



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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The Honourable Jackie Jacobson, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Monday, March 10, 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 1:32 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 54-17(5):
MED-RESPONSE**

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, we are making the final preparations for our new Med-Response clinical support line for community health workers. This innovative project is a priority in the Department of Health and Social Services' strategic plan and advances the 17th Legislative Assembly's goal of ensuring a fair and sustainable health care system. It uses technology to connect people with services and it will be an important part of our effective, efficient health system.

The new Med-Response service will provide community health care workers throughout all Northwest Territories regions with a single phone number to call for emergency clinical support.

We have not had a system-wide approach to dealing with emergencies. When there is an emergency situation in a community, the local health care professionals may currently call their regional facility, or they may contact the emergency room physicians at Stanton Territorial Hospital or the Inuvik Hospital.

Mr. Speaker, the new Med-Response service will guarantee community health care staff access to immediate support.

Dedicated clinical staff will respond to calls 24 hours a day to help community health practitioners stabilize critical patients. They will assess patients and dispatch medevac flights quickly when needed.

The new Med-Response system will work with our telehealth service, and staff will have access to the medical information they need to provide appropriate care.

In the early stages, Med-Response will focus on emergency situations. Over time, this 24/7 service can expand to include providing physician support for chronic disease management and non-urgent consultations, and follow-up for patients discharged from hospital. It will also provide direct support for communities without a resident nurse. These changes will improve the care patients receive.

Mr. Speaker, we hope to begin in April. I will inform Members of this Assembly when the service is available. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 55-17(5):
BUILDING CAPACITY THROUGH
GNWT INTERNSHIP AND
SECONDMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, jobs for Northerners are a priority of all Members of this Assembly. For the Government of the Northwest Territories, the NWT Public Service Strategic Plan and the Workforce Planning Strategy provide multi-pronged approaches to build capacity through recruitment, development and retention. I would like to provide Members an update on some of these initiatives being led by the Department of Human Resources.

Partnering with Aboriginal and community governments through secondment opportunities to build capacity is a win-win. Secondments provide employees with the opportunity to become familiar with other government structures and processes. They also allow employees to gain new knowledge and skills and help form valuable contacts and relationships. As of January 2014, five GNWT employees are on secondment to Aboriginal and community governments and one is on secondment to an Aboriginal association.

We are also very encouraged by the recent initiative with the Gwich'in Tribal Council to work together on designing a pilot program for internships and secondments to build capacity in Gwich'in communities. The Department of Human Resources and the Gwich'in Tribal Council are currently working on a terms of reference and will start work on program details in 2014-2015. Other

Aboriginal governments may want to consider similar models. During 2013-14 the GNWT hired 22 northern graduates as interns through the Graduate Internship Program. We currently have 12 apprentices.

Mr. Speaker, the GNWT, like many other employers, is facing both current and future occupational shortages and it is recognized that our northern students and graduates can meet some of the demand. I am pleased to announce that existing student and youth programs have changed to more strongly correlate the opportunities in the public service with the studies and aspirations of young Northerners.

Changes to the Internship Program include options for departments to extend the term of the internship to longer than one year in length and link the internship to occupational shortages in the GNWT. To expand the pool of northern graduates available, the eligibility requirement to graduate from post-secondary studies within the last six months has been changed to 12 months. The program guidelines have also been updated to help ensure managers and interns understand the purpose of the program and their roles and responsibilities.

We know many northern students want to work for the GNWT, and changing our internship requirements offers new graduates better and longer opportunities to gain knowledge, skills and experience to more easily transition into the GNWT. By linking internship placements with GNWT occupational shortages, we are gaining the valuable technical and specialized skills the GNWT requires. The changes are effective April 1, 2014, and information will be available on the Department of Human Resources' website in the coming weeks.

Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to building capacity through partnerships with Aboriginal and community governments and initiatives to transition northern graduates into the public service. This approach helps us meet the challenges from current and future occupational shortages. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON 2014 BEAVERTAIL JAMBOREE

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Last weekend people were getting together for the annual Beavertail Jamboree. People came into Fort Simpson from all over the Deh Cho, Tulita, Fort Providence, Yellowknife and northern Alberta. Our hardworking organizers arranged a mix of events to get people outside into

the fresh air. It's time to enjoy the longer days of sunshine, knowing that summer is just around the corner. I was happy to enjoy the festivities and the great weather, and especially that everyone had a happy and safe weekend.

The tradition of the Beavertail Jamboree began about 35 years ago and the festival is as lively as ever. This may be one of the longest continuous ones in the North. There were activities for youth and folks of all ages.

A great big thanks to the Beavertail Jamboree Committee and all the many volunteers and organizations that contributed to the festival. Corporate sponsors deserve a very honourable mention as well. You have once again put on a great show and once again shown the outstanding hospitality of Fort Simpson. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MAKING PEACE IN TSIIGEHTCHIC SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY GATHERING

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. February 26th was Anti-Bullying Day, Pink Shirt Day in Canada. However, the Chief Paul Niditchie School, in partnership with the Tsiigehtchic Justice Committee, will hold its own Making Peace in Tsiigehtchic school and community gathering on Monday, March 31st, in order to accommodate the travel schedule of its elected leadership.

Students of the Chief Paul Niditchie School will make a start of making peace with each other by signing a school peace treaty banner. Parents, grandparents, relatives and guardians will be invited to sign on behalf of their families and to say a few words on what it means to make peace with each other.

This school-community peace treaty will be witnessed by the anti-bullying T-shirt partners, which include the Chief Paul Niditchie School, the Tsiigehtchic Justice Committee, Tsiigehtchic charter community, Gwitchya Gwich'in Band, the Gwitchya Gwich'in Council, Tsiigehtchic Health Centre, Tsiigehtchic by-law office, Community Wellness Program, the Tsiigehtchic District Education Authority and the Fort McPherson RCMP "G" Division detachment.

In observance of Anti-Bullying Day, the students will wear pink T-shirts courtesy of the Tsiigehtchic Justice Committee through funding through the community justice and community policing division, Department of Justice, Government of the Northwest Territories.

The banner will be hung at community public offices throughout the year to remind people and students

of their promise of their commitment to keep the peace with each other.

Mr. Speaker, the students and people of Tsiigehtchic are against bullying and are for making peace with each other. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
SUPPORT FOR HIGH PERFORMANCE
ATHLETIC DEVELOPMENT

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This afternoon I want to talk about an idea, a concept that was once in the Northwest Territories.

Some time ago up in Inuvik, they had the ski program, the TEST program. This program was sponsored to develop young northern skiers. This program was so successful that it produced some high quality athletes, athletes that were so good that we sent them to the Olympics because they made the Olympic Team, Mr. Speaker. They did us proud. Certainly, today in the Northwest Territories, we just celebrated a couple of our northern athletes going to the Olympics.

I'd like to say, of the people in the Northwest Territories, even though we're small, we're a powerhouse in terms of the quality of young kids, young athletes in the Northwest Territories from all our schools and communities. I'd like to develop this TEST program again and develop these high-calibre ambassadors of the North and to develop these young athletes to have a strong belief that they can go anywhere as long as they get the support, the coaching and get the programs in place.

Let's build on the TEST program. There are many good athletes in the Sahtu region that would benefit from the program if it was back in our schools. We could have it in our schools, to teach discipline, self-esteem, self-confidence, healthy eating, a good way of life. We need to have that type of program back in our schools again.

Mr. Speaker, there were many students from the Sahtu who were in the TEST program who made the Canadian junior ski team and the Olympics. We need to look at this again and support these young athletes in the Northwest Territories and the Sahtu. We want to see something like this so we can say we are the world's best and we're not lagging behind development. Our students are ready, so we should get ready for them, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
LOCAL FOOD PRODUCTION

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The United Nations conference on trade and development released its 2013 trade and environment report, titled "Wake up before it's too late: Make agriculture truly sustainable now for food security in a changing climate." It included contributions from more than 60 international experts.

It shows recent global food prices were almost 80 percent higher than for the period 2003 to 2008. It also indicated how much slower agricultural productivity growth and fast-rising populations in the most vulnerable regions will almost certainly worsen current problems with hunger, drought, rising food prices and access to land. These pressures may easily lead to massive migrations and to international tensions and conflicts over food and resources such as soil and water.

The report recommends a rapid and significant shift away from conventional, monoculture-based industrial production of food with expensive inputs of fertilizers, agrochemicals and feedlots. Instead, mosaics of sustainable regenerative production systems that also considerably improve the productivity of small-scale farmers and foster rural development are the way to go.

We in the NWT import a lot of our food and that makes us part of this global food supply system. The recommendations to focus on producing mosaics of small-scale farmers are as applicable here as anywhere in the world. Historically, there were market and domestic gardens in many of our communities, possibly all. There is some return happening, fortunately, but the recovery of commercial gardens will take some initial support.

This past year the Northern Farm Training Institute in Hay River ran a very successful first season of workshops, which has led to small-scale farming operations starting up in several communities across the NWT. Yellowknife had a farmers market that ran for the whole summer, with several small commercial garden vendors participating.

This UN report can help government realize that all over the world, people are looking at how to produce food on a small local scale. This approach makes even more sense in the NWT where, fortunately, we have not gone to over-fertilized monoculture farming. I know ITI is revising its programs to better support local food production, but they are still missing the mark required to help small producers build to sustainable enterprise.

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

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. BROMLEY: There is a lot of enthusiasm for this in the Northwest Territories and I get messages and updates from constituents and others every week. With planting season starting now and wrapping up quickly, let's get rid of barriers and make sure our programs readily support small-scale market gardens and the food security we want.

I will have questions for the Minister of ITI. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Moses.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MEDICAL TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION CONCERNS

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to focus my Member's statement today on another concern and issue that we have with our Medical Travel Policy. As Members who represent people of the public, we come across situations that we don't always account for or ever think that would happen. This was the case of one my most recent situations, where an individual who was travelling inside the Northwest Territories – or any individual, for that matter, who runs into some unforeseen health issues and whether or not our government takes care of them while they are in the situation when they might have been travelling for personal or other business issues throughout the Northwest Territories. That's just the issue that I'm dealing with right now.

I'm not sure how many other MLAs or residents of the Northwest Territories might have run into this problem, where they went travelling for other business for their work or, like I said, other personal commitments, and received some medical attention and were refused. This is the situation: they were refused possible accommodations, even a boarding home, as well as refused possible transportation upon returning to their home when they had to go back to a small community. In such cases, when a person is travelling from a small community, they have some kind of charter vehicle or something to get them back in a proper time after their personal or their work-related events happen, and in this case it was work related and they did miss a charter and a shuttle in and now they're a little concerned about how they're going to get back home to the community.

I will ask questions to the Minister of Health in dealing with these kinds of situations when there are unexpected medical issues that happen for our residents of the Northwest Territories who are travelling inside the Northwest Territories when medical travel has told them that they won't be able to help them out because they weren't sent out of their home community on their medical travel. That needs to be dealt with.

I will ask questions of the Minister of Health later, on some of these policies and how we can change them and, in this certain case, how can we make things better for the resident and for their family and for other people in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NWT TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION WORKLOAD STUDY

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association released a pan-northern study on teacher workload, entitled "Understanding Teacher Workloads."

It is significant to me that the findings from this study are consistent with national and international research. In fact, across many sectors in North America, overwork is a growing problem marked by work intensification. This report's findings show that although NWT teachers love their jobs and their students, they are burning themselves out, trying to deliver a quality product within a system that is not supporting their efforts.

Northern teachers are consistently being asked to do more and more with less and less. We must ever be mindful that teachers' work environments are our children's learning environments. If working conditions are putting our teachers at risk of burnout and stress, this has a negative effect on the quality of NWT children's education.

The report finds that NWT teachers are struggling with increasing demands and fewer resources. These demands include such things as:

- diverse needs and academic abilities amongst the children in any classroom;
- student absenteeism;
- lack of clerical support and classroom assistants;
- lack of time for planning and professional collaboration;
- a perpetual cycle of new teachers leaving the communities and/or the profession due to stress or isolation; and
- stress from non-instructional issues.

This report also includes recommendations for positive change, including such things as:

- creating flexible curriculums supported by capacity and time to do things;
- building time into the teacher's day for professional collaboration;

- support for unworkable systems, multiple grades, ability levels and increasing students' needs in the classrooms;
- recognition and support for workloads, which include increased reporting, changing curriculums, evolving assessment requirements and societal demands;
- supporting teachers in classrooms with adequate numbers of EAs and coordination with other community supports, social services, health care and so on.

I applaud the NWTTA for their initiative in doing this study and sharing the findings with all education stakeholders. I sincerely hope that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment will seriously consider the report and its findings as it moves ahead with their Education Renewal and Innovation Initiative and that the Minister will continue to work with the NWTTA to make things better for all our NWT teachers. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Saturday, March 8th, was International Women's Day, a time to celebrate the achievement of women and what they have accomplished here in the North, across Canada and certainly across the world.

I personally support the equality of women in all aspects of our world and certainly in our lives. All women so readily deserve our love, appreciation and definitely our respect.

Women, as we know, are equal contributors to the world we know and they must not be thought of in any lesser manner. They are recognized leaders in all aspects of business, politics, academics, sports and family. The results of their work and dedication can be found everywhere we look. Simply, more can be done to recognize the impacts women make in our lives. Sadly, they do not get the recognition they deserve and at times they absolutely have crimes against them, which is certainly unfair and we must highlight the accomplishments and support them in many ways.

At the same time, many women, both young and old, have been unfairly targeted by others through violence and exploitation. We need to look no further than the recently deeply disappointing example in Ottawa, where a Special Committee on Violence Against Indigenous Women failed to act. I believe they failed not just Aboriginal women but all women and girls across Canada and the world through their inaction. Without proceeding to a formal inquiry to address this terrible, terrible

problem on addressing the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls in Canada, they have failed them.

So, here is a clear example on how women are not being supported in Canada. I certainly hope our territory stands up loud and clear and expresses its objection. We must do everything we can to support women to help them through the education of everyone, and certainly through our actions here as men. We must all join together, because a woman's fight is a man's fight as well. We must help them in their relentless struggle for gender equality, which certainly they deserve.

On the weekend, the wise women that certainly deserved our recognition were Karen Willy, Pamela Faith Gordon, Patricia Modeste, Sister Margaret Beaudette and Harriet Geddes.

Of course, I must make sure I mention that wise woman in my life would be, of course, my wife, and I'm very grateful for her, but I especially want to acknowledge the wise woman in my life who I look towards the most, which, of course, is my mother.

I draw this attention because I say in closing that there is so much to celebrate, but to support women on every single occasion we must continue with the work that needs to be done. I believe we can do this through making it a better world and we can do this, certainly, together. I ask all men to join together in the women's fight for equality.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON LOCAL WATER TREATMENT PLANTS

MR. NADLI: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Each year we spend thousands of dollars servicing the communities of Enterprise and Kakisa with the water truck from Hay River. As expensive as it may be to build and maintain water treatment plants, by now the cost of trucking water has paid for local water treatment systems.

Kakisa is right beside the lake. It's time to find creative solutions for the construction and operation and maintenance of water treatment plants for both of these communities.

A number of years ago, a hamlet in Sweden with a similar population as Kakisa and Enterprise, came up with six different water treatment options for decision-makers to consider. All of these options met or exceeded standards for quality, cleanliness, community capacity and environmental responsibility.

Water treatment plants are fully operational in communities throughout all three territories and in remote work camps that serve 10 times the number of people living in Kakisa and Enterprise. That

proves that water treatment plants can be established in these communities too.

Both Enterprise and Kakisa want to explore the possibility of partnerships between government, local development corporations, band councils and even private industry to fund local water treatment systems. The proposed wood pellet plant in Enterprise will need a water supply and so do the campgrounds at Enterprise and Kakisa. Further development of both of those areas could provide a reliable, long-term partner in the operation of water treatment plants.

We are all aware that water treatment plants need to meet a comprehensive list of standards and codes. It is absolutely necessary that the systems in our communities meet or exceed these standards. Trucked-in water from Hay River guarantees a certain water quality, but in the long term, local water treatment is by far the safest, least expensive option for any municipality. Safe, reliable, functional water and sewer systems are integral to our standard of living. The construction and operation of local water treatment plants is essential to all of our communities. I urge this government to rise to the challenge and work together to reach the solutions that Enterprise and Kakisa need.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON 2014 ARCTIC WINTER GAMES

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was able to go back to Hay River this weekend and saw that there were biathletes training in Hay River for the Arctic Winter Games. Today I thought I'd recognize all those athletes out there practicing and training throughout the Northwest Territories for the Arctic Winter Games next week.

