over \$1.6 billion, with office towers full of bureaucrats here in the headquarters that we cannot find the money or the creativity to find a way to put health care professionals and policing services into these small communities. It's not acceptable anymore. We have to find a solution. We must prioritize our agenda and our initiatives. This must be a priority.

So, I support this motion. This is not like southwestern Ontario where you come to a town every three kilometres. This is the Northwest Territories where there are great expanses of distances between communities and in those communities are people who need protection and who need quick and responsive health care. So, I will be in support of the motion. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. To the motion. Mr. Blake.

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to support this motion. I thank the mover and the seconder as well. It's great to see support from the larger centres.

Our communities that have no RCMP and nursing face enough challenges as it is. Many times we have cases where we wait on the RCMP for up to five hours, sometimes 12, 24 hours. We also have cases in our communities where our own residents are acting like ambulances. We have people going out of their way, which is great to see the community pull together in emergencies, but we

have people in emergencies driving our residents to Inuvik for medevac situations, and that has to stop. We need nurses in our communities and we need RCMP to make our people feel safe.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Blake. To the motion. Mr. Nadli.

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a great honour to stand up in support of this motion. I'd like to thank the initiators of this motion, the mover and the seconder. I think in this day and age it's vital and integral that we have a sense of confidence in terms of residents of our communities especially the vulnerable sectors of our population, the elders and the youth, that need to feel safe and that they're okay to live at home independently, and at the same time, for kids to play out in the streets and ensure that there is a measure of safety that they can rely upon. At the same time, if there is anything that happens within the community in terms of injuries, that there is a nurse on call and an RCMP is there that students and kids can look up to in terms of role models while ensuring just overall public safety in our small communities. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Nadli. To the motion that is amended.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request a recorded vote.

RECORDED VOTE

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Order! Order! The Member is seeking a recorded vote. All those in favour, please rise.

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Langlois):** Mr. Yakeleya, Mr. Menicoche, Mr. Blake, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Dolynny, Mr. Bouchard, Mr. Nadli, Mr. Moses.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. All those opposed, please rise. All those abstaining, please rise.

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Langlois):** Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Abernethy, Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. McLeod – Yellowknife South, Mr. Lafferty, Mr. Ramsay, Mr. McLeod – Inuvik Twin Lakes.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The motion is eight yes, zero no, seven abstentions. The motion is carried. Eight in favour, seven against. The motion is carried as amended.

---Carried

Item 18, first reading of bills. Mr. Blake.

### First Reading of Bills

BILL 18:  
AN ACT TO AMEND THE  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AND  
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ACT

**MR. BLAKE:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Kam Lake, that Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, be read for the first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Blake. Bill 18 has had first reading.

---Carried

Item 19, second reading of bills. The honourable Premier, Mr. McLeod.

### Second Reading of Bills

BILL 15:  
OIL AND GAS OPERATIONS ACT

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Kam Lake, that Bill 15, Oil and Gas Operations Act, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill substantially mirrors the Canada Oil and Gas Operations Act in accordance with the requirements of the Northwest Territories Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 15 has had second reading. Mr. Premier.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 69(2) and have Bill 15, Oil and Gas Operations Act, moved into Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Premier.

BILL 16:  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT  
ON LANDS AND RESOURCES  
MANAGEMENT ACT

**MR. BROMLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Monfwi, that Bill 16, Northwest Territories Intergovernmental Agreement on Lands and Resources Management Act, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill implements the Northwest Territories Intergovernmental Agreement on Lands and Resources Management and sets out the structure and duties of the Intergovernmental Council on Lands and Resources Management. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. Motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 16 has had second reading. Mr. Premier.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Mr. Premier, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 69(2) and have Bill 16, Northwest Territories Intergovernmental Agreement on Lands and Resources Management Act, moved into Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Premier.