I'd like to commend all those people that have helped them, the coaches, their parents. I look forward to being at the Arctic Winter Games next week. We have 35 athletes and six coaches from Hay River ourselves, and many of their parents are travelling to Fairbanks, Alaska, to be there.

Twenty-six years ago I was there curling in Fairbanks. We ended up with a silver ulu, and I think it's a great event for most of the youth.

I'd like to read out the youth that are coming from Hay River as well as the coaches: Kaed Blake, Tori Blake, Nicholas Cockney, Clell Crook, Michaela Crook, Kiel Crook, Elli Cunningham, Daniel DaRose, Joel Demarcke, Cordell Gagnier, Logan Gagnier, Jeffrey Groenheyde, Rachel Harder, Bryn Hill, Carter Hill, Alex Huang, Fiona Huang, Calvin King, Paige Kruger, Jared LeBlanc, Andrew Lirette, Tanner Mandeville, Dawson McMeekin, Daniel Melanson, Lochlan Munro, Elliot Pinto, Simon

Pittman, Cassidy Ring, Drake Roberts, Brooke Schaefer, Kara Schaefer, Nathan Schepher and Levon Schumann.

The coaches are Claude Crook, Coady Duncan, Charges Lirette, Lorraine McDonald, Curtis Rowe and, obviously, Mr. Paul Delorey for junior curling.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish everybody good luck and let's bring home some ulus. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Mr. Dolyunny.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS STABILIZATION FUND

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Non-government organizations, or NGOs, are non-profit citizen groups who provide essential services to our residents. Everything from feeding the hungry and housing the homeless to providing child care, safe shelters or counselling services for youth and those with addictions or legal issues.

NGOs face unimaginable challenges in doing the work they do. They rely on a core of selfless volunteers who work long hours with little support because they believe in helping others in their communities.

They lack funds and often make do with less than adequate facilities, yet somehow year after year they continue to meet the needs of the most vulnerable and underprivileged among us.

Where is the GNWT in all this? Our NGO funding policy makes a paltry \$350,000 per year available to eligible NGOs that meet our vaguely defined criteria. This \$350,000 hasn't changed since the policy inception in 2010-2011.

Let's put this in perspective. In 2012-2013, 27 organizations applied for funding totalling over \$1 million of ask. Of the 27, less than half, 11 applicants, shared in the funding and of those, only three got the full amount they requested.

Only three out of 27 had their funding needs met, yet the GNWT's own policy says that this elusive funding is for NGOs to "deliver programs and services that the GNWT considers critical and which the GNWT would deliver directly if the NGO were not able to do so."

Further, for those NGOs seeking funding for the coming 2014-2015 fiscal year, information is non-existent. Information on the Department of Executive's website is a year old and provides deadlines for applicants for last year's allocations. I think this speaks volumes about how critical the GNWT really thinks the work of NGOs is.

Members of this House have asked repeatedly for funding for NGOs to be increased, but this alone is not enough. The time NGO volunteers spend

fundraising is time they are not spending helping those in need. NGOs need clarity and reliability of funding. They need accurate, up-to-date information. NGOs need a clear decision-making process for funding applications and a list of what the government considers to be priority of critical services.

We need to do more for these NGOs who do not qualify for funding so they can become better qualified.

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

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. DOLYNNY: We should be providing services to assist emergent NGOs and to take a look at existing stable NGOs to see where there are overlaps in synergies, so we can assist these NGOs to streamline these operations and stretch our funding dollars.

This government has a responsibility to stop paying lip service to NGOs and to start to recognize NGOs as a valued and essential resource. It's time the government stopped inadequate, piecemeal funding for services that are, by its own admission, critical to NWT residents.

It is time for the government to implement an integrated approach to working with NGOs in the true spirit of partnership. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Premier, Mr. McLeod.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased to recognize my wife of 40 years and my lifelong partner, and also another constituent of Yellowknife South, Carmelita Allen. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize, to you and through you, a resident of Range Lake, Mr. David Wasylciw. Thank you, David.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize a couple of constituents in the gallery. First off, I'd like to acknowledge and recognize Dawn Lacey who's up there, I just saw her a few minutes ago. I'd also like to recognize Brian Heppelle who's here to follow our proceedings today. Of course, special to my heart and to the Premier's obviously, Melody McLeod, who has

been a wonderful lady to me for so many years. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now that I know that my friend Carmelita is up there, I'd like to recognize Carmel, a long-time friend and co-worker. I would also like to recognize Mr. David Wasylciw and Mrs. McLeod and Mr. Heppelle. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd also like to recognize Brian Heppelle in the gallery today. I had a chance to have coffee with him. I know he's a concerned citizen and it's great to see him in the gallery and all those who are out today. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. I'd like to welcome everybody in the public gallery today. Thanks for taking an interest in our proceedings. I'd also like to welcome Mrs. McLeod in the House today. It's always good to see you.

Item 6, acknowledgements. Mr. Nadli.

Acknowledgements

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 5-17(5): 2014 WISE WOMAN AWARD RECIPIENT HARRIET GEDDES

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Harriet Geddes of Fort Providence was chosen and honored on Saturday, March 8th, as the Wise Woman for the Deh Cho region for 2014.

Harriet comes from a very traditional background. She was raised on the land and from a very young age, she was taught how to be a good caregiver from her mother, Adeline Landry.

She took those words and applied them to her own life and to others. Harriet started on a healing journey and decided she was meant to be here to help others. She took training and workshops firstly on self-awareness, prevention and treatment for alcohol and drugs, counseling, family violence issues, and many wellness and healing workshops.

Harriet has worked hard, effortlessly comforting families with loss, guiding young families, giving advice and caring for the elders and teaching her cultural and traditional values.

She has helped many families to live a healthy lifestyle and reminding young families of their culture, tradition and spiritual ways. She stresses that families are so important today and we should love and care for each other, like the old ways.

She deserves the recognition as she is a good role model, never stopping to help out and volunteer her spare time for others in need. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 251-17(5): SUPPORT FOR HIGH PERFORMANCE ATHLETIC DEVELOPMENT

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I spoke about the high quality of athletes in the Northwest Territories and having a program that would be something like a TEST program. I want to ask the Minister of MACA, in his role as the Minister of Sport and Youth, is it something that has been talked about in senior level of government? Has something like a TEST program been talked about where we could begin training some of the younger children who have the calibre to go to the Olympics and other world champion games?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister of Youth, Mr. McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're quite proud of our athletes from the past and present. I think the athletes from the past have set the bar very high for our athletes coming along today. With the support that the athletes get from this government, they are able to develop. We have some fantastic sporting partners that bring all the games to the communities. With the support of this Assembly and Assemblies past, we have been able to increase the funding. We also have funding available for high performance athletes, those who are competing at a national and international level. We are quite proud of that too.

I think this is one program we may have to revisit because we have heard some concerns that our athletes are starting to get out there competing at a higher level and we may have to look at how these athletes are funded. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, my colleague Mr. Bouchard talked about the athletes from his riding attending the Arctic Winter Games, and certainly many athletes across the Northwest Territories will be there next week. Also, over the weekend we had the Second Annual Traditional Aboriginal Games Championships and I'm very happy to know, from speaking there to the young athletes, that Mr. McLeod was there to show support and people were quite happy that he was there to show support.

I'm asking if there is any type of discussion, with all the other support he has given to the athletes, if there's any type of program that's being looked at

similar to the TEST program that happened up in Inuvik.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: To the TEST program specifically, there has been no discussions; however, our colleagues over in the Yukon are tossing the idea around about a centre for sports excellence, and this is one initiative that we'll be following quite closely to see if there are opportunities for us, as the Northwest Territories, to see if that would work here.

Again, I did have an opportunity to check out the Traditional Games; I had an opportunity to check out the NWT speed skating championships that were going on, and we have some fantastic speed skaters coming up. I understand there was also the territorial ski championship, I believe, going on this week. Our athletes are quite engaged and I think, again, working with our sporting partners, the Aboriginal Sport Circle, Sport and Rec Council, Sport North and the Mackenzie Beau-Del Recreation Council, with all the programs that they're bringing to the front line, I think we're starting to see a result of that. I would say the fact that we had 27 of 33 communities represented in the Arctic Winter Games by athletes I think goes a long way to indicate that our programs are working and all the programs we're providing in the front line are paying off. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. YAKELEYA: Just witnessing the Second Annual Traditional Aboriginal Games Championships over the weekend at William Mac School, I could see these young students with gleam in their eyes with all the excitement.

I would ask the Minister, when he is meeting or talking with his colleagues from the Yukon government, is that something that will come to this Legislative Assembly for some discussion on this side as to possibly looking at the concept of a centre for excellence for our northern athletes?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, as we go further into the initiative and get some information, as we normally do, we will meet with committee and provide them an update and seek some input from them.

Again, we're very early in the stages. We have to have a discussion with our colleagues over in the Yukon to see how their program is being rolled out and how it may be working. Again, everything that we do we share with committee and get some feedback from them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is the beginning of planting the seed, so I look at that as the first process, is get the seed in the ground and start developing a vision for our athletes in the future. I'm not too sure the time frame of when this

discussion will come to our side; hopefully, it will be done within the life of this government.

Can the Minister then sort of give some assurance that it will happen soon so we can have some discussion and start working on it?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I believe the seed was planted a long time ago. I think we've been able to see what our athletes in the Northwest Territories are quite capable of doing with the proper mentoring, the proper training, the proper facilities, the proper funding, so it's very important to us that we not only develop our athletes – I think it goes further than that – we develop them as people. I think we see that with a lot of the TEST ski program participants back in the day.

Again, we're early in the stages. Any information that we do come up with and any feedback that we're seeking, we will have a discussion with committee and I can probably say, without reservation, that we will have a discussion before the end of this Assembly. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 252-17(5):
EDUCATION RENEWAL INITIATIVES
FOR 2014-2015 SCHOOL YEAR

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do have some questions for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. I'd like to follow up a little bit with regard to my statement. One of the things that add to teachers' workload is new initiatives and changes made to curriculum, changes made to the way that they are expected to report things, changes made with the way that they're expected to deal with students in the classroom and in the school.

I'd like to ask the Minister, right now the department is undergoing or has posted an Education Renewal and Innovation Strategy and they're working on an action plan. I know that there are some initiatives planned for the next school year, which starts in September 2014.

So I'd like to ask the Minister what initiatives are planned for schools, other than JK, we know junior kindergarten is starting, but what other initiatives are planned for September 2014 for the next school year? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. The department obviously understands the importance of teachers having adequate time to prepare for many responsibilities, including the instruction of students, working with students, assisting students' learning, engaging and also the

ongoing professional development and collaboration.

As the Member indicated, the education renewal innovation is part of the process where various initiatives will be undertaken. We're at the preliminary stages right now because we are going to be developing an action plan pertaining to those highlighted portfolios within the education renewal. So, we will be coming back to the Legislative Assembly with the action plan overall and which priorities we're going to be moving forward with. As you know, there are sectors of activities that will be happening in 2014-15. Mahsi.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister. I didn't hear a specific answer to my question. Apparently we have to wait for the action plan for the ERI Strategy to come forward. My understanding is that that's going to be, I think I've heard May, I think I've heard June. That doesn't leave much time for anybody to get ready for initiatives in a few short months.

I'd like to know from the Minister if he can tell me, if the action plan is coming out in June, are there expectations that programs or changes other than junior kindergarten that will need to be implemented in September of 2014? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi. Upon receiving the action plan later this year, we will be putting that towards the business planning process for the following year, so it is a process that we have to follow. We are in the stages of developing some of the initiatives for 2014-15 this September. As the Member alluded to, junior kindergarten is a prime example of one that falls under that as well.

So, by this summer we're expecting the action plan to be developed and finalized and then put it towards the business planning process for the following year's budget. Mahsi.

MS. BISARO: Thanks. I'm not quite understanding why the Minister doesn't really know what these initiatives are at this point. The budget for 2014-15 has been passed. Presumably there's planning in that budget under the Department of Education, Culture and Employment for new initiatives for the fall of 2014, September, for schools, for new things.

Can the Minister tell me what is in the 2014-15 Education budget that they are planning on implementing and that those changes are going to be coming in under the Education Renewal Innovation Initiative? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi. I can provide the detailed list to the Member. As the Member indicated, part of it is the junior kindergarten, the wage top-up is another one. Those are just some of the examples of the activities that will be happening, but I will commit to the Members to provide the most detailed information on those activities that will be coming forward. Mahsi.

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

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the commitment from the Minister, and I would hope that that information would be made public because I'm sure the teachers want to know what changes are coming down the pipe for them as well.

One of the things that is required, and the Minister has referenced it, in terms of junior kindergarten, there's going to be training required for some of the teachers who are going to be going in and teaching junior kindergarten.

I'd like to ask the Minister if the school boards have been provided with funds to do the training that is required for new staff or is the department going to take on that training itself?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: My department will be providing the training and working very closely with the school boards, because we have to deal with the teachers to deliver the junior kindergarten. I stated in the House that we are moving forward on training by this summer and then in the fall time for those individuals that may not have gone through the training program. Those are slated for this summer and then this fall, and again, my department will be working with the school boards to finalize those plans.

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

QUESTION 253-17(5):
GNWT MEDICAL TRAVEL POLICY

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a follow-up to my Member's statement, I just want to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services a couple questions on the Medical Travel Policy.

In terms of one of our NWT residents who might travel to a regional centre or to here in Yellowknife either for personal or business type of travel and they end up getting sick or succumb to illness where they have to be admitted into the hospital or be under some type of observation over a couple days and they have to take care of their travel back, what does the policy state in terms of taking care of any type of accommodation or other travel in order to get the residents back to their communities?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Moses. The Minister of Health, Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Medical Travel Policy is for patients who require medical travel to the nearest location where necessary and appropriate insured services are available, so if a resident were to travel to Yellowknife from a community or from outside of Yellowknife and they happened to get sick while they're in Yellowknife, there is no transportation

required to bring them to the closest location where the insured services can be provided because they already happen to be in Yellowknife. If the patient is then discharged and is able to travel on a commercial flight, there is no requirement under medical travel to provide the patient with travel because they would have come in without medical travel and they can leave without medical travel. But we do recognize that there are exceptional circumstances, and there is an exception request process that an individual can follow based on situations beyond individuals' control of if a person needs special care on their transportation back. There is an exception process available to residents of the Northwest Territories for the type of situation the Member is describing.

MR. MOSES: You heard earlier in another Member's statement about the work that NGOs do on behalf of people of the Northwest Territories, and in some cases NGOs have to cut costs where they can or make savings where they can, so sometimes they don't pay for a full flight return ticket back to their communities. Sometimes they're not able to make those changes if they get a ticket on a seat sale or something. Those are some of the issues that come, because some people that do come to some of the bigger centres might be on a fixed income, should it be a senior, somebody living with a disability or somebody that is doing volunteer work on behalf of an NGO that might be on income assistance that don't have the necessary funds to do it.

In the Medical Travel Policy group – I know they're following their guidelines and their policies – is there an appeals process? I know the Minister mentioned there's an exception process, but is there an appeals process to the decision made for residents of the NWT when they're travelling outside of their home communities to get that turned over so that they are able to get some support to get back home?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: As I've previously committed in the House, we are doing a comprehensive review and modifications to the Medical Travel Policy, and these are the types of discussions we're having and we'll certainly continue to have them with the Member and his committee.

The exception requests are done on a case-by-case basis. They have to come from a practitioner, but in situations like this, if the Member identifies to the practitioner or the resident identifies to the practitioner the need and the situation behind, they can absolutely make an exception request and it will be considered seriously. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MOSES: The Minister mentioned the exception process of going through the practitioner. Can the Minister confirm the process for an

exceptional grant to get the necessary accommodations or travel for a resident to get back home? Can he confirm that the patient, resident or family of the resident would go through the process of getting a letter or note from the practitioner in order to get these extra expenses paid that are unforeseen should an individual fall sick or need some medical attention while on a trip? Can he confirm that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The resident who happens to be utilizing the services would have to work with the practitioner and then we would follow the normal medical travel process with respect to the exception request.

If a resident comes to Yellowknife, happens to get sick and is admitted to the hospital and then has to be transferred to another hospital in their home community, they would actually be covered. It's when the individual is discharged or free to go where this is a situation. The resident would have to work through their practitioner and follow the normal medical travel process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned, these are unforeseen medical concerns or issues that might come up at any given time.

What is the turnaround date in any of these appeals or exceptional processes? Is there a timeline? A lot of times they might just need one, two or three days of assistance. What is the timeline in the turnover to get these expenses covered or any of the additional supports the resident or patient might need? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Exception requests are done on a case-by-case basis, recognizing the challenges that the patient and the practitioners provide. I can't say it would be one day, I can't say it would be three days. It all depends on the situation, but they would move as quickly as they can to accommodate the needs of the residents and the practitioners to make sure they get the support they need. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 254-17(5):
LOCAL FOOD PRODUCTION

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are following up on my Member's statement directed to the Minister of ITI. When we were reviewing the budget for ITI a couple of weeks ago, the Minister promised to look into the policy requiring that commercial gardeners have at least one-sixth of an acre to be eligible for funding.

Given that only one commercial producer of these operating producers might actually meet this bar, is the Minister now able to explain the reasoning behind this policy? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Minister of ITI, Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through the work of the EOS, it was identified that the territory does need to do some work in the area of policy when it comes to developing the agricultural industry here in the Northwest Territories. We are moving forward with development of an Agriculture Strategy for the Northwest Territories, which will include work towards a policy base, as well, for agriculture here in the Northwest Territories. We continue to work towards that. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks to the Minister. I will remind the Minister, it is planting season, believe it or not, as we speak. When he spoke on the 25th of February, the Minister said it is important we maximize any opportunity we have to get people involved with the agricultural sector here in the NWT.

Recognizing that new approaches and technology could substantially increase production from small, intensively farmed plots and especially given our modest markets, how does refusing to help people because their operations are too small help maximize opportunities for them? Mahsi.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: We want to make sure we get things right and the Member is correct; we want to maximize opportunities. If changes to policy are going to allow us to maximize opportunities for people and it's in the best interest of the territory and the sector, that's something we are very much interested in doing. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: I appreciate the Minister's commitment. With the one possible exception, the largest market gardens in the capital area are about 2,500 square feet, or about a sixteenth of an acre. These successful market gardens have just had their applications rejected because they are too small. So if the largest market gardens are too small, how does the Minister plan to change this policy in time for this season so that any agricultural development can go ahead in the North Slave region? Mahsi.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: If there are changes that we could look at that would have an immediate impact – and I know the Member is very much interested in beginning to plant seeds here – we will take a look at that. I can give the Member every assurance that we will look into this matter and if we need to adjust the policy to allow funding applications to be approved, we will do just that. Thank you.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Minister. I almost have no question left here.

Fresh produce is one of the largest contributors to the high cost of living, as I know the Minister is aware of in the North. We've got some very good people finding ways to make this happen and these are new ways.

Will the Minister commit to supporting the actual people and organizations that are, indeed, in place right now and making it happen and dealing with these disabling barriers in time for this season? Mahsi.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: The Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment has a very good track record when it comes to working with the Territorial Farmers' Association. We put on the NFTI, the Farm Training Institute in Hay River, last year. It was very successful. Again, we need to ensure that that relationship that we have with the Territorial Farmers' Association continues to be nourished. We are going forward again this spring with an Agriculture Strategy for the territory. We need to ensure we have a sound policy base. We need to ensure we are including stakeholders in the development of that strategy. We are going to put our best effort into that so we can continue to see the success that we've had in the agricultural sector here in the Northwest Territories continue to move forward. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 255-17(5):
COST/BENEFITS OF NEW YELLOWKNIFE
GNWT OFFICE BUILDING

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be asking questions to the Minister of Public Works regarding the downtown building that's being constructed at this time.

I guess my first question to the Public Works Minister is: What will be the full cost of this particular building? Once we hear that on the record, I'd like to know what we will be saving once we understand the investment required to build that building. I want to understand how much we will be saving, as a government, by having that building in place. Let's start with that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister of Public Works, Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not have the cost-benefit analysis of the savings between the construction of this building and continuing to lease office space. What I do have is the initial evaluation when we were going into

building this office space. We were looking at the amount of space that we are leasing versus the amount of space that we own and ensuring we have a good balance for the city of Yellowknife. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: There have been a fair amount of questions regarding the impact of this potential new building. I shouldn't say "potential" new building; it's coming like a freight train. Much has been discussed about the vacancy rate and the impact this will have on our city and certainly the impact on attracting more investment from companies wanting to build office space.

What type of evaluation was done on rental vacancy? How does the Northwest Territories, particularly Yellowknife, compare to that study on vacancy rates and how does it compare to across Canada? What is considered a normal vacancy rate when we consider government-owned and leased buildings? I want to understand the type of vacancy vacuum we've created and the impact it will have on our local market to attract new investment in Yellowknife. Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: My understanding is we haven't created a great amount of vacancy. In fact, we are still looking for some office space for some of the departments that are not moving out of lease space. That building will be filled by Department of Transportation and the Department of Health. The information I have here doesn't indicate that that building is going to create any hardship at all for any of the office people that provide office space, any of the businesses that are providing office space to the GNWT. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Some people have informed me that local market with more than a 5 percent vacancy rate can really seriously affect potential investors in a particular market area. So, in other words, once we reach greater saturation than 5 percent in the local market, investors are starting to look at this area and saying, well, why would we be there because we're just going to build an empty building.

What type of study and balance was taken into consideration and is the Minister able to cite the actual percentage of vacancy that will be created in the local market here? Because I want to understand, and I think the public wants to understand, what potential vacancy we will have here and certainly the effects it will have on potential investors that may want to look north, but don't see it as a profitable market and probably stay away. Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you. The information I have is that the office space vacancy in the city of Yellowknife will be between 5 and 7 percent, which is considered to be a healthy vacancy. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My concern is being at least 5 percent before the building was built or is being built, but certainly let's get to my last and fourth question, which is about the building and the impact of the cost. Now, the Minister said he didn't actually have the cost on this building at the very start of my first question. Is the Minister in a position to talk about the costs associated with change orders? So in other words, what was the original budget of this building and what will the final number be when the final cheque is written? We need to get a sense of impact on the change orders and how they affect them and sometimes it's received as the backdoor bidding, people bid low and then they change order the final price up. If the Minister could get that detail before the House. Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you. The office space construction is not over budget. There has been no requirement for change order. The only thing that we have changed is that we have moved money from the previous year back because the office space construction was ahead of schedule. But the bottom line is that we went in with a certain budget and we're well within that budget. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 256-17(5):
REPLACEMENT OF
JOE GREENLAND CENTRE

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a few questions for the Minister of Housing. I'd like to ask the Minister for an update on the Joe Greenland Centre. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Blake. Minister of Municipal and Community affairs, Mr. McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The contract tenders should have gone out and we anticipate some of the work being done on the foundation in late spring and construction in the summer and fall and scheduled for a spring opening of 2015. Thank you.

MR. BLAKE: The Minister actually answered all three of my questions here. That's good news.

When can the elders in the community expect to move into that building? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I'll just work on the one question. We worked closely with the community in identifying a location for the Joe Greenland Centre and their preference was the existing location. So the demolition took place and the building is down. If all goes according to

schedule, the elders should be able to move back in there in spring of 2015. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 257-17(5):
NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS
STABILIZATION

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a follow-up to my Member's statement, I am gravely concerned that we're not doing enough for our NGOs who provide critical services for the Northwest Territories. Further to this, our Executive website is now over a year old and provides no information for funding for the upcoming 2014-2015 fiscal year. We need a firm, renewed commitment from our government that sends a clear message to support our NGO sector. With that, I have questions today for the Premier.

Given the paired down Executive, which now has divested itself of devolution and the program review functions in the 2014-2015 Main Estimates, will the Premier commit to a renewed approach to NGO support and funding?

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

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to advise the Member that in addition to the \$350,000 that he referenced, this government spends millions of dollars on third-party agencies. Not only that, through the Anti-Poverty Strategy we're going to put another \$500,000 to put towards use for our NGOs. We have so many third-party agencies that we have a Third-Party Agencies Accountability Framework and to ensure consistency of dealing financially, we've developed criteria for determining the level of accountability and we use that accountability to determine the level of funding. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you. It's a given that we have many NGOs offering similar programs, sometimes overlapping mandates and duplication of synergies. What is the Premier prepared to do to assist these NGOs streamline their operation and stretch our funding dollars? Thank you.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you. The Government of the Northwest Territories does not prescribe NGO mandates or activities. What we do is we assist them. So with the NGO Stabilization Fund, for example, we provide short-term support to NGOs for governance, management, organizational development and extraordinary operations so that they can continue to provide the essential services.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you. Will the Premier commit to developing an NGO support office similar to what we see with the BDIC, but which helps emergent NGOs get on their feet and address my earlier questions assisting existing NGOs

streamline their operations and maximize their funding? Thank you.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you. Yellowknife used to have a storefront for voluntary organizations and it was not very well utilized. At the end of the day it was shut down, so we're using other processes to assist NGOs. Thank you.

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

MR. DOLYUNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Premier share what the Department of Executive is doing right now, because their website is currently a little outdated, and what are they going to do to reach out and assist NGOs seeking funding for the upcoming 2014-2015 fiscal year? Thank you.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: I'm not sure when the Member checked the website, but I checked it today and it looked like it was updated. But for the Member's information, for 2013-14 there were 16 applications and 11 organizations were granted funding. For this upcoming year we have guaranteed that we will have our request for applications before the end of May and that we will have the money out before the end of July. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 258-17(5):
POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF
JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week I had questions for the Minister of Education on junior kindergarten. I want to follow up with some questions about the funding for other programs that are going to be affected by junior kindergarten.

Has the Department of Education looked into the effects of taking four-year-olds out of the systems we have? I'll use Hay River as an example, obviously. We have a playschool, we have Growing Together and we have a Head Start program. These are programs that are affected by that, so I'm wondering if the department has looked into the effect of the enrolment in those departments by introducing junior kindergarten.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: The introduction of junior kindergarten this fall, the following year in Hay River is not meant to replace other high quality programming being delivered in Hay River, playschool or Head Start programming. We are providing families of the NWT with a high quality, affordable education option for four-year-olds.

The early childhood program continues to provide ongoing funding through all these licenced daycares and family day homes, as Members alluded to earlier. This also addresses where we have different pots of funding that I've highlighted in the House, I believe it was last week or the week before. Language Nest funding like the Small Communities Initiative, some Small Communities Initiative funding, Healthy Children Initiative funding. Part of the funding that we provide to licenced child care programming or licenced daycare programming is to offset the costs of operating, whether it be the day home or the licenced operators. We will continue to provide that funding to these establishments.

MR. BOUCHARD: I guess the issue is if those organizations don't have four-year-olds, are they funded per capita or per student? How will they continue to exist? Will the enrolments be so declined that they will not be able to operate? Has the department looked at that enrolment and do they fund per student?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: We made some changes to our early childhood programming and then based on the student attendance and the reporting mechanism and so forth. We're trying to make it easier for the licenced operators to function effectively and efficiently. Yes, my department, again, is working very closely with operators in the Northwest Territories, not only Hay River but other communities that have four-year-olds going into the school system, because we're fully aware that the planned focus will be zero to three, so that's the planned target. We're doing what we can to subsidize them with all the program subsidizations that we currently offer.

MR. BOUCHARD: I've received information from one of the organizations, the Head Start program, that basically they had been informed that they are now a zero to three not a three/four, and I guess they're quite disturbed in the fact that they have been running this for over 20 years. They were asked to realign after the Department of Education has done that.

How can the Minister justify that we're changing the focus to zero to three when these organizations were established to do three to four?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Early childhood consultants have been working with the operators throughout the Northwest Territories. We will continue to do so. These are just some of the areas that have been in discussion with the operators. We're offering a free junior kindergarten to the Northwest Territories and allowing more focus on the zero to three as we move forward this fall, the following year and also the third year phased approach. The free junior kindergarten has been offered as a free basis. It has been a fee-for-service in some of the communities. This is an opportunity

for those individuals, the parents, the single parents that cannot afford junior kindergarten.

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

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my experience, nothing is free in this world. The point is that the funding for the junior kindergarten is going to be from within and now it's affecting other organizations, other communities that have Head Start programs. My concern is that these Head Start programs and other organizations will fail. I'm just wondering: Has the department completely assessed this in their plan to launch junior kindergarten both in the small communities and in the larger centres?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: This junior kindergarten is not new to us. We've been engaging the general public since the early start of the Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative, the early childhood development, the framework itself now, engaging education renewal and innovation. There has been a lot of discussion pertaining to this, and yes, there is going to be an evaluation of what's needed at the community with those operators, what kind of subsidies will be required, and we will continue to subsidize them. We will continue to strengthen that. We don't want to see operators losing out. Those are just some of the discussions and our early childhood consultants are working very closely with the operators.

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

QUESTION 259-17(5):
LOCAL WATER TREATMENT PLANTS

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. I think I've raised this matter on water treatment plants in the House on numerous occasions. A particular highlight is in Kakisa. Because they don't have a water treatment plant, people have to schedule their lives around water delivery and perhaps it sometimes could be delivered today, and so people have to make due with perhaps a 250 gallon tank that could last until Friday. Other examples are recently ITI had invested with the community a fish plant, and it was noted that the operations would probably be contingent on a water supply.

With those in mind, what are the barriers to establishing a local water treatment plant in Kakisa? If I could pose that to the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are no barriers to establishing a water treatment plant in Kakisa. I noticed on their

five-year capital plan they have identified some funding to go towards a water treatment plant. Again, we can work with the community. I'm not sure if their capital plan has changed, but we can work with the community and see what some of their priorities are and how we can make it happen.

MR. NADLI: My question, again, is what are the obstacles of setting in place a local water treatment plant in Enterprise?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Again, I don't see very many obstacles. Both communities are funded. We give them capital allocation and they can use that money towards a water treatment plant. As well, the gas tax money that the community has received, they can use that towards the construction of a water treatment plant. We've seen it in a number of cases in the past where communities have done a bundled project and got good value for the dollar, including water treatment plants in a number of communities at the same time. Again, there is another opportunity for our officials to meet with the community. Again, they have to identify as a priority and ask us to come in and have some discussions with them. We will work with them to see how they could make the water treatment plants happen.

MR. NADLI: I'd like to thank the Minister for his response. It is clear that the Minister has indicated over time that the local responsibility lies on the local leadership and they have the capacity of funding and also, at the same time, there are no obstacles, so does the Minister agree that over the long term, local water treatment plants would be the best option for these two communities especially when the wood pellet plant and campgrounds are fully developed?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: The Member has pointed out quite well the benefits that will be in these two communities should they establish their own water treatment plant. Again, I say that our staff over at MACA are more than willing to meet with the community. As with a number of our programs that we do offer through the communities, the onus is on the community to make the decision to establish a water treatment plant – they have the authority – then our department will work closely with them to see how we can assist them in making these water treatment plants a reality.

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

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It seems again clear that the Minister is indicating that the onus is on the local leadership. They have the capacity.

Could the Minister commit to meet the communities halfway and be willing to work with both communities to identify viable options and next steps within the 2014-15 fiscal year? As one

example, perhaps you could initiate the advance towards a planning study. Mahsi.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, we will wait for the community to take the initiative. They know what their priorities are a lot better than we do. When the money was initially allocated to all the communities, they knew what their infrastructure needs were a lot better than we did, so communities have done quite well in that. We expect if the communities of Kakisa and Enterprise want to start the discussion on a water treatment plant, they will let us know and we'll be there to start the discussion with them. We can provide them a lot of advice, technical advice and financing options. We're more than willing to meet with the communities, again, at the invitation of the community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 260-17(5):
NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS
STABILIZATION

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask some questions to the Premier about the NGO. It looks like he was very well versed in the NGO field today and I had some questions about he talked about the mandates of NGOs and that they don't look at that.

I'm wondering, because I've heard some concerns from the Hay River NGOs that are in that area, that the territorial NGOs that are set up and established in Yellowknife are not providing funding out into the regions.

Can the Minister please provide me some direction on how those NGOs' mandates are looked at, and if they're providing a territorial mandate, if they're providing it to the regions? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated in response to a previous question, the Government of the Northwest Territories does not prescribe NGO mandates or activities and it's up to the NGOs themselves to regulate themselves. If they're raising funds on the premise that they're going to be distributing the funds, then I expect they would do that.

The only legal requirement, as far as I know, is the requirement to register with the registrar. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BOUCHARD: Mr. Speaker, I kind of disagree with the concept that we're funding these territorial NGOs but the money isn't getting out to the regions, they're not providing money out to these other organizations that are basically affiliates of theirs. A lot of the funds are used to employ people

in Yellowknife here, and other organizations are struggling for funds.