BILL 17:  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT  
ON RESOURCE REVENUE SHARING  
AGREEMENT ACT

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that Bill 17, Northwest Territories Intergovernmental Agreement on Resource Revenue Sharing Agreement Act, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill provides for the sharing of the net fiscal benefit in accordance with the Northwest Territories Intergovernmental Resource Revenue Sharing Agreement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. Motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 17 has had second reading. Mr. Premier.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 69(2) and have Bill 17, Northwest Territories Intergovernmental Agreement on Resource Revenue Sharing Agreement Act, moved into Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

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

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Good afternoon, colleagues. I will call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of committee? Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Committee would like to consider Committee Report 2-17(5).

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Is committee agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Okay, thank you. We will resume after a brief break. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** I will call Committee of the Whole to order. Before we launch into the business before us today, I'd like to recognize Mrs. McLeod in the visitors gallery, the Premier's wife, and his two very handsome grandsons.

---Applause

Committee, we were going to deal with the Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2012-2014 Public Accounts. We are going to proceed with that now. I am going to ask the chair of the Standing Committee on Government Operations, Mr. Nadli, to please deliver the opening remarks. Mr. Nadli.

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The Standing Committee on Government Operations has presented its Report on the Review of the 2012-2013 Public Accounts.

The public review took place on January 24, 2014. The committee's report includes 10 recommendations. The standing committee thanks Assistant Auditor General Terry DeJong and his staff at the office of the Auditor General of Canada for their generous assistance in this review.

The committee also thanks the NWT comptroller general, Warren St. Germaine, and his staff for their assistance in the appearance before the committee during the public review.

The committee feels strongly the timely completion of the public accounts contributes to accountability of government. For this reason, the first four of the 10 report recommendations include with improving the timeliness of the public accounts.

The report acknowledged a notable improvement of the timeliness of the public accounts over the previous years and makes recommendations for future improvements.

The report also recommends that a list of government agencies not meeting the deadline for completion of their audits be included each year with the public accounts.

The committee gave consideration to the Government of the Northwest Territories fiscal position and the challenges faced by government in paying for the services it provides to the public. The report encourages the GNWT to take steps to maximize its own-source revenues, paying particular attention to self-reporting taxes such as income tax, liquor, fuel and tobacco taxes.

Again, with respect to the GNWT's fiscal position, the committee took note of the commitment made by the GNWT to be accountable for its own Fiscal Responsibility Policy by reporting on the debt management results of government through the public accounts.

The report recommends that future public accounts include a detailed explanation of how the government has performed for the year with respect to the Fiscal Responsibility Policy and makes suggestions as to how this can be accomplished.

The standing committee also paid particular attention on the notes on accounts receivable and on loans receivable. The committee again expressed its concern with the amount of money owing on accounts receivable from the Government of Nunavut and with the loss of revenue to the GNWT in maintaining such a large interest-free receivable.

The report recommends it reviews its accounts receivable from Nunavut to develop targets and measures for improving collections and to identify and write off those debts deemed to be uncollectable.

The committee, again, took notice of the significant mortgage receivable owing to the NWT Housing Corporation and Members reiterated their belief that the NWT Housing Corporation could be doing better in collecting on these debts.

The standing committee recommended again this year that the government monitors loans receivable and develops targets and measures to improve collections with a view in reducing the allowance for doubtful accounts to less than 30 percent of the total loans receivable.

Environmental liabilities have become a major issue in public sector accounting. The standing committee took great interest in learning more about the remediation of environmentally contaminated sites for which the government is accountable. The committee requested and received a list of all sites requiring remediation and has included this list in Appendix B of this report.

The committee recommends that the government continues to provide updated timetables and

schedules for the remediation for all known potentially contaminated sites for which the GNWT is responsible; further, that this list be included annually in the public accounts.

The Standing Committee on Government Operations concluded its report by recommending that the government provide a response to its recommendations within 120 days. The committee intends to continue to give priority to its mandate to review the public accounts so that the GNWT's spending issues are publicly examined and all relevant information is placed before the public. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Any general comments? Mr. Dolyunny.

**MR. DOLYUNNY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I think, first and foremost, I need to congratulate the department on providing a signed copy of these public accounts at least one month sooner than they did in 2012 and it was tabled in November 2013, which is, again, three months sooner than the process that we did, the first time we've done this in many, many years. I appreciate the government for doing that.