I'm struggling with the question because I don't want to out any one NGO, but is the government looking into the mandates of territorial NGOs, looking at where they put their money regionally?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Again, in response to a previous question, I referenced the Government of the Northwest Territories Third-Party Agencies Accountability Framework. We have three categories of third-party agencies and they're categorized based on accountability. The ones that require the most accountability are the ones that provide the most essential services. The second category provides services but are not as essential. The third category provides other services. Depending on the category that the NGO is in, that's where the accountability comes in. So if the NGO that you're referencing is in category one, they would be fully funded for financial and otherwise. If they are mandated to fund parties outside in other regions, then the government would make sure that they do so. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BOUCHARD: I appreciate that they would have to do this, but what is the mechanism that the government uses to make sure that this is being done? Obviously, we're hearing those concerns in our community and it's not being fulfilled. The territorial NGOs that have agents in Hay River are not being represented.

What is the government doing to make sure that these mandates are being fulfilled?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: I guess we can start by the Member providing me the information about who he's talking about and what he's talking about so that we can follow up.

As I said, we have three categories. The first category, the one that provides the most critical services, we go as far as providing multi-year contributions. Depending on the category, if the NGO you're referencing is in the third category, then we probably would not even follow up as to where they were getting their funding. But if they were in the first or second category, we would make sure they did what they're supposed to do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would be very interested to see how the money is being accounted for. Just because we provide money and then we just leave it at that, we should be following the audit trail of where the money is being spent; what money is being sent out to the regions; if you're a territorial organization, what are you doing territorially to represent all the people in

the Northwest Territories. I guess I would like to see the territorial government fulfil the mandate.

How is the money audited for the territorial government for these organizations? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: There are four pillars to good government: accountability, participation, predictability and transparency. For those that are in these three categories, in the highest categories we require this transparency. So if we're giving them money to distribute, then they would have to account for it generally through audited financial statements. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to opening address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Mr. Dolyunny.

Reports of Standing and Special Committees

COMMITTEE REPORT 3-17(5):

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PRIORITIES AND PLANNING REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF BILLS 1, 2, 3 AND OTHER LEGISLATION TO IMPLEMENT DEVOLUTION OF LANDS AND RESOURCES RESPONSIBILITY TO THE GNWT

MR. DOLYUNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning Report of the Review of Bills 1, 2 and 3 and Other Legislation to Implement Devolution of Lands and Resources Responsibility to the GNWT.

Introduction

The Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning is pleased to report on its reviews of Bills 1, 2 and 3, and comment on other legislation required to implement the devolution of lands and resources responsibility and associated revenue to the Government of the Northwest Territories and Aboriginal governments.

Collectively, this legislation marks an historic step in the evolution of responsible government in the Northwest Territories, as set out in the NWT Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement. These bills either mirror existing federal legislation, or were required under the terms of that agreement. This suite of legislation includes:

- 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, Northwest Territories Intergovernmental Agreement on Lands and Resources Management Act; and
- Bill 17, Northwest Territories Intergovernmental Resources Revenue Sharing Act.

These bills represent a great deal of work by this government and its many partners. They are proposed as the cornerstone for NWT control and management of lands, waters and resources within its boundaries, and for groundbreaking partnerships with Aboriginal governments. The health of these crucial partnerships will depend on the responsiveness of our government in adapting the federal management regime to meet the needs and aspirations of the people of the Northwest Territories, today and long into the future.

The Review Process

The review of bills to implement devolution was somewhat unusual due to many constraints beyond the committee's control and, in some cases, beyond our government's control. For example, Bill C-15, Canada's legislation to enable devolution, was not passed in the Senate until March 6, 2014, and at this writing has still not received Royal Assent. Most of our own devolution-related bills were only introduced in the Legislative Assembly in the last few weeks. The process unfolding in our Legislature is lightning fast by any reasonable measure.

Within these very challenging limits, Members have done their best to scrutinize the bills and seek public input to the greatest extent possible. A territory-wide call for public submissions was made on February 3, 2014, supported by a press release and media interviews, a prominent advertising campaign, and public service announcements. The feedback we have received will help guide our future work on devolution-related legislation, and we thank all who responded.

Bill 1 – Reindeer Act

Bill 1 provides for a peace officer or wildlife officer to seize a reindeer, reindeer parts, vehicles or other articles that he or she believes have been involved in the killing or moving of reindeer contrary to regulations. The bill sets out the legal process for the potential forfeit of these items to the GNWT, and sets penalties for infractions.

Bill 1 mirrors the Reindeer regulations made under the federal Northwest Territories Act, which are to be replaced by this legislation.

Bill 1 received second reading in the Legislative Assembly on November 7, 2013, and was referred to the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning for review. At a public hearing on March 5,

2014, Premier McLeod spoke to the bill and responded to questions prior to a clause-by-clause review. Bill 1 was then referred by motion to Committee of the Whole.

Bill 2 – Archeological Sites Act

Bill 2 provides for a peace officer to seize any object that has been dealt with contrary to regulations respecting archaeological sites. The bill sets out the legal process for the potential forfeit of these items to the GNWT, and sets penalties for infractions of the act.

This bill mirrors federal Archaeological Sites regulations made pursuant to the current Northwest Territories Act.

Bill 2 received Second Reading in the Legislative Assembly on November 7, 2013, and was referred to the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning for review. At a public hearing on March 5, 2014, Premier McLeod spoke to the bill and responded to questions prior to a clause-by-clause review. Bill 2 was then referred by motion to Committee of the Whole.

Bill 3 – Surface Rights Board Act

As stipulated by the NWT Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement, Bill 3 mirrors the federal Northwest Territories Surface Rights Board Act, a relatively new law passed by Parliament in 2013. However, many sections are not yet in force and a board has not been appointed.

The act provides for a Surface Rights Board with authority to resolve disputes over terms and conditions of access to land and waters, chiefly for commercial purposes. This includes disputes over compensation for access.

The board is to consist of five to nine members, resident in the NWT and appointed by the Minister, including at least one resident of each region where there are settled Aboriginal land claims.

Bill 3 received second reading in the Legislative Assembly on November 7, 2013, and was referred to the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning for review. In response to the committee's calls for public input on devolution bills, Alternatives North provided specific and thoughtful comments on Bill 3, including the following suggestions:

- Surface Rights Board should have the power to deny access if appropriate;
- The act should not apply within municipal boundaries, and municipal governments should have the ability to prohibit mineral rights acquisition within their boundaries;
- An integrated resource management system, including environmental audits and land use plans, should be completed before this legislation comes into force;

- The board should have the ability to require financial security to ensure compliance with its orders, and shift the burden of proof to the developer rather than the surface rights holder;
- The board should have the ability to set its own procedures, including discretion to hear from other parties besides the developer and the rights holder; and
- The regime should not apply in regions lacking recognition or settlement of Aboriginal claims.

These suggested changes are beyond the scope of mirror legislation as stipulated by the Devolution Agreement. However, these issues were raised by committee members during a public hearing on Bill 3 held on March 5, 2014. During this hearing, Premier McLeod committed to further public review of devolution legislation as soon as it falls under the control of the Government of the Northwest Territories on April 1, 2014. The committee recommends that these matters be considered during that review.

A public clause-by-clause review of Bill 3 was held in Yellowknife on March 5, 2014. A small amendment was made to the French version of the bill, with which the Premier concurred. The bill as amended and reprinted was then referred by motion for consideration in Committee of the Whole.

At this time I'd like to pass this to the chair of the Priorities and Planning committee, Ms. Bisaro. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Ms. Bisaro.

Other Bills Required to Implement Devolution

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is unfortunate that most of the bills required to implement devolution – including the most complex and important legislation – could not be reviewed by the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning due to time constraints. Among these bills are the Northwest Territories Lands Act, the Waters Act, two bills pertaining to oil and gas regulation, and two bills to implement GNWT agreements with Aboriginal governments, related to land, water and resource management, and revenue sharing. The latter two bills are brand new, not mirrored federal legislation, stemming from obligations in the Devolution Agreement itself. First reading only occurred on March 5, 2014.

This lack of scrutiny by the appropriate standing committee is a serious departure from the normal process, which provides for a detailed review and valuable advice from our constituents on proposed laws in the Northwest Territories. During this phase of legislative oversight, bills are often improved and amended, frequently with the agreement of the sponsoring Minister. This speaks to the value of

committee and public comment and an additional layer of accountability to our citizens. Committee members deeply regret that time limits resulted in seven bills circumventing the normal review process in favour of direct referral to Committee of the Whole.

To partially mitigate this situation, some additional measures were taken by members of the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning. Several Members and committee staff attended the federal Parliamentary Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development's Yellowknife hearing on Bill C-15 to hear the views of Northwest Territories residents and organizations firsthand. These included many Aboriginal governments and numerous prominent non-governmental organizations.

These submissions made it abundantly clear that support for devolution is broad but not universal, particularly in regions where Aboriginal land and self-government claims remain unresolved. Opposition to regulatory changes within the federal jurisdiction under the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act, MVRMA, is much stronger and more widespread. Representatives of major Aboriginal governments in all five Dene claim regions are adamantly opposed to the regulatory changes, and several reported they are considering court action. The elimination of regional land and water boards by the federal government will likely result in pressure by Aboriginal governments for increased input in management regimes within the GNWT's control, perhaps testing the latitude of the soon-to-be-established Intergovernmental Council on Land and Resources Management. This council, made up of the responsible Minister and leaders of each Aboriginal government party to the Devolution Agreement, is to coordinate the management of lands and waters across regions, and between public and land claim settlement lands.

The issues raised with the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development were reinforced before the Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources, which also reviewed Bill C-15, albeit without a hearing in the Northwest Territories.

In addition to monitoring public response to Bill C-15, the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning sought public opinion on all devolution legislation in its call for input on February 3, 2014. This too was outside the norm, as seven of these bills were not technically before the committee and then only available in un-mirrored form in the existing federal legislation. In light of such hurdles, it is a great credit to those who submitted feedback to the committee that they were able to provide very useful comments. It is further evidence that it will be fruitful to review devolution legislation after April 1, 2014.

Such a review is supported by Alternatives North, which also provided specific comments. The committee takes no position on these matters, pending a thorough review in the future. What follows is a summary of some of the key points made to the committee by Alternatives North:

Bill 10 – Northwest Territories Lands Act

- Ensure that development is accompanied by closure and reclamation plans and financial security, as under the Commissioner's Lands Act;
- Leases of public lands should be on the public record and easily accessible;
- Longer-term, there should be one piece of legislation to administer all public lands to ensure a coordinated and effective system;
- Royalty rates and fees should be reviewed to ensure adequate return to the public; and
- Alternatives to the free entry system for mineral rights administration should be reviewed and considered.

Bill 11 – Petroleum Resources Act

- Public input should be sought with respect to determining which department should be the responsible regulator of petroleum resources;
- Oil and gas decisions should be taken out of the political realm and placed with an independent, transparent and accountable board, based on a co-management approach with Aboriginal governments;
- There should be a clear requirement for financial security to cover all aspects of oil and gas operations in the NWT, particularly for accidents, malfunctions and spills;
- There should be a coordinated approach to closure and reclamation between oil and gas regulatory systems and the land and water regulatory systems, to ensure fairness for operators and protection for the public and the environment;
- Composition of the Environmental Studies Management Board should be reviewed to ensure greater representativeness and accountability; and
- Royalty rates and fees should be reviewed to ensure an adequate return to the public.

At minimum, the comments from Alternatives North illustrate that many important issues should be widely studied and discussed across the Northwest Territories once jurisdiction over these laws resides here.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

The Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning recommends that the Premier initiate a broad and thorough public review of all devolution-related legislation as soon as it is within the jurisdiction of the Government of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, that concludes the Report of the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning on the Review of Bills 1, 2 and 3 and Other Legislation to Implement Devolution of Land and Resources Responsibility to the GNWT.

MOTION TO RECEIVE COMMITTEE REPORT
3-17(5) AND MOVE INTO
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE,
CARRIED

Therefore, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Range Lake, that Committee Report 3-17(5), be received by the Assembly and moved into Committee of the Whole for further consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. Committee Report 3-17(5) is received by the Assembly and moved into Committee of the Whole.

---Carried

Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 93(4) and move Committee Report 3-17(5) into Committee of the Whole for consideration today.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. SPEAKER: Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Colleagues, I will take a 15-minute break.

---SHORT RECESS

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, colleagues. Item 14, tabling of documents. Mr. Dolynny.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 67-17(5):
SCREENSHOT IMAGES FROM GNWT
EXECUTIVE WEBSITE PAGE
ON NGO STABILIZATION FUND

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table two documents. I'd like to table a screenshot from the Executive website on the NGO funding which was taken on Friday, March 7th, regarding 2013-2014 grants.

I'd also like to table a screen shot from the same website today. There is something missing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Mr. Lafferty.

Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

BILL 24:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE
STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE ACT

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, March 12, 2014, I will move that Bill 24, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act, be read for the first time. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

BILL 25:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE
EDUCATION ACT

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, March 12, 2014, I will move that Bill 25, An Act to Amend the Education Act, be read for the first time. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Colleagues, before we continue on, I'd like to welcome former Member Leon Lafferty, who is in the gallery today.

---Applause

Item 17, motions. Mrs. Groenewegen.

Motions

MOTION 16-17(5):
REQUEST TO GOVERNMENT OF CANADA
TO EXTEND MAXIMUM TERM OF
17TH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,
CARRIED AS AMENDED

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: WHEREAS Parliament is currently considering Bill C-15, the Northwest Territories Devolution Act, which includes a new Northwest Territories Act that would extend the maximum term of office of future NWT Legislative Assemblies from four to five years;

AND WHEREAS the Legislative Assemblies of Nunavut and Yukon already have five-year maximum terms of office as a result of past changes to federal legislation;

AND WHEREAS the next NWT general election is currently scheduled for October 5, 2015, in the same month as the next federal general election

and municipal elections in several NWT communities;

AND WHEREAS overlapping elections create significant communications and administrative concerns as well as the possibility of lower voter participation rates;

AND WHEREAS some provinces with elections scheduled for the fall of 2015 have extended their terms in order to avoid overlap in election periods, or are considering doing so in the near future;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that this Legislative Assembly requests that the Government of Canada propose to Parliament an amendment to the Northwest Territories Act that would authorize this current 17th 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, that 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. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I gave notice of this motion last week and since then most Members have had a chance to return to their constituencies and have had an opportunity to also receive input and communication from constituents on this matter. There have been many suggestions and ideas proposed.

In reviewing the motion this morning, we realized that one of the issues that this motion speaks very definitively to is the last furthermore where it talks about a bill that defers the next NWT election to October 2015. That is a very definitive date and it would take it to the maximum of one year and we did hear from constituents who wondered why to avoid the overlap why it couldn't be three months or one month or six months or different ideas. So in hearing that and in response to that, I would like to move a motion to the amendment that we could discuss and debate prior to the motion being decided on. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. To the amendment to the motion. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MOTION TO AMEND MOTION 16-17(5),
CARRIED

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for

Thebacha, that Motion 16-17(5) be amended by deleting the words "AND FURTHER, that 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," and by replacing the second paragraph of the resolution portion of the motion with the following "AND FURTHER, that the Premier communicate this request to the Prime Minister and report back to this Assembly." That is my motion of amendment. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. I'll allow the seconder to the motion to speak. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This amendment clarifies the motion and puts the focus where it should be. This is a process that has some steps to it, which I'll speak to in the main motion, but now it focuses the attention on what needs to be done, which is to get the authority to approach the Prime Minister to give us the tools to deal with our own affairs. So it's a good motion, a clarifying motion and puts the attention where it belongs on that particular step. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. To the amendment to the motion. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This amendment simply reduces clarity in what this motion is asking by saying we're going to change it however we like. It might be six months, it might still be a year, it might be eight months, it might be one month, but we're not going to let you know. At least the way it is now is clear. So I may vote for, I may abstain, I may agree or disagree with the motion, but the point is this buries the clarity that I think has already been revealed by the motion itself and certainly the public will be alerted.

I think we do need some flexibility, but the crux of the issue here is that we are asking the federal government to change legislation and this House to change legislation to allow us to extend our own mandate without hearing from the people. To that I disagree and I'll be speaking further to that during the motion. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: To the amendment to the motion. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are a lot of things that could happen that could affect whether or not we would exercise that flexibility to change our dates. For one thing, let me give you an example, the federal government that's in power right now has a majority. They might decide to change their election date, in which case a lot of the discussion around this motion becomes a moot point because we then would not have the overlap with the federal election campaign period.