Although the government may have received what the Auditor General called a "clean opinion," it's important to note that variances in any one category greater than \$24 million are not followed up in any of the samplings of the Auditor General. Therefore, we could still see some smaller variances that are possibly not captured within that framework of this audit and that it could have a huge impact on our bottom line.

We also need to talk about our finances from a sustainability, a flexibility and a vulnerability aspect and that was echoed loud and clear within that report and it's no secret that our Territorial Formula Finance Grant is our main life support and we're depending on it with our own antiquated and limited own-source revenues. Moving forward we know that this is going to be very problematic, as was noted by the Auditor General.

The Auditor General notes that the GNWT continues to be stable, but equally notes that we have limited flexibility to raise new revenues and it did emphasize many times of that vulnerability over control of our future revenues. Although the Auditor General did not go into it because this is something relatively new, questions around the opportunity for us to take what we know on our public accounts and look at the future servicing of debt is what we've heard from the department here about possibly raising our debt ceiling to well over \$1.8 billion. This question was posed during a public forum with the comptroller general and there was some doubt and there was some cast of shadow on whether or not we can, from what we know from public accounts, really afford moving forward with such a state of borrowing.

Clearly, even though we see what I think is the appearance of a healthy balance sheet, many in this room know full well that we're definitely heading into a debt wall – I like to call it the wall of worry – and sometimes when you look at the public accounts it doesn't really echo that because of the way it's designed. I just wanted to make sure that that goes out in public. It gets confusing, not only for Members but I think for the public, when you see imbedded within the framework of public accounts issues of debt and net debt. These types of terminologies, I think, really confuse the public and it confuses many of the Members in this room. I think it's important that somehow we need to be a bit clearer as we move forward within this framework.

We also had within the report, and clearly, that we have huge fluctuations in our personal income tax and our corporate income tax, and I think it clearly demonstrated our lack of understanding and how these changes, and these changes within the framework of this public accounts was roughly to the tune of about \$38 million. This does hurt our bottom line and it does have a huge impact on our fiscal strategy for budgeting, as we clearly saw during the main estimate process for this year, and for our large infrastructure planning for years to come.

Also, we talked about within the framework of the public accounts was the issue of the disposal of public housing, public housing loan forgiveness and dealing with public housing rental arrears. Although the Auditor General does say we did follow the proper accounting principles, there is much debt that lingers in the shadows of the books, and this was also talked about within the four walls of committee and also with the Auditor General and the comptroller general of the Northwest Territories. Clearly, this needs to be cleaned up. This is a very aged receivable and we don't even know the dating of that receivable. This was possibly years that these numbers have been on the books and we'll never collect this money. So to be prudent, to be fiscally honest with the public, we're going to need to clean up those arrears and leaving them in the book are, clearly, wrong. I think you might see some future motions on that and we'll talk about that today.

We have a revenue problem, plain and simple, but the public accounts books clearly indicate that we do have a revenue problem and it is coupled with many of what we called self-reporting mechanisms. One, for example, which I know is near and dear to my heart, is tobacco, and that's why I continuously talk about that self-reporting and how we do a fairly substantial poor job on validating the collection of. I want to echo the issues of even the petroleum tax, these are self-reporting numbers that the government here does not do an adequate job in making sure that we are collecting our fair share of

taxes properly. Clearly, there is money left on the table and I think we're failing our residents if we don't start to think about doing something in those areas.

What adds a little bit of complexity is when we continuously hear the government talk about their Fiscal Responsibility Policy and what they do with the annual surplus. I can probably spend another 20 minutes just on this very topic, but what is concerning to the Members here of the committee, including myself, is really the detailed framework about how this policy is put into action, how this policy is branded and backed up publicly. Quite frankly, the surplus that we had in our books for the fiscal year, it really begs into question where this money or this surplus is going. Again, there are clear definitions around the Fiscal Responsibility Policy, which states 50 percent of that money is to go towards short and long-term borrowing, but we don't know what that money is, we clearly don't know if this is new money, old money, old debt and new debt. So there is a lot of ambiguity within the framework of the Fiscal Responsibility Policy and I think that we might even hear more about that later today in some of the motions.