So there are things that could change this, but right now, like some people have said, well, wouldn't it be a good idea if we held all the elections on October 19th, which is the date now scheduled for the municipal and the federal election? Wouldn't it be great to go into a voting station and go here to vote for your MP, go here to vote for your MLA, go here to vote for your mayor and council, go here to vote for your school board? Some people think that would be a great idea. We wouldn't even have the flexibility to even explore something like that because our four-year mandate ends, as it is now under the current legislation, on October the 12th. These other elections are scheduled for October the 19th. So we can't vary the territorial election under this by one, we can't move it forward, we can't move it back one day. Like, we can't change it all, there's no flexibility. So I think the operative word here is flexibility, and if anybody wants to speculate on where that flexibility ends up, well, I guess they can do that, but this is a very preliminary step. That is to the amendment. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. To the amendment to the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. The amendment to the motion is carried.

---Carried

To the motion. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't want to take up too much time speaking to this motion, but I think it is important to be clear about what this motion is asking for. This motion, if passed, would allow our government to request the federal government to amend the maximum term of the 17th Legislative Assembly.

Currently, under the NWT Act, four years is the maximum term. In the new legislation passed now and awaiting assent by the Governor General, Bill C-15, all future Legislatures in the NWT would have maximum allowable five-year terms. Again, maximum allowable, I don't think that any jurisdictions where they have maximum allowable actually have more than five-year terms, but they do have the flexibility to go to a maximum of five years. In every jurisdiction in Canada, with the exception of ours here in the NWT, maximum terms are currently five years.

This discussion was precipitated by the convergence of federal, territorial and municipal elections all in October of 2015. There are capacity issues and I think we need to be mindful that the challenges may not look the same in all communities. What might work in Yellowknife or Hay River may not work in some of our small communities.

In fairness to candidates who may want to run at any of these levels, I think it's safe to say that there could be competition for volunteers, nominators, financial contributors, campaign workers, returning office staff, all of the behind the scenes work done at the level of the chief electoral officer position and the elections staff here in Yellowknife.

As a consensus government, candidates running for MLA in a community like Hay River may draw supporters from residents who may be of all political partisan stripes. Could that be compromised by pressure on candidates who are running at the same time as the federal candidates or their supporters to show their loyalties if the mayoral, MLA and Member of Parliament candidates are all campaigning at the same time? In a community like Hay River, at one level you may be working to get a candidate elected to a level of government and your allies or opponents might completely change at a different level. Even in larger communities it's always a challenge to get people to come out, so to speak, for the candidate of their choice. Imagine this if all these elections are occurring this close together.

Some people have suggested that there are synergies that might bode well for voter participation if all the elections were held on the same day, and I've already briefly referred to that, but I think there's already enough potential confusion with overlapping roles, mandates, platforms, without having them all within a two-week period.

Without the changes being proposed by this request, even moving the territorial election to the 19th of October would be outside of the four-year maximum limit as it exists today. In some Canadian jurisdictions there is provision for an automatic trigger to move a provincial election out by a few months if it looks like the election period will overlap with a federal election. This solves the issue without requiring the elected sitting Members to vote on an extension of their own terms if that extension stays within the maximum five-year term. This legislation and regulation is definitely something that could be included in future revisions after the new provisions of Bill C-15 are in effect. That was another suggestion by constituents, is that these trigger regulations that are in other jurisdictions may work well here in the Northwest Territories as well.

Some people have expressed concern about the timing of this motion, citing the lack of time for public consultation, so to be clear, this motion today will not give this Assembly a five-year maximum term. It would merely enable this government to make a request to the federal government to permit our Assembly to bring forth a bill that would need to be debated and passed in this House to allow this Assembly the same provisions of every other jurisdiction in Canada to exceed the four-year term

to a maximum of five years if there were compelling reasons to do so and they were duly debated and passed by the majority of Members of this House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. To the motion as amended. I will allow the seconder, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to speak in support of this motion. Back in July of last year, I was at a videoconference call over at the Greenstone Building with the Finance Ministers from around the country, and as we were waiting for the call to start, we ended up talking about elections and things that were happening in our jurisdictions, and that's when I first heard from Manitoba and Saskatchewan that they had changed the dates of their election, and because they have fixed election dates, as do we, because of the possibility of those dates coinciding with the federal election and that the federal government, as a senior government, has made it clear that if there is any movement to happen, it will happen at the provincial and territorial level. They had taken advantage of that advance notice and they had gone to their systems to do that. Subsequent to that, we also know now, I believe, Prince Edward Island is looking at the same movement of their dates because of the overlap.

That issue, I brought back to Cabinet. We thought there was significance here. There are potential problems that we could all readily identify that have been outlined by Mrs. Groenewegen. We also took the matter over the months to Caucus and back to Cabinet to talk about how it was going, what are the options, what should we be doing, and to the point where as time has marched on, devolution is coming, we're not that far from the election, the decision was that somebody put a motion on this floor in the House, which Madam Groenewegen has done and I thank her for that. I'm happy to second it, to have the discussion about that we need the tools to manage our business.

We're the only jurisdiction in the country that doesn't have this authority. We are the only jurisdiction in the country that doesn't have the capacity to deal with the problem that's going to occur on our watch, which is this overlap with all the potential and practical problems that will occur by having three major elections, four major elections happening at the same time. This motion is a very common sense, practical motion that, as a Legislature, we need to be in a position to manage our affairs. We shouldn't stand here handcuffed, because for this period of time when we know there's a problem coming to be able to deal with the issue that's going to be before us here in the not-too-distant future. To me, this is a very practical, common sense motion that allows us to proceed; to talk to the federal government, to get the authorities

so that we, in fact, have the tools to manage our affairs, and as Mrs. Groenewegen pointed out, when we get that and there is further discussion, there will be another process, a public process. That bill will have to be included. There are things that Madam Groenewegen indicated that are worth considering, things like triggers and those types of things, but this is the fundamental next step to pass this motion and to give us the tools to manage our affairs.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. To the motion as amended. Mr. Dolyunny.

MR. DOLYUNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the mover, Mrs. Groenewegen, for this amended motion, and to Mr. Miltenberger for allowing debate here today.

We are here to debate this motion because of an alleged concern that an overlap at potentially three levels of government elections in 2015 will somehow negatively affect the administration, the campaigning and overall voter participation of democracy from succeeding. I have stated on more than one occasion, the foundation of a democracy is built on our electoral process, a process that has rules and is bound by the social contract we share between the elected and the electorate body we represent. This motion today speaks to the first steps of changing this social contract for Members of the 17th Assembly. Before I indicate whether I will or will not support this motion, I believe it is prudent for me to evaluate some of the statements within the motion for a better understanding and transparency.

The motion mentions the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut and the Yukon already have five-year maximum term offices in their legislation. This is true, but this alone should not be the sole determinant for our decision-making today. If this were the case, I could cite many other examples where I stood before this House to point to legislation enacted in the Yukon where we don't have it in the Northwest Territories; yet, this has had little sway in making our government jump up and say, yes, I'd like to have that same legislation today as well. I wish it were that easy, but now when the shoe is on the other foot, it appears that comparing legislation with our sister territory is a bona fide tactic now. This is good to know, as I'll endeavour to try this someday myself.

Furthermore, the motion speaks to some provinces having extended their terms to avoid overlap in election periods. Actually, to be honest, only two have. Let me explain.

According to the original fixed election schedule of October 2015, six subnational jurisdictions would, by default, have general elections during this same period as our federal counterparts. They are Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and, of course, ourselves,

the Northwest Territories. Only two of these provinces, Manitoba and Saskatchewan, have enacted such legislation so far. PEI has stated in December 2013 they intend to bring forward legislation to extend, but hasn't done so yet. Ontario has a minority government and, to my understanding, may hold polls this spring on the subject but has not considered a term extension as of this date, and at this time we have not heard any plans to extend the legislative term in Newfoundland and Labrador. Aside from Nunavut and Yukon legislation name dropping and failing to speak to the actual dilemma presented to the six subnational jurisdictions directly affected, this motion is a bit blasé without these solid facts.

To the statement of concern of overlapping elections, the motion references unease of communication, administration and lower voter participation. To be clear, the overlap for the proposed territorial general election of October 5, 2015, is overlapping the federal election date of October 19, 2015, by only 17 days. By all accounts, there is a perception that the elections are on the same day, but in fact they are actually two weeks apart. To the concern of such overlap, many have mentioned that this could actually serve better for administration function for more effective use of returning office functions and space and for increased voter awareness and turnout.

I would like to further point out that actually only six Northwest Territories tax-based communities are affected by this overlap for school board and municipal elections, and with these elections taking place in such larger centres, the argument of lack of labour and suitable office space have little merit.

As for the concern of voter turnout or fatigue with such overlap, there is some evidence to suggest that holding more than one election campaign during the same time period increases voter turnout, and many of my constituents have echoed similar sentiments of support and that multiple elections at once would be more convenient.

There is much being mentioned today of all the alleged issues of such overlap, yet there are little facts to substantiate the bold moves of extending terms for another year. Again, many agree there are no real concerns to be had and that many are crying wolf when there is no reason to fear. Therefore, as was cited by many of my constituents and many residents of the Northwest Territories, why not just leave the date as is? This in itself is a good question, yet it appears that this motion is already making the assumption that status quo is no longer an option for our residents. Sadly, for this Assembly to make a bold assumption of such magnitude without the formal input and concern of its residents, in my opinion, is breaching our entrusted social contract of office. I ask that this issue be further investigated before we throw the

baby out with the bathwater, as implied with this motion.

Continuing on, this motion also raises the overall premise of the Northwest Territories being left out in the cold, of having no such power to extend our terms, and this motion, in some ways, is a triggering mechanism to catch up with the rest of Canada. We need to ask ourselves, is this the principle on how we should govern ourselves moving forward?

Many residents feel that this motion is the beginning or the unravelling of moral principles of those of us in office. In essence, it is a breach of ideals of our democratic value system we long uphold. Many believe we have not examined all options, such as an early election of June 2015, nor have exhaustively justified the status quo of leaving the date as is, that many have unilaterally fast-forwarded on the principle of extending one's term for an indefinite term that we see with the amendment as a justification of what's best for the devolution files.

Whatever the motivation, it is clear that the public was taken by surprise last Thursday when this notice of motion was read into the House and that 96 hours later we are thrust to make a hasty decision personally affecting everybody in this room.

I don't wish to repeat all the messages, e-mails, text messages, Facebook replies and phone calls that we all received in the past four days on this subject, but I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that the public is not in favour of this request of extension, period.

As I stated at the beginning, and I want to make perfectly clear, I am not in favour of this motion. This motion jumps on the very foundation of democracy I hold true to our electoral process. Anything that would lengthen my term of office from the original mandate bestowed on me by the people of Range Lake would, in my humble opinion, be a breach of my social contract of such principles and values.

For the record, I have no problem looking at term extension legislation that will assist future Assemblies, just as long as I don't personally benefit from such a decision of the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. To the motion as amended. Mr. Bouchard.

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank my colleagues, Mrs. Groenewegen and Mr. Miltenberger, for bringing forward this motion. They were the mover and seconder of this motion, but we did discuss this topic in Caucus several times and it has been done with heavy heart and consideration of a whole bunch of different issues.

I will not be supporting the motion because I feel that it's not something we should be doing. I went home, talked to my constituents and a bunch of them had concerns and issues with it. The other thing is that as a member of the Board of Management here in the Legislative Assembly, we often look at agents and committees to look at what we do as an Assembly, as MLAs, and we typically take those recommendations and put them to the future Legislative Assembly. That's what the federal government is going to do with Bill 15, changing our mandate to be able to change it to five years if we want, but that's for future consideration.

I think the current Legislative Assembly should stay the course, status quo, keep that date. There are probably 50 different options. We can go early, we can go a month early, we can go three months early, we can go two months later if this motion passes. But my concept is we just stay the course, set those dates.

Mr. Miltenberger has said, since we've started this session, give us the time that we have, the hours and the days we have left in this Assembly. We should stay on that course. We have time to plan. I've heard from returning officers in my community that have concerns with those three elections happening at the same time, but I think over the next 18 months we're able to alleviate a lot of the issues that are going to happen with that, so at this time I cannot support the motion. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. To the motion as amended. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to express my appreciation to the mover and the seconder of the motion for bringing it forward, but I, unfortunately, don't support that particular action.

On Friday I put some queries out on social media, through Facebook and through Twitter, and I asked anybody who saw it, listened, heard it, whatever, I asked them for comments and I asked them for positive or negative comments. I didn't care; I just wanted comments because I felt it very important that we get some kind of feedback.

I had considerable input from my constituents and from other people's constituents over the last three days. Of that reaction, 99 percent were against the action that's proposed in this motion.

I have concerns about the rationale for the motion, as I think many Members do. The federal election date is scheduled for October 19th, but I don't feel, as some Members do, that we have a guarantee that that federal election is going to be called for that date. There's certainly not a good track record on the part of the federal government which shows that they keep to a fixed election date. I don't think they've kept to one certainly in the last 10 or 15 years.

Another of the arguments is that the NWT is the only jurisdiction that doesn't have legislation which allows extension of a term to a maximum of five years, and Mr. Miltenberger spoke passionately to that. And that is true. But it goes against our current convention, and that convention is that any changes to legislation which will affect the Legislative Assembly are made in one Assembly for implementation in the next. In my time here, we have not ever made a change to legislation that has been implemented for the current Assembly. We do that, Mr. Speaker, to avoid the perception that the Assembly is doing something which will benefit us as Assembly Members.

One person's comment that I want to pass on: "I do not believe that you have the moral or ethical authority to even request this action." That we are the only jurisdiction argument I find is rather weak.

We also know that Bill C-15 will allow the 18th Assembly to have the authority to extend an election up to five years, and every Assembly after that will have that authority, so in keeping with our convention and being true to ourselves, I think we need to ensure that we do it for the next Assembly, not for this one.

There's a very strong perception out in the public, certainly from what I saw, that Members are bringing this motion forward for personal benefit. That may or may not be true and I don't have an opinion on that, but public perception carries a really big weight and there are many people who believe that we are doing this for personal gain.

The timing for the consideration of this issue is normal. Part of our process when a motion comes forward, is we give notice of motion and then 48 hours later, or a little bit longer if it's over a weekend, the motion comes to the floor and we debate it. But for an issue which is as contentious as this one is, this timing is way too short. This needed to have consideration in the public realm for at least a month, more like two months or three months, and that certainly hasn't happened.

To quote another constituent, "Give us more time to debate and think about this issue." That's a common theme that I heard in many, many comments back to me.

The public has said, and I believe them to be right, that they want to have a hand in any decision on this issue. Another comment: "Two days of so-called consultation is a sham. Why the rush?"

This issue needs to be discussed and debated and considered in the public. There needs to be formal consultation that should take place and it has not done so to this point.

Another concern for me is that there hasn't been adequate time to consider potential options. There was one option put forward and that was to extend our term for a year, but there are many other

options and some have been mentioned already. We could extend for a week; we could extend it for two weeks; we could go earlier; we could go three months; we could go six months; we could have all the elections on one day, as has been mentioned; we could move the municipal election date; we could postpone it for the latest amount of time possible, so we could postpone for a day, for that matter, but we didn't have those discussions, certainly not in the public, and they need to be held.

I, like many of those people who I heard from, don't buy the argument that it is confusing to voters to have all three elections within the same month. Many people told me that they're affronted by that rationale, and I think more of my constituents than that suggests. I don't think they are quite as stupid as we think they are, or as some people think they are.

Constituents have mentioned that this action is undemocratic. The majority of the input that I received was very, very clear. This Assembly was elected for a four-year term. Our job contract is for four years. Any extension should be granted by the voters, not by the ones who are doing the job. That came through time and time again.

Another comment that I want to pass on: "I see voting to extend your own term as a huge conflict of interest."

It's been said that there's a risk of poor voter turnout by having all three elections in the same month. I believe there's a risk of increased voter turnout if we have all the elections in the same month. People are already engaged; people are aware that voting is happening, and I think it's entirely possible that we could get greater voter turnout through doing this.

I also heard from people, similar to my own views, that I think if we have the election on the day as scheduled, October 5, 2015, and the other two elections a couple weeks later that that can be dealt with. Yes, it will make life a little bit difficult, but it's nothing that's insurmountable. It's nothing that we, as individuals in our communities and returning officers and CEOs, can't handle. There's certainly nothing, I don't think, that should delay it for a year and that came through again from people as well.

I'm very glad that the one-year date is off the table, but as has been stated, it leaves us with an unknown. We now don't know what's being contemplated.