Finally, and again, echoed by the Auditor General themselves, is that the issues of employee future benefits and failing to recognize our liabilities related to the remediation of contaminated sites is going to become extremely problematic for this government. So much so that I believe, and I think some of my Members also will echo this, I'm hoping that we have to start looking at actuaries and to assess what is our risk. I know we've got some smart folks up in the Finance department and I've always said that we've got probably some of the top people in North America working for us, but this is very specialized work. This work requires the expertise, which I believe goes far beyond the four walls of the GNWT and this risk is real and this risk could come back and haunt us. So I'm hoping that through repetition and through emphasis of such things as public accounts and what we're doing here today will clearly give direction for government to say look, yeah, we recognize this may be out of our realm and we've got to do something about it.

So, this is just kind of a general overview of what I picked up as a Member of the committee. I look forward to getting further into detail today. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. General comments. There are motions with respect to this committee report, Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just a bit of a preface, I guess. This was my second opportunity to review the public accounts and each year it adds to the learning, it makes it a little bit easier. I still struggle with some of the accounting

language and some of the ins and outs. My colleague mentioned debt and net debt and that's a difficult concept to get the head around, but I do want to thank the office of the Auditor General; their staff were extremely helpful to us. They're still teaching us how to deal with the public accounts and we're learning every time we do them.

**COMMITTEE MOTION 29-17(5):  
ANNUAL DATE TO PROVIDE  
INTERIM PUBLIC ACCOUNTS,  
CARRIED**

I would like to make the first motion, Madam Chair. I move that the Minister of Finance provide the Standing Committee on Government Operations with the interim public accounts by August 31<sup>st</sup> of each year, to assist in the committee review of the government's business plans. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion, Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I'd like to just comment a bit on this and on the timing of the public accounts that this report references. The completed public accounts were tabled on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October of 2013 and the deadline for tabling of the public accounts is the 31<sup>st</sup> of December of 2013. So this was only the second year, I think, in quite some time that the public accounts had been tabled in advance of their deadline. So we were really pleased that the government was able to do that. In addition, we were able to get an embargoed copy of the interim public accounts and that's the government portion of the public accounts, it doesn't include all the education authorities and the health authorities and so on, but we were able to get the interim public accounts as a committee on the 12<sup>th</sup> of September in 2013 and that was in advance to the business plans that we were about to discuss. It certainly made things a lot easier for us, gave us information ahead of time, it was very close to the mains and, in future, if it's at all possible to get them earlier that would be a preference of committee. Getting the public accounts, even though it's only part of it, but getting it within a couple of days of when we're going to discuss business plans makes it pretty difficult to go through that whole document.

I do want to say that the government, in the last couple of years, has done an excellent job of advancing the timing and the completion of the public accounts. This motion asks for them to be completed by August 31<sup>st</sup> of each year. This is a repeat of a motion that we made last year as a committee, or a recommendation last year, and it's not to suggest that the government is not doing a good job, they are, and we are gradually getting closer and closer to that August 31<sup>st</sup> deadline, but as a committee we felt it important to put this

recommendation in to indicate that August 31<sup>st</sup> is our preference. If we can ever get there, that's certainly a better time than receiving it any time after August 31<sup>st</sup>. That's the background to the motion.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Question is being called. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Ms. Bisaro.

COMMITTEE MOTION 30-17(5):  
AGENCIES FAILING TO COMPLETE AUDITS  
BY DEADLINE,  
CARRIED

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I have a second motion. I move that, as part of the standard reporting process, the comptroller general include a list of agencies in the consolidated public accounts that did not meet the deadline for completion of their audits.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The motion is in order. To the motion. Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to just speak to this motion as well. The public accounts include all of our arm's-length entities. It includes our Crown corporations. It includes our health authorities. It includes our education authorities. There are many, many authorities which complete the consolidated public accounts. We have all the government departments and then we have all the other authorities. Some of those authorities have a fiscal year end which is June 30<sup>th</sup>, and that makes it rather difficult for the government to get the consolidated public accounts done by August 31<sup>st</sup>, which was what I was referencing earlier; however, they've done a very good job of doing that.