This to me is an issue where every MLA should be representing the views and the wishes of their constituents. It's not a government issue. I don't feel there's any need for Cabinet solidarity. This is a Caucus issue in which we sit as 19 individual Members wearing no hats, but simply representing our constituents. I look forward, hopefully, to

hearing that Cabinet will have a free vote on this motion.

One last comment for those who do support this motion. This came from someone within the last day: "I beg of you to represent your constituents in an honest and ethical manner. I beg of you not to cross over the threshold of humiliation." So I am not in support of the motion and I hope that my colleagues will see the light of day and vote against the motion as well. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. To the motion as amended. Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I begin I'd just like to thank the mover and the seconder for bringing the motion forward to bring out a good discussion and debate, which you are seeing before the House here and a lot of good points from both sides, actually.

Upon the notice of motion that was given last week, I almost immediately sent out e-mails and posted on social media to get feedback from residents of the Northwest Territories but also constituents from Inuvik. I heard a lot of good points for, and a lot were against. Some of the arguments that were for supporting this motion were for continuity within this government, but agree this government is doing a lot of good things and with a lot of the action plans coming up and implementing devolution is moving forward. Also, some people mentioned the cost savings that we'd have if the government moved to every five years, we wouldn't have to be putting the money into elections a lot sooner, rather than later, and we also got support that it allowed this government the option to extend. Just having that option for the 17th Legislative Assembly knowing full well in the NWT Act it does state that for future Legislative Assemblies of this government.

However, those that supported it, out of the numerous numbers that supported the concept of it, were just two constituents from back home. The majority of e-mails, the majority of phone calls, texts, responses to social media did not support the motion, mainly because there was a furthermore that was initially put into the motion and that furthermore was amended just recently today. So we're speaking about that amended motion now and that had the fixed date of extending to October 2016. After speaking to a lot of the constituents, there was a lot of options that were brought forward, too, such as having an early election, having it three months, two months sooner, talked about having elections in the springtime and also maybe six months later, having it in the springtime, it doesn't have to be a fixed date of putting it a year further.

However, the majority of people that I spoke to, and these are some very respected individuals in the community and also some leaders that I spoke to, they said just leave it the same, you know, status

quo doesn't need to change, further governments can make those decisions when they happen. So the majority of the information I got was status quo and I'd like to thank all the constituents as well as residents of the Northwest Territories who did respond and send feedback in to me and to the office here.

Some of the comments that I did get was things like when residents last went to the polls, it was to elect MLAs for a four-year term in the 17th Legislative Assembly and they also talked about people of the NWT are capable of voting more than once in a month. They have that ability to choose a responsible government, whether it's territorially or municipally.

Just closing off, I want to say that even with the amended motion, the motion still speaks to the fact that if this goes through and there is an amendment to the NWT Act that this government, any Member of this Legislative Assembly can then bring forth a motion to extend our term, or extend it by however many months, and Mr. Bromley did speak to earlier, whether it's a year, six months, three months, a month, it just doesn't have that clarity and having this option for this government knowing full well a lot of people were mentioning that when we all got elected we knew that there was going to be a conflict in 2015 and some jurisdictions did address that. However, on this particular vote to the motion, I stated clearly right from the beginning that I will be voting with the voice of the people that I spoke to, the constituents, the people that did vote me in here, as well as residents of the Northwest Territories that all Members of this Legislative Assembly do represent because we do make decisions territorially with the territorial programs, projects. So with that, I do believe my constituents spoke up and a lot of concerned residents of the Northwest Territories spoke up and in that they don't support the motion as is, even the amended motion, because the motion still gives this government the opportunity to bring a motion further down the road to look at extending our term.

With that said, my vote is with the people, the constituents that I represent and some of the concerned residents of the Northwest Territories and I cannot be in favour of this motion. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Moses. To the motion as amended. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's too bad that the motion was a bit confusing when it first came out on Thursday because the media was quick to pick out a one-year extension and certainly it coloured the whole debate. But I think the principle of the motion was about seeking the authorization to extend. I believe that with the amended motion now it's more clear, it's just the authorization to extend from the federal government. Once again, this motion does not

actually extend our term at all. We have a fixed election date of October 5, 2015, and that date has to be actually changed with another motion, another bill later on in this Assembly.

I believe that residents and constituents will then have time to consider if the apparent closeness of a federal and MLA elections will be confusing enough that warrants a change of our election date.

I did go to out to social media, as well, and sent out e-mails. Regretfully, because of the short timing, I was only able to get six comments and none from my outlying communities as well. But I am conducting my normal spring constituency tour and this will be the highlight of those discussions. I certainly agree we need the flexibility to have a solution for overlapping elections if need be. At the same time, I'm supporting this motion, but it does not mean I would not go out to the people and get their feedback for a second motion should we get to that stage.

Once again, in closing, with the amendment, this motion does not extend our term. That's why I'm voting in favour of it. There will be another motion, and as stated, I will be seeking full consultation from my constituency. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. To the motion as amended. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the first whereas mentioned in the motion, it's noted that the federal Bill C-15 already provides flexibility on extending the Legislative Assembly's length of term for the 18th and subsequent Legislative Assemblies and this is the crux of the matter. To avoid questions of ethics and avoid undemocratic stances, we as politicians should not be changing legislation that might provide benefits to ourselves, especially without clear direction from the electorate.

Yet this motion proposes that we circumvent normal public process and change both territorial and federal legislation, normally a huge and lengthy process, to allow the 17th Legislative Assembly, that's us, to unilaterally extend our mandate originally for a full year but now amended to a length of time that is not stipulated.

The disregard for the public and the voice of the electorate is widely regarded by residents as undemocratic. In the easily 25-plus e-mails I have received so far – and they're still coming in as we speak – only one person was in favour of the proposal put forward in this motion.

Given the lack of democratic process for the electorate here, I would like to provide an opportunity for their voice in speaking to this motion. Here are some amazingly consistent but uniquely stated samples of the comments I received expressing clear and adamant opposition to the motion. These are all quotes.

"In my view, such an extension would be a conflict of interest for sitting MLAs."

Another: "The democratic chill sweeping the country is very disturbing. When I heard the motion yesterday, my first thought was that the PMO is now dictating to the GNWT not only on devolution and environmental regulation but on democratic rights and freedoms. Not only is the GNWT rolling over indigenous rights but also the rights of all Northerners, both equally unacceptable."

Here's another: "The proposal to extend the life of this Legislature and its unelected Premier by another year is an outrage and insult to voters. It suggests that the electorate isn't capable of holding more than one thought at the same time and that voters will be overcome with fatigue if they are asked to exercise our franchise three times in one month. Nonsense."

And another: "About this 2016 proposal, I'll accept the idea if the Premier will agree to postpone the implementation date of devolution one more year."

Here's another: "Pair this up with the federal vote suppression law and why would the citizens bother to show up? Again, I am not in favour of this proposed extension. I believe we, as constituents, voted in the previous election and knowledge of the specific time frame for that term in office. I further believe I have another vote at the end of the term to continue supporting my vote or making another choice."

Here's another resident: "With devolution scheduled to take place in about three weeks, I don't see the necessity of government continuity for an additional 2.5 years. In 1.5 years on the original election date, people should have a say about the performance of their MLAs and the decisions they have made about devolution."

Here's another: "I do not believe that you have the moral or ethical authority to even request this action. The people of the NWT voted for their MLAs for a four-year term and without going back to the electorate for approval, this Assembly cannot extend its mandate."

Here's another: "As a political science major, I strongly oppose the question to extend the term for MLAs. Simply, it is highly unethical and very undemocratic."

Another voice: "When you were elected, you were given a four-year mandate by the voters, not a five-year mandate. To change the term of your office is very self-serving and not what the voters of the NWT signed up for. You and the rest of the Assembly will benefit personally. In my view, that is not appropriate."

The people speak further: "This is to express my objection to the motion to defer my right to vote in 2015."

And again, they say: "You have forgotten that you work for us, the people of the NWT. We have to offer the job to you if we want you to continue working for us."

A colourful one and I think Linden MacIntyre said it best this weekend in his Fifth Estate piece on Mike Duffy: "When you mistakenly believe that privilege means entitlement, you're already on the threshold of humiliation."

I believe my colleague Ms. Bisaro referenced that one, so, obviously, that went to many of us.

Again, politically correct: "What lessons would Ukraine learn from us at this crucial time in their walk towards democracy? If Putin had decided to consult the Russian people for two days over a weekend before extending his job for one more year, we would have said he was making a farce of democracy. In the NWT you are doing the same and claim it is so I can better vote next year. What's the difference? For those of you contemplating to vote in favour of extending your term, don't do it."

And again: "While I do not disagree with the concept of a five-year term, or perhaps a term that could vary between four and five years for future Assemblies, it is an affront to democracy for sitting Members to essentially vote themselves in for another term."

And finally: "There are many challenges and decisions to be made during this devolution transition and we need closer public scrutiny during this time, not less. This includes the public being able to vote on who they want to continue steering the devolution ship."

Almost all were very concerned about the lack of voice they had and the failure to give people their due in terms of consulting with the electorate. This is something that I've tried to bring up throughout my term, is we have ample opportunity to check with the people, get our finger on the pulse, hear what people are saying, get their view, and adjust our views accordingly. Here are some of the ways that our people have spoken to us on their voice.

"This issue has come up far too suddenly for ordinary citizens to give it due consideration. We would ask the Assembly to delay or table a vote on this motion."

MR. SPEAKER: Mrs. Groenewegen. Point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, we have a rule in this House that suggests that you cannot quote extensively from a document or documents that are not before the House, and we have Members here that are reading things they would themselves be allowed to say in this House. I have heard the words unethical, immoral, self-serving,

Now, if they want to stand up and say those things, go right ahead, but don't hide behind "and I quote." Okay? Because I think that that is stepping over the line and it is just a cheap way of trying to impugn the motives of Members and just say, oh, and I quote somebody else. I mean, I could stand up and quote some pretty horrible things and say, oh, that's not me. I'm just quoting somebody else.

I rise on a point of order. I think that there have been several people out of line, and Mr. Bromley's quotes have just gone on too long.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. I'll allow Mr. Bromley to speak to the point of order.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have to say that many of these quotes are from e-mails that were sent to every Member in this House, and I'm happy to table all of these from e-mails directly, and further, I cannot believe... The whole issue here is the voice of the people. We are trying to change our election process here. We are taking away the voice of the people. We have given them the weekend to comment. A few of them have, and this is their chance to have their voice heard. How can this Member try and repress their voice?

MR. SPEAKER: To the point of order, Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you. This is to the point of order, Mr. Speaker. Finally, I did check with the officials of this House before I proceeded with my comments to ensure that I was on track and legitimate in doing so, and I'm well within my 20 minutes, I might add. This is apparently one of the few opportunities that the public has to hear their voice and for this House to fully hear their voice. I am tempted to lay a point of order myself. This is the voice of the people that are speaking here, and it is my right and duty and privilege to fulfill that by making sure their comments are heard in public. May I continue, Mr. Speaker?

SPEAKER'S RULING

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. You may continue. I will deal with this point of order right now. There is no point of order. You are reading off of papers that are not singling one paper out. You are reading off of different people's aspects of what they're thinking and sending to all Members and to yourself. There is no point of order. I will allow you to continue, but I am going to remind Members, the respect and the decorum of this House is the priority while we are debating this motion. Respect each other. Thank you. Mr. Bromley, you may continue.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do want to say that I respect this House and the voice of your authority.

As I was saying, almost all were very concerned about the lack of voice they had and the failure to

give people their due in terms of consulting with the electorate.

The issue has come up far too suddenly for ordinary citizens to give it due consideration. We would ask the Assembly to delay or table a vote on this motion until sufficient time has passed for a reasonable public debate, if it is possible to do so.

Mr. Speaker, another voice: "This move is anti-democratic..."

MR. SPEAKER: [Microphone turned off]...you may continue.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was speaking to you. "This move is anti-democratic in the sense that there is no opportunity for public consultation and little time, five days, for public debate." I think it was less than that actually, Mr. Speaker. "A decision to tamper with this fundamental democratic right cannot be made without the full and informed consent of all citizens of the NWT. To propose a weekend to consider deferring my right is an affront to democracy and to the hard fought battle to have the right to vote."

Mr. Speaker, another constituent or resident says, "I find it totally unacceptable to spring this issue on voters and then expect them to get back to their MLAs over the weekend."

Another: "At the very least, allow time for full and open public debate on a matter of such importance."

Finally: "This rushed approach does not allow adequate time for the public to become informed or respond."

Mr. Speaker, there is firm data, firm studies on the benefits of concurrent elections such as through the study that examined many situations concluded that there was a significantly improved voter turnout with concurrent elections. People want to hold the election October 2015 as scheduled, or a bit earlier if we must. Again, the public spoke clearly along similar lines with these comments.

I quote again, Mr. Speaker: "It might be hard for this government to understand, but as voters we can keep more than one issue straight, especially because the federal election is so simple. My two cents: Have it on the same day and save us some money."

Again, a voter says, "The possibility of voter fatigue is disrespectful to those voters who take voting seriously. This move is anti-democratic in the sense that there is no opportunity for public consultation and little time, five days for public debate. I urge you to leave the election date where it is and face the electors with your skills and decision-making record."

Another constituent writes: "Also, to suggest that voters would be confused and/or frustrated with a possibility of up to three elections taking place in a

relatively short period of time denigrates the intelligence of all Canadians and particularly the electors in the NWT."

Mr. Speaker, a resident says, "If you really must change the election date, why not make it shorter rather than longer?"

Another says, "I am concerned that Members of the Legislative Assembly would think that the electorate of the NWT would be confused and not able to differentiate between different elections for different levels of government. I don't know anyone who would find this confusing."

Another says, "If you sincerely believe the electorate is too simple to cope with multiple elections, you could offer to hold territorial elections earlier."

A constituent says, "I strongly disagree with the concerns that having all three elections at the same time would affect voter turnout in a negative way. As a matter of fact, I believe the opposite. Those of us who do vote, will continue to vote. Those who do not, may be convinced to do so as a result of the increased exposure." And that is consistent with the findings of the study.

Finally, a constituent says, "I don't believe three elections in close proximity to each other is nearly as problematic as some would make it out to be. While there are some risks in terms of voter fatigue, there is also a possibility that many could find the elections in close proximity much more convenient."

Mr. Speaker, to my mind, the public has spoken and their message is crystal clear. This motion is considered by most to be undemocratic and of questionable ethics. The message that people may be confused with three concurrent elections is insulting to the people of the NWT.

Finally: "Give this up, stick to the democratic as currently provided for in legislation and await additional authority for changing election dates as provided for the 18th Legislative Assembly following due and democratic process."

So, Mr. Speaker, based on the people, I firmly oppose the motion and invite my colleagues to hear the people and join me and others in opposition.

Before ending, Mr. Speaker, I would like to, in recognition of the comments I've heard to the previous amendment, I think there is interest in having flexibility to reset the dates of the election within the month of October in order to maximize the voter turnout and the coordination between elections. I heard that from my colleague Mrs. Groenewegen, I believe. I would like to propose an amendment to Motion 16-17(5).

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

MR. BROMLEY: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Frame Lake, that

Motion 16-17(5) be amended by adding the following to the resolution portion of the motion: "AND FURTHERMORE, that 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 election to a date within the month of October 2015 that maximizes coordination of concurrent elections and voter turnout." Mahsi.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've been very clear so far, so speaking very briefly to the motion, there was some indication and sentiment that we do need to have a little bit of flexibility within the month of October 2015 rather than force the election on the first Monday of October 2015.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. We're just waiting for the copies of your amendment, Mr. Bromley. I will take a five-minute break.

---SHORT RECESS

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Bromley, could I ask you to read your amendment to the Motion 16-17(5) into the record, again? Thank you.

FURTHER MOTION TO AMEND
MOTION 16-17(5),
DEFEATED

MR. BROMLEY: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Frame Lake, that Motion 16-17(5) be amended by adding the following to the resolution portion of the motion: "AND FURTHERMORE, that 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 election to a date within the month of October 2015 that maximizes coordination of concurrent elections and voter turnout." Mahsi.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I'm trying to recognize the requests of the original movers of the motion. I think Mrs. Groenewegen spoke to the desirability of having some flexibility to move the date around within the month of October 2015, so we don't have to have it on the first Monday. My point has always been that there's a real opportunity to maximize voter turnout if we can coordinate our election with any other elections that might be happening in October 2015. This motion is a proposal to do that.

Again, there's good evidence to indicate that with this sort of move we can actually achieve increased voter turnout. In the last election, certainly it was a concern as turnout was down quite a bit from the election before. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. To the amendment to the motion. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I listened with interest to the Member's comments and his speaking to the motion where he belabours us for not consulting the people, for putting in a date, for not giving him an opportunity to have a say, then he turns around, after we've amended the motion to make sure we focused just on getting the tools to allow us to possibly make a change, to stand up, without any consultation from anybody, the 25 people he referred to, there are 42,000 people in the Northwest Territories. I was in my constituency this weekend and I didn't hear anything near what the Member is saying.

It seems to be, at the very least, contradictory, if not a double standard, where he on one hand accuses us and says we shouldn't be doing this, it's taking people's rights for granted, then stand up and throw in a motion that's so narrow as to be almost useless and handcuff the intent of the motion, which is just to get the tools and then let's have this debate, let's put it to the people, let's give them what Mr. Bromley has said they need, that Mr. Dolynny has said they need as a foundation piece of democracy and then to put this out, if it's not outright duplicitous, it's friggin' double standard. And I withdraw the friggin'. Thank you.

---Laughter

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you for that withdrawal, Mr. Miltenberger. To the amendment to the motion. Mr. Bouchard.

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can't support the amendment. Like I indicated earlier, I think status quo is the easiest process. Either we vote for the one year or we vote for status quo.

I did hear this concept of putting elections together, but I think we should keep our status quo the way it is, or this motion moves forward. But I think if we start to look at...because I heard just as many people go, let's go early, let's go six months or a year early. I guess the point is that I don't support this motion.

Like I indicated in the statement, we could figure out 50 different ways to do it. Let's just stay status quo, simplify this process and move on. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. To the amendment to the motion. Mr. Dolynny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do appreciate where the mover of the motion and seconder are coming to the House with and I do appreciate and applaud them trying to find some line or reason, I guess, with what publicly we've heard and trying to find some tools so that we can mitigate the current situation.

However, with very little notice of this motion, or amended motion on the floor, it makes it very difficult to accept at this time for two reasons. One, again, the sample pool that we received here and creating this motion is rather small, as was pointed out. Two, I have great respect for the Board of Management but, unfortunately, I don't have a vote on the Board of Management, and given the fact that I don't have a vote on the Board of Management, this is something that has to be dealt with in the realm of 19 Members here in the Assembly and for those reasons I cannot support that motion. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. To the amendment to the motion. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, needless to say, I won't be supporting the amendment to the motion here, but I do want to say it is too prescriptive. I think the original motion, which we're going to vote on here shortly, gives us more latitude to have that discussion with the greater public to find out what people think before a bill comes to this House. So I think that putting it all on the same day...and that is an idea that is out there. There is some research around doing that type of thing, no doubt, but I don't know how that would work out in the smaller communities. I don't know how it would even work out in Yellowknife. But I've run in five election campaigns; I don't think I'd want to be having my constituents go to the polls on the same day. You know, my supporters going to the polls on the same day as everybody else. It's not what we're used to; it's complicated. You know, not to insult anybody though. Let's not confuse things here. I'm not saying that people aren't smart enough to figure it out; of course they are. But I'm thinking of candidates even that want to run in an election and I think it's a lot of doors to be knocked on and a lot of people to be consulted for all to culminate on one day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. To the amendment to the motion. Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm enjoying the good discussion on the amendments of the motion here today. Given the short notice of this amendment to the motion that's on the floor, even with the good nature of trying to come up with an agreement within the House, with the short notice I can't support the motion going forward. As stated in my earlier comments, with the options that I discussed with constituents back home, the majority just said to leave it the same. I'm going to stick with that and I won't be supporting the motion brought forth. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I like Mr. Bromley's motion to try to have it in October, but it gives the appearance that we are

really not extending our term. At the same time, perhaps September 3rd or September 5th is the best day too. This motion doesn't allow that flexibility, so I won't be supporting the amendment. 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 defeated.

---Defeated

To the motion as amended. Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not support the initial motion nor the motion as amended, which now, understandably, will basically leave the election in 2015.

My principal belief is that people elected after four years should stick with it. To unilaterally add another year to our terms, again, basically goes against the fundamental philosophy which is to serve people and the public. As you might know, locally with all communities that I represent, local councils have two to three-year terms and they are quite happy with that, but as a territorial-level institution, we need to keep in mind the precedents which we're setting.

I understand why we are trying to do this is because of devolution, and implementation of the agreement is a significant challenge. It's going to bring us into a phased-in stage for the institution of authority and structure are mobilized to work effectively in delivering services to Northerners. I understand the need for consistency in leadership to ensure a smooth transition. However, I'm incredulous of the timing of this proposal.

Basically I see this as a smoke screen and as lining up of someone else's ducks. Devolution gives us authority over lands and resources. Now that we have more power, we want more power. I will propose another motion, a motion that goes with the status quo. Leave it as is and have the election on October 5, 2015, but at the same time supporting the principle of the idea of exploring an extended term from four to five years with consultations and public debate and the legislative draft to be considered then. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nadli. To the motion as amended. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is, in all honesty, a very exciting motion. Rarely do we see the engagement of Members and certainly the public into a type of motion like this. It has drawn the public into the business of the Assembly. It has drawn Members into the business certainly of the Assembly. You see this type of discussion here where people are talking about the issue before us. If we could only give every single issue this

Assembly dealt with this much attention, can you imagine the public belief in our system at large?

I will say with great respect, and I certainly mean this, I want to thank Member Groenewegen and certainly Member Miltenberger for bringing this motion forth before us here today. Because if it wasn't for this type of society we have here and the type of work we do here, we wouldn't be able to have this type of discussion. Many have spoken for it, many have spoken against it, but it's a privilege to be able to speak one way or the other. I'm grateful that I've heard the voices and seen the motion moved.

I wish, as I said, everything could be talked about at length and certainly discussed and seen as we've seen this issue here today. But the motion we're talking about before us stems from a particular problem of the overlap of multi-elections. We've heard the potential of logistics being cumbersome, coordination being challenging, volunteers being exhausted, donor fatigue all the way through, and certainly voter fatigue is a potential problem. Every single one of those issues is a very serious concern and we need to be weighing to ourselves in some way or manner, in going this route is it best to change the date or do we create more problems?

I've received various feedback from people and I want to say thank you very much for people who took the time to e-mail, to call, to stop me at the Co-op, to continue to stop me at the Co-op, I go down the next aisle to be stopped again at the Co-op – I think you're getting the picture – and going to Canadian Tire and on and on and on. I'm not going to say 90 percent or 80 percent or whatever the case may be, I'm going to say there were people who said no, and honestly, there were people saying yes to the motion. There were. It doesn't matter, really, at the end of the day what small percentage we talk to says this, but what we should be listening to is their message why people say this – support the motion, that is – and why people say don't support the motion. That is the important key.

One thing that I heard repeatedly that I think is so important about this whole particular issue – and I say this with an enormous amount of respect to Minister Miltenberger, whose perspective I'm not sure I can share – but I will say I will thank him for sharing his perspective. The issue that came to me repeatedly was, where are the rest of the voices in Cabinet? The public has heard vigorously from most Members, not all, and I would say we have such a privileged opportunity and institution. We have the right when we want to share a voice and we also have the privilege and right not to share a voice, and I want to thank those who took the time to share their perspective.

But the public asked me, would the Ministers be speaking on this? Is it a whip vote? And if it is a whip vote, I'm okay with that. It's just the way it

goes sometimes. But I think the public deserves to know who's voting in favour or against it, Mr. Speaker. I think that was one of the big concerns laid before me.

Now, you've heard from many people that voters will be confused. I'm not sure that will be the case. Now, I've had to face voters a few times and I'm going to tell you, the number one thing, I think they're going to be exhausted by all means. I don't think they'll be conflicted by who they're voting for, but sometimes that is the job of an MLA, knocking on doors. I can tell you, many times I knocked on a door for a territorial election and they start bringing up the roads and the dog issue and the dump issue. But sometimes that's the job of a public official to hear those types of things. Although it's not by department per se, but, sure, I'll make sure the message gets passed on.

So I agree with the point of the fatigue, I do, and I agree that there will probably be donor and voter fatigue, and logistics fatigue, and volunteer fatigue, absolutely. Every single one of those issues I absolutely agree with. But I don't think that taking people's rights to be able to vote on that day away is the right approach.

I agree with other Members, like Member Dolynny talking about it's a contract, and I have great faith in the public who wanted us to stick by that contract and I have great faith that our public is educated to follow us.

If we wanted to talk about confusing elections, which is not necessarily this motion per se, but I could imagine the super-ballots of the Americans when they vote on multiple issues, could we vote multiple times in one day or within a couple days? I mean, I've never had that privilege nor do I want it, but I can tell you, that's got to be a confusing election, so would we have a confusing election here? I'm not necessarily sure.

Mr. Speaker, again, I have faith in the public and I would say that if I had my preference, we would be calling the election on August 1st and having our election first because we're more important than the feds in worrying about their election. But that's not the option before us and perhaps in some cases – we have so many options on the table – the public still would like us to further discuss this. I know this issue will be back. Let us all know that. By passing this motion, we will be back to it someday for the legislation.

So, I do have great respect for those who feel this motion needs to be supported and I do honourably respect that. I believe that the intentions of the people supporting this motion are honourable. I will say that, because I know many of the people doing the work here are honourable. But it's important that I stick to what I agreed to and I know those, whether they voted for me or against me, believe

there was a four-year control, 48 months, and of course, October 2015 will be the expiry of that.

I will ask for a recorded vote on this because I think it's important that we do this. But I would like to ask this one last thing, and it's important to say this: I often rail about this government about my view that they're not doing enough for things like jobs and whatnot. But I will say this: there's nothing wrong with this government that could not be fixed with an election. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. To the motion as amended. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When we sought nomination and put our names forward for the MLA for our riding, we knew perfectly well, through speaking with our elders and people, they said, you're working for us. That's what your job is, to work for us and do the best you can in that term.

I sat down with many elders and they said, you, as an MLA, you're like an arrowhead. The people are like that bow. Whatever issue we talk about, we'll pull the bow and you shoot. Power to hang you and the arrowhead goes to that issue. Don't be scared, because you're the voice of the people. But if you speak for yourself, that's your voice. You speak for us. Of course, I've had some phone calls; I've made some phone calls. It's not an issue for us yet in the Sahtu.

What I understand is that we need the tools in the Northwest Territories. Of course, I heard, and I talked to people, are we writing our own conditions to our employment as an MLA, or are we giving ourselves the authority to make our own laws to decide on.

I think we no longer need the permission slip from Ottawa to tell us how to live. We've done that through devolution. We don't need the permission slip anymore from Ottawa. That's what we've been saying for a long, long time.

I've been thinking about this, what do we need to do? My cousins in Nunavut and Yukon have that option, have that tool, have that authority. But for us here, we still need Ottawa to say okay to us.

I don't think any one of us sitting around here or any one of us listening expected us to have this discussion when we first got elected, when we first sat down in Caucus. It never even crossed our minds. I don't think the electors thought, well, give yourself another few months, a year, extend your term. That never came across. It was the furthest thing from my mind. However, to speak to the principle of the bill is to give us authority and the principle.

Mr. Speaker, the decision has been put upon us, certainly having it read in the House on Friday and making phone calls on the weekend and talking to people. I've seen, in my 10-year term, decisions

made quicker than this. This is not new. Some bigger decisions have been made. We talked about the devolution file and I wasn't a happy camper with the devolution file. Let me tell you. I wasn't a happy camper on that file. It's done, beginning April 1st.

Again, I haven't heard much from the Sahtu people. I certainly heard from constituents outside the Sahtu and I appreciate their e-mails to me. I even had one this morning. So the passion is out there. We've been very limited with our public consultation, if you want to call it public consultation.

We're talking about extending our term. Every one of us coming to this office is highly ethical and to be called otherwise is not justice. We work for the people. What fashion of democracy is determined at the end of the day? We stand here because people sent us here. We need the tools to train our own future. We're doing that through devolution. We have to have the tools. We need the authority. Along with that comes the responsibility. Today we're asking for that permission to create our own destiny. Do we still need the permission slip from Ottawa?

Mr. Speaker, I thought about this and asked myself as an MLA. I talked to the people in the Sahtu. You know what, Mr. Speaker? It is true when we put our name down and got elected, we said it's a four-year term. Some say it's too long and some say it's too fast, depending on what side of the bed you get up in the morning. But it is true; we work for our people.

As an MLA, this is a very, very soul-searching task. You feel so strongly about it. People feel strongly that we did sign up for a four-year term contract. As a person, you can always resign and say, call a snap election in your riding. Let the people decide, if you feel very strongly about it. If people feel strongly about it, give it back to them. It's a privilege to be here. This is no entitlement. It's a real honour to be here to represent your people. Some of the people are not here today. We'll decide in the Sahtu how we want to go. We live up there. It's our life. We'll decide how we will do it. It's our land; it's our people. If that's the way they feel, then I'm okay with it because it's a privilege. It's an honour to represent them. I don't take this job very lightly.

I see the old-timers put their X. We are good people. We offer our service. They can take it away like that. That's what I want to say. In the Sahtu we will decide our future. With this motion here, we ask for the tools. We do not need a permission slip from Ottawa. We need to do it ourselves. I don't know how that will be; only God knows how the future will determine ourselves. I'm not the boss. That's what the old people tell us: work together. Sometimes that's very hard because I make it hard and very easy. That's what I wanted to say on this motion here. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. To the amendment to the motion. Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There's a lot of good discussion here today. As we look forward to our next election, there is a concern that I have having this election at the same time as the federal election. I thought there might be some sort of conflict that we have the same returning officer doing both elections, but there would not be a conflict, but it would be very overwhelming. That's what I've seen even when we had the one election this last time.

Even during our last election, we've had a lot of difficulties in the riding that I represent with their election. I can see things even progressing if we have two at the same time. That's my major concern. I did speak to over 50 people about this extension. We were throwing around numbers at our Caucus over eight months ago. That has given us a lot of time to think about this. Since then, I have spoken to a number of people, as I mentioned. Also, PEI, Saskatchewan and Manitoba have all extended or deferred their election to April. That would be a really good time for us in the riding that I represent as we could all travel to each community by ice road. It's very challenging during the fall election for many of the people that run because Aklavik is isolated and many of the other communities are also isolated.

To the motion, I will be supporting the motion. There are a lot of priorities that we have not met here at the 17th Legislature also. That was one of the things that Nunavut actually extended their term a year to do, to fulfil the priorities they set as their Legislature. We have many outstanding. Even though we are doing very well, we still have a lot of unemployment, about 35 percent in our smaller communities. We need to address that. For that reason and also because we will have a lot of challenges in our smaller ridings, smaller communities, I will be supporting the motion. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Blake. To the motion as amended. I am going to close debate. I'm going to let Mrs. Groenewegen have closing remarks. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank everyone for their comments and engaging in this discussion here today. There's not a lot that I can add to it. In defence of the democratic process, I can assure you that I love the democratic process. As a matter of fact, to let nominations come and go and not put my name forward next time, I'm going to have to put on earmuffs and handcuffs. Every time there's an election, I can't help myself. I love the democratic process. I love the process when we come here, but the things that some of us could be thinking of doing this for self-serving or unethical or immoral

reasons is just not in the cards. I'm sorry. I do object to those quotes being made here. I realize the people out in the public may be saying that. I'm sorry if that's the case, but I know the honourable Members in this room, and that's what we all are, and we do not impugn motives of anybody. We come here to serve, I believe, everyone with the best of intentions of serving our people, as Mr. Yakeleya has said.

To the issue of whether or not this would be confusing, I just wanted to say that we have some information here about the differences in elections. The rules are different from federal to territorial to municipal, from everything from vouching for people to proxy voting to all kinds of different things. The rules do vary from election to election. I don't think that's intended to, again, insult anybody, but there could be confusion with the overlap. I still think that that's true.

One thing that hasn't been mentioned here today very much, and it did come up during our consultation with our constituents, is the issue of devolution. Now, we know that devolution will give new authorities to this House and even with respect to setting our election dates, it will give new authority to this House. I just want to remind people that we have talked... I want people to go back and check their... Well, I guess you haven't been all around as many times as I have for elections, but I want you to go back and check your campaign brochures and see how many times we saw devolution. I can guarantee it was in mine 20 years ago. We cannot understate the accomplishment of this government that we have. Like it or not, this government has brought devolution home to the Northwest Territories. I believe, when people ask and say, oh, this is a smoke screen for devolution, I think we should be very, very proud of what has happened here. People say, oh, the bureaucrats can carry on. You know, we don't need the elected leaders in there, they are dispensable. I also don't agree with that.