In each of the two years that we've gone through the public accounts, there have been entities which have not met their statutory deadline for reporting or for having their audit done, so we wanted to make sure that that was noted. In this past year there was one entity, and it was the NWT Housing Corporation, who did not meet their deadline for the completion of their audit. That certainly was an improvement over the previous year when we had rather more than that. I can't remember exactly how many. But we feel, as a committee, that any entity that does not meet their deadline for their audit should be reflected in the public account so that if somebody in the public wishes to go to the public accounts and see how various entities are doing they can see that, oh, yeah, last year the Housing

Corporation didn't meet their deadline for their audit. Sorry, Minister, but there it is.

---Interjection

**MS. BISARO:** They were building houses. Sure. You still have to account for the houses. That's the background on this motion.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. To the motion. Mr. Dolynny.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I think Ms. Bisaro summed it up quite well. Again, there is a fiduciary obligation on behalf of all of our stakeholders to report their financial statements to public accounts and to this government, and as Ms. Bisaro mentioned, the Housing Corporation... Actually, there were four that did not meet the criteria, and I wanted to make sure that that was clear. We had Aurora College that required an extension. We also had NWT Business Development Investment Corporation that also needed an extension date, and we had Northwest Territories Hydro Corporation who also required an extension date.

The purpose of this motion is clearly to put on notice all associated public agencies that they have an obligation and that they have to make sure that they get their affairs in order to make the public accounts deadline. That being said, I can tell you that should these public agencies fail to meet this obligation criteria, I can only assume that in future public account audits the committee might request these agencies appear before committee or their designate to explain why. We're basically giving all these agencies a heads-up. This is a requirement that will be from the Government Ops committee to make sure that, again, affairs are in order, these are solid dates, they are given fair warning, and these are the rules of the game, and we're hoping that all public agencies will adhere to them.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Question is being called. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Yakeleya.

COMMITTEE MOTION 31-17(5):  
EARLIEST POSSIBLE COMPLETION OF  
INTERIM AND FINAL PUBLIC ACCOUNTS,  
CARRIED

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Madam Chair, I have a motion. I move that the Department of Finance continue to work with the Auditor General of Canada and GNWT departments, boards and agencies toward the completion of both the interim and the final

public accounts at the earliest possible date each year.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Question is being called. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Yakeleya.

COMMITTEE MOTION 32-17(5):  
SUBMISSION OF NWT HOUSING  
CORPORATION ANNUAL REPORT,  
CARRIED

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I have another motion. I move that the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation submit its annual report within 90 days of the fiscal year end; and further, if this does not prove to be possible, the Housing Corporation should seek appropriate approval for an extension to their deadline and provide the House with reasons for the delay.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The motion is in order.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Question is being called. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Dolynny.

COMMITTEE MOTION 33-17(5):  
MAXIMIZING REVENUES FROM  
SELF-REPORTING TAXES,  
CARRIED

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I do have a motion. I move that the Department of Finance undertake the necessary audits and investigations required to ensure that revenues from self-reporting taxes are fully maximized and that the department report back to the Standing Committee on Government Operations with respect to its findings by August 31, 2014.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Dolynny.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Well, it should be no surprise to the Cabinet and the Members in this room my continued journey on putting a lens on what I refer to as one of the largest loopholes in our taxation collection, I think, in modern history that we deal with in the Northwest Territories.

This loophole, this self-reporting loophole is exactly what it is. It's a loophole. This self-reporting aspect

is rarely monitored by government. We don't have enough investigators to do the audits, and clearly, when audits are done, miraculously, money is found. This motion clearly sets the stage and the concern not only as one Member has but a number of Members have. This is a committee motion and so I hope that this will put a little bit more lens on the subject. The fact remains, within the audited statements of public accounts there was, indeed, a \$1.7 million shortfall in tobacco tax collection alone in the fiscal year. This is an 11.2 percent drop in tax collection with very little explanation, very little data, and very little statistical data to support why there was a drop.

There was some degree of discussion here in the House recently about it with the Minister of Finance and I believe that there is work being done. However, that being said, this motion is very clear, and this motion is very specific not only to tobacco but all self-reporting taxes including such things as fuel tax, as well, which also had a fairly substantial delta in returns from the main estimates. Those are my comments.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Question is being called. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Dolynny.

COMMITTEE MOTION 34-17(5):  
GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE AND THE  
FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY POLICY,  
CARRIED

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I have a motion. I move that, in future, the public accounts include a detailed explanation of how the Government of the Northwest Territories has performed for that fiscal year in relation to the Fiscal Responsibility Policy.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Dolynny.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. As I mentioned in my earlier comments today here, the Fiscal Responsibility Policy is very specific in how it deals with surplus, and clearly, this government has had surplus in years past, in some cases we've had substantial surplus, and that surplus has to follow within their own policy called the Fiscal Responsibility Policy, which states 50 percent of that is put into operation surpluses for infrastructure and 50 percent, roughly, goes back to short-term and long-term borrowing. I'm just kind of summarizing it in basic terms.

The concern committee had is we don't know roughly where that surplus is indeed applicable, because the term of debt becomes the question. Is this debt new debt? Is this new debt for infrastructure or is this old debt, and are we actually physically paying down old debt which would really, when you look at the framework around the policy, it is definitely leading credence to. So committee had a grave concern as to whether or not this policy is as transparent as it can be. Quite frankly, that is the question at hand within the motion. We're hoping that with future public accounts that the Fiscal Responsibility Policy is clearly articulated within the public accounts or in an addendum to which will actually break down what indeed is done with that surplus and how it is spent. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Question is being called. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Moses.

COMMITTEE MOTION 35-17(5):  
REVIEW OF  
NUNAVUT ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE,  
CARRIED

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I have a motion as well. I move that the Government of the Northwest Territories review its accounts receivable from Nunavut, the purpose of this review being to develop targets and measures to improve collections, and to identify and write off those debts that are deemed to be uncollectible. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Moses. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Moses.

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just before I begin, I too would like to thank the committee for all the hard work within the public accounts portfolio. Being this is the second time that we've moved forward in public accounts receivable, I just want to make note that again this year the standing committee noted with concern the substantial amount of money owing in accounts receivable from the Government of Nunavut. While this figure has decreased from close to \$10 million in 2011-2012 to \$7.78 million this year, the committee reiterates its concern that maintaining such a large interest-free receivable has cost implications for the GNWT in that the government may have to borrow and pay interest on additional funds for its own needs in addition to the loss of potential interest revenue.

The committee was encouraged last year that the government was reviewing its interest rate policy for other jurisdictions, with a view to perhaps charging Nunavut interest on individual items. The committee is far less encouraged this year to hear the comptroller general acknowledge that this account receivable is costing the GNWT money but that it's not a common practice to charge interest to other jurisdictions, therefore bringing this motion forward, Madam Chair. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Moses. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Question is being called. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Moses.

COMMITTEE MOTION 36-17(5):  
IMPROVING COLLECTIONS OF  
LOANS RECEIVABLE,  
CARRIED

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that the Government of the Northwest Territories monitor its loans receivable and develop targets and measures to improve collections, with a view to reducing the allowance for doubtful accounts to less than 30 percent. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Moses. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Moses.

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The allowance for doubtful accounts is an estimate of the amount of accounts receivable upon which the GNWT does not expect to collect. In 2012-2013 allowance was about 41.4 percent of total loans receivable. In 2011-12 it was about 38.45 percent of the total loans receivable. The year prior it was approximately 30 percent.

The committee sees that this is a concern with the incremental increases over the years and wants to try to address that before next year gets a little bit higher. We want to make sure this government does the right thing in terms of monitoring it and setting targets and measures to improve these collections and do it sooner than later. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Moses. To the motion. Mr. Dolynny.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I think Member Moses summarized it quite eloquently. I just need a few points to add to this motion.

What we're referring to in this motion is hopefully setting up more of a target base approach for loans receivable. If we look at the history of this government, we were collecting literally at one point

in time I call it 70-cent dollars, and that number has dwindled from 2011 to 2013 to about 60-cent dollars on our doubtful loans. This is a bit problematic. Losing 10 cents on the dollar really, in essence, will be significant in the long run.

Good accounting principles, public accounting principles clearly state that targets should be achieved within this type of framework, and I believe this motion speaks to good accounting practices. So I'm hoping that this motion does echo that and we're hoping that this motion does reflect for future public accounts that the government of the day will set the appropriate targets for loans receivable. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Dolyunny. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Question is being called. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Nadli.

COMMITTEE MOTION 37-17(5):  
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF  
POTENTIALLY CONTAMINATED SITES,  
CARRIED

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I have a motion too. I move that the Government of the Northwest Territories continue to provide updated timetables or schedules for the environmental assessment of all known potentially contaminated sites for which the government is responsible, to be included annually in the public accounts. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Nadli. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Nadli.

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Madam Chair. In terms of moving towards devolution and the target date of April 1<sup>st</sup>, this government is assuming several contaminated sites. Of course, that relates to mines and oil and gas sites that have been decommissioned or are no longer in use. What that leaves is a legacy of industrial footprints that are sometimes just not repairable, so it's usually the practice to try and at least remediate the site so that it could go back to the state that it was before it was disturbed.

There's a real need for, at least on an annual basis, an updated schedule and timetables for these sites that exist here in the NWT in terms of how it is that governments plan to employ teams to ensure that those sites are clean and remediated in a timely manner and, of course, within budget.

What's also integral is just the value of information that needs to be very accurate in terms of being

part of the integral process of decision-making related to this subject matter. Those are just some key points I wanted to bring up. Mahsi.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Nadli. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Question is being called. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Nadli.

COMMITTEE MOTION 38-17(5):  
RESPONSE TO REPORT WITHIN 120 DAYS,  
CARRIED

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I have another motion. I move that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a comprehensive response to this report within 120 days. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Nadli. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Nadli.

**MR. NADLI:** Hopefully, by next session, in June, we'll have a reply and report from the government. Mahsi.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Mr. Dolyunny.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Again, to the motion, I'm hoping that we can get some information before the end of next session here and before the next round of public accounts. Again, for the record, I do want to thank my colleagues. It was a good journey, preparing for today and with the motions. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Dolyunny. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Question is being called. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Does the committee agree that consideration of Committee Report 2-17(5) is concluded?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Agreed. Thank you. What is the wish of the committee? Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that we report process.

---Carried

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** I will now rise and report progress.

### Report of Committee of the Whole

**MR. SPEAKER:** Can I have the report of Committee of the Whole, Madam Chair.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Committee Report 2-17(5), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2012-2013 Public Accounts, and would like to report progress with 10 motions being adopted and that Committee Report 2-17(5) is concluded. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Do we have a seconder to the motion? Mr. Yakeleya.

---Carried

Item 22, third reading of bills. Mr. Beaulieu.

### Third Reading of Bills

BILL 5:  
AN ACT TO AMEND THE  
MOTOR VEHICLES ACT

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Great Slave, that Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act, be read for the third time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act, has had third reading.

---Carried

Madam Clerk, orders of the day.

### Orders of the Day

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Langlois):** Orders of the day for Friday, March 7, 2014, at 10:00 a.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 15-17(5), Public Access to Automated External Defibrillators
18. First Reading of Bills
  - Bill 19, Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), 2014-2015
19. Second Reading of Bills
  - Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
  - Tabled Document 4-17(5), Northwest Territories Electoral Boundaries Commission 2013 Final Report
  - Bill 1, Reindeer Act
  - Bill 2, Archaeological Sites Act
  - Bill 3, Surface Rights Board Act
  - Bill 10, Northwest Territories Lands Act
  - Bill 11, Petroleum Resources Act
  - Bill 13, Devolution Measures Act
  - Bill 14, Waters Act
  - Bill 15, Oil and Gas Operations Act
  - Bill 16, NWT Intergovernmental Agreement on Lands and Resources Management Act
  - Bill 17, NWT Intergovernmental Resource Revenue Sharing Agreement Act
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Madam Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Friday, March 7<sup>th</sup>, at 10:00 a.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 4:37 p.m.