I think that this motion does something today. People say that two days is not enough to get real feedback and they oppose it on that basis, but all this motion does is grant the authority to this government to ask the federal government if we can create a bill to have this discussion. That's what this does, so let's keep that in perspective. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. To the motion as amended.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

RECORDED VOTE

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. I have a request for a recorded vote. All those in favour, please rise.

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

MR. SPEAKER: All those opposed, please rise.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Langlois): Mr. Dolynny, Mr. Bouchard, Mr. Nadli, Mr. Hawkins, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Moses, Mr. Bromley.

MR. SPEAKER: All those abstaining, please rise. All those in favour: 11; seven opposed. The motion is amended as carried.

---Carried

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

First Reading of Bills

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Great Slave, that Bill 20, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 4, 2013-2014, be read for the first time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Bill 20 has had first reading.

---Carried

Mr. Miltenberger.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, that Bill 21, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2014-2015, be read for the first time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Bill 21 has had first reading.

---Carried

Mr. Miltenberger.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Kam Lake, that Bill 22, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2012-2013, be read for the first time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Bill 22 has had first reading.

---Carried

Mr. Miltenberger.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Monfwi, that Bill 23, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2013-2014, be read for the first time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Bill 23 has had first reading.

---Carried

Item 19, second reading of bills. Mr. Miltenberger.

Second Reading of Bills

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Great Slave, that Bill 20, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 4, 2013-2014, be read for the second time.

This bill makes supplementary appropriations for infrastructure expenditures for the Government of the Northwest Territories for the 2013-2014 fiscal year. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. Bill 20 has had second reading and is deemed ready for third reading.

---Carried

Mr. Miltenberger.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, that Bill 21, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2014-2015, be read for the second time.

This bill makes supplementary appropriations for infrastructure expenditures for the Government of

the Northwest Territories for the 2014-2015 fiscal year. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. Bill 21 has had second reading and is deemed ready for third reading.

---Carried

Mr. Miltenberger.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Kam Lake, that Bill 22, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2012-2013, be read for the second time.

This bill makes supplementary appropriations for operations expenditures for the Government of the Northwest Territories for the 2012-2013 fiscal year. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. Bill 22 has had second reading and is deemed ready for third reading.

---Carried

Mr. Miltenberger.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Monfwi, that Bill 23, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2013-2014, be read for the second time.

This bill makes supplementary appropriations for operations expenditures for the Government of the Northwest Territories for the 2013-2014 fiscal year. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. Bill 23 has had second reading and is deemed ready for third reading.

---Carried

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. 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): I would like to call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of the committee today? Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Madam Chair. We would like to consider Committee Report 3-17(5), the report on the review of Bills 1, 2, 3 and other devolution legislation and, if we have time, Bills 10, 11 and 14.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. We will proceed with that after a brief break. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I'd like to call Committee of the Whole back to order. The report of the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning, the Report of Bills 1, 2, 3 and Other Legislation to Implement Devolution of Lands and Resources Responsibility to the GNWT has already been read into the record. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Madam Chair. Are we doing comments or are we going right to the motion?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): If you'd like to do general comments, please. I thought... Yes, general comments. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thanks, Madam Chair. I just thought there might be some Members who might like to make a few comments on the process and so on.

The report lays out pretty well, I think, and in a fair bit of detail the process we had to follow. Bills 1, 2 and 3 followed our normal process. They were read in the House to second reading and then referred to committee, and committee held a public hearing and asked for comment from the public, then held a public hearing and then reported it back to the House as ready for third reading.

But the other seven bills, the process has been kind of hijacked, I guess, is the best way of putting it. We didn't do it willingly, I guess. It's a matter of time. We didn't have the time in which we could properly consider these other bills; we didn't have time to refer them to committee; we didn't have time for public consultation. We agreed, as committee, that we would have these bills go directly into Committee of the Whole and bypass the consideration by committee at that stage.

I think the major concern for me, and I think for committee as well, and I think it's expressed in the report, is that even though these are mirror bills, there is an interest on the part of the public and there is an interest on the part of Members to look at the NWT bills and to determine whether or not there are some gaps in these bills, whether or not there are some statements in these bills that maybe we don't agree with from a territorial perspective. They may work in a federal perspective, but if they're going to be ours, do we totally agree with what's in this legislation? Not to change it at this point but to have some things on the record so that in future, when we are looking at the legislation, we can go back and say, well, in 2014 we did have representation from various people who said this is not quite what we want in legislation, this is not quite what we want in this piece of this legislation and we then have a bit of a base on which to start and look at changes to the legislation.

The fact that we couldn't do that while we're considering the bills is a bit of a concern. There is a recommendation in the report, in a motion that I will read shortly, that specifically recommends that we have a very public review and a very broad review across the territory for all these pieces of legislation, which we haven't been able to review as a comment. We can't do that until after April 1st. But as of April 1st when the bills become ours, we can then start the process of reviewing them in consultation with the public and come up with some potential amendments.

I don't know, Madam Chair, if you want me to read this motion now, or if we go to other comments from people.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. General comments. Mr. Dolyunny.

MR. DOLYUNNY: Great. Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the opportunity to clarify a little bit. Some Members have already asked me, what was the intent of the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning to read this report into the House? What merit will it perform? I think it says it and summarizes it best: the process itself, the reviewing process and the implementation of these 10 devolution bills was very unusual. To accept mirror legislation typically isn't something of a norm. A lot of the processes that normally go into bill legislations – consultation, line-by-line, clause-by-clause – were somewhat triturated for ease of providing these acts in a timely fashion for a deadline date.

Committee felt that because there were some constraints by the committee and we also knew there were some constraints by the government that were beyond our control, as was indicated inside the report. So it was important for Members to make sure that that was clear and concise and transparent for the public to understand that we

were under a little bit of a different constraint than normal, and that we had very challenging limits to work towards and trying to get April 1st as the agenda deadline for the devolution implementation.

So we did our best to scrutinize the bills and to seek as much public input to, what we said, the greatest extent possible, and we did get a number of submissions. A number of Members were able to gather, collect. All this information was meant as setting the expectation of what is to move on a forward basis. It was important for Members to make sure that point was valid and brought forward, and hopefully by this whole exercise that we actually are creating a baseline of information so that whether we review this within the life of the 17th Assembly or we're doing this for ease and operation of Members for the 18th Assembly, we felt it was our due diligence to provide that type of information, that type of feedback at the moment, the moment when these bills came into our being that these bills came into, I guess, our jurisdiction for review, and we felt that this was the best course of action to undertake, given the very unique circumstances of the House. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. General comments. Ms. Bisaro.

COMMITTEE MOTION 39-17(5):
PUBLIC REVIEW OF
DEVOLUTION-RELATED LEGISLATION,
CARRIED

MS. BISARO: Thanks, Madam Chair. I move that this committee recommends that the Premier initiate a broad and thorough public review of all devolution-related legislation as soon as it is within the jurisdiction of the Government of the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Thank you. Does the committee agree that we have concluded consideration of Committee Report 3-17(5)?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. We're moving on to Bill 10. Could I ask the Minister responsible to please provide us with his opening remarks. Premier McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you for the opportunity to speak to Bill 10, Northwest Territories Lands Act. The passage of this legislation is an

important step towards implementing the Northwest Territories Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement.

The Northwest Territories Lands Act is a mirror of the federal Territorial Lands Act, which Canada will make inapplicable on Territorial lands on April 1, 2014.

Under the Devolution Agreement, the GNWT is committed to "substantially mirror" Canada's legislation that is repealed or made inapplicable to public lands transferring to the GNWT through devolution.

The mirroring exercise means that the new GNWT laws will address the same matters, in substantially the same way, as federal laws do now.

The mirroring process also required that the GNWT limit changes to addressing issues such as correcting outdated language and applying GNWT drafting standards.

Mirrored legislation is a practical first step to ensure a continued delivery of services on April 1, 2014. Mirrored legislation also ensures that there are no legislative gaps or overlaps between the GNWT and Canada.

The parties to the Devolution Agreement entered into a Protocol for Review of Devolution Legislation. Under this protocol, all parties have been able to review and comment on this legislation before it was introduced in the Legislative Assembly. We have considered these comments carefully in preparation of the bill before you.

The Northwest Territories Lands Act will provide the Government of the Northwest Territories with authority related to the disposition and use of land, including the disposition of subsurface minerals.

This legislation will form part of an integrated regulatory system of land and water resource management in the Northwest Territories with the new Waters Act and the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act.

The authorities set out in the Northwest Territories Lands Act will be the responsibility of the new Department of Lands, with the exception of the administration of subsurface minerals which will be administered by the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

The bill provides the GNWT with the authority to lease and sell land, and sets out prohibitions on trespass and the unauthorized use of public lands.

Regulations made under the Northwest Territories Lands Act will also govern the issuance of land use permits in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region.

I would be pleased to answer any questions Members may have. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Premier McLeod. I would like to ask the Premier if he would like to bring witnesses into the Chamber.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Yes, I would, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Premier McLeod. Is committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I will ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to please escort the witnesses to the table.

Premier McLeod, for the record, please introduce your witnesses.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Chair. To my right I have Kelly McLaughlin, director of legislation with the Department of Justice; to my left I have Jamie Fulford, legal counsel with the Department of Justice. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Premier McLeod. General comments. Are there any general comments? Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd say if there was any place we could be generating confusion, this could be it given that we now have two lands acts, once we have this in place, the NWT Lands Act and the Commissioner's Lands Act. Not only that, but, as I understand it, this legislation, Commissioner's lands, it reaches out to the Commissioner's Lands Act, changes it to allow Commissioner's land to be considered under this NWT Lands Act and vice-versa, it provides for Territorial lands to be considered and regulated under the Commissioner's Lands Act. How or when this will be happening, I haven't seen one word about that, or why. I know there is concern in the public that this could be used to actually avoid some of the regulatory visions of the Commissioner's Lands Act which is stronger in terms of the need to ensure mandatory closure plans and financial security. That is my first point.

I guess related to that, I would say what certainty is provided in terms of mandatory closure plans and financial security requirements are in this act. I know 19.(h) begins a little bit in that direction. What is in the act mandating a closure and reclamation plan for any lands that are leased pursuant to either legislation?

The leases should be a matter of public record. We've heard a lot of complaints from the mineral industry, for example. They know they're working in the area of leaseholders. They know they theoretically have access to that land, but they need to notify leaseholders about that. They're not able to find out and there are many, many reasons why those working on the land should have access and there should be transparency. This is public land that is leased out. There should be absolute transparency on that. I don't believe that's in this

act, but maybe I could get confirmation on that or clarification that it is where it is.

The bill contains provisions, 57(3), to allow Cabinet alone to decide to move these lands back and forth between the acts. Why do we need that? I don't think I've seen any reasoning provided for why we would need that and I don't believe that's any kind of a mirroring. That's above and beyond the need to mirror here.

Again, the concern is it would allow Cabinet to allow developers to avoid putting up financial securities or, for example, other more restrictive provisions of one piece of regulation or regulation over another. So it seems to be a questionable authority to ask for, and not in the public interest.

There are two aspects of the NWT Lands Act that would also require public review. I think the details would be in regulations more than legislation itself, but the first is royalty and fees. Again, in order to ensure an adequate and fair return to the public, those should be reviewed. Secondly, the regime to administer mineral rights disposition is free entry, as we've discussed before, where mining is considered the best and highest use of the land, despite other users or owners or the inherent value of the land itself. Again, a very problematic situation and I know many other jurisdictions, Ontario and Quebec, our largest jurisdictions come to mind, have changed that free entry system.

So, again, the public review is long overdue and has been called for in the past when it was federal law without any response. I guess I have those comments and questions, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Premier McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess the best way to counter those comments is this is mirrored legislation and we are essentially doing what was done under the federal government. As a government, we have committed to undertake a review of the legislation and, as well, our Aboriginal government partners are very supportive of a review as well. So we'll be setting up that process in order to respond to the very detailed questions raised by Member Bromley. Through you, Madam Chair, I will ask Jamie Fulford to respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Premier McLeod. Mr. Fulford.

MR. FULFORD: Thank you, Madam Chair. If I could just start with maybe what we can call the land trading provisions in the mirror act. The reason it was thought necessary to do that is that, at least as of April 1st, this act will only apply to lands that come into the administration and control of the GNWT on April 1st or after. So, as the Member correctly pointed out, there are two different land regimes and there are a lot of reasons why you'd

want to have a way to coordinate administration of those lands. Maybe if I could give an example. With a community that has a block land transfer with Commissioner's lands around it, maybe there's a need to administer lands that are just outside the block land transfer. This would allow Territorial lands to be transferred under the administration of the Commissioner's Lands Act, so you would have a single regime applying to both lands.

Further on, the intention is not to avoid any requirement of either one of the two acts. I think the Member correctly points out, as well, that there is no express requirement for security to be given under the Territorial Lands Act. That's a feature of how old this act is. It's a standard term of leases right now under the Territorial Lands Act that security can be given and there are provisions of remediating the lands essentially after the end of the lease.

Further, maybe I can just point out that in Yukon the same kind of land trading provisions were included in their mirrored lands act for the same reasons. So that was the model that we used for those provisions. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Fulford. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Is there a mandatory requirement for a closure and reclamation plan for any lands that are leased pursuant to either legislation? Thank you.

MR. FULFORD: There certainly isn't in the Territorial Lands Act. There isn't a statutory provision that would make that a requirement. Under the Commissioner's Lands Act, several years ago it was amended to include provisions that speak specifically to security and reclamation. So that is definitely a difference between the two different land management regimes. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: I guess the obvious question is, to connect the two issues, will land designations be moved back and forth either to ensure that financial security is provided or not and will that mechanism tend to delay merging these two pieces of legislation? I'm hoping the Premier will tell me that, in fact, the review is meant to get these two pieces of legislation merged as quickly as possible, so we don't have the confusing situation out there. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Premier.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Chair. I seem to recall when we were doing this work, there was a call to keep it separate. If other Members of committee want us to put them together, I'm sure they will come out when we do a review. If that comes out of that review, then we'll do that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

MR. BROMLEY: I don't think that recall is correct. Cabinet came back to us in response to our concerns that there had not been work done to ensure that gaps were filled between the two different pieces of legislation. So it was a Cabinet idea, not a committee idea. Anyway, I guess there was another question and maybe Mr. Fulford was prepared to answer that. Thank you.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Maybe if the Member could repeat the question he's awaiting an answer for, then we'll respond to it. Thank you, Madam Chair.

MR. BROMLEY: Just on the question of the leasing and that it should be a matter of public record. I think the reasons for that are obvious. Is that provided for in this legislation? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Mr. Fulford.

MR. FULFORD: Madam Chair, there's no express requirement for leases to be made public in this mirror legislation. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Fulford. That's the 10-minute time for Mr. Bromley's general comments. I have Mr. Dolynny and Ms. Bisaro on the list, but I'm afraid we're going to have to defer that until tomorrow. I'd like to thank the Premier and his witnesses for their attendance in the Chamber today.

I'd ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to please escort them from the Chamber. I'm going to recognize the clock. It's 6:00 and I'm going to now rise and report progress. Thank you.

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. SPEAKER: Can I have the report of Committee of the Whole, Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Committee Report 3-17(5) and Bill 10, Northwest Territories Lands Act, and I would like to report progress with one motion being adopted and that Committee Report 3-17(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. Beaulieu.

---Carried

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

Third Reading of Bills

BILL 1:
REINDEER ACT

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik

Twin Lakes, that Bill 1, Reindeer Act, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. Bill 1, Reindeer Act has had third reading.

---Carried

Mr. McLeod.

BILL 2:
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES ACT

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Monfwi, that Bill 2, Archaeological Sites Act, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. Bill 2, Archaeological Sites Act has had third reading.

---Carried

Mr. McLeod.

BILL 3:
SURFACE RIGHTS BOARD ACT

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Kam Lake, that Bill 3, Surface Rights Board Act, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. Bill 3, Surface Rights Board Act has had third reading.

---Carried

Mr. Miltenberger.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Great Slave, that Bill 20, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 4, 2013-2014, be read for the third time.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. Bill 20, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 4, 2013-2014, has had third reading.

---Carried

Mr. Miltenberger.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, that Bill 21, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2014-2015, be read for the third time.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. Bill 21, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2014-2015, has had third reading.

---Carried

Mr. Miltenberger.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Kam Lake, that Bill 22, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2012-2013, be read for the third time.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. Bill 22, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2012-2013, has had third reading.

---Carried

Mr. Miltenberger.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Monfwi, that Bill 23, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2013-2014, be read for the third time.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. Bill 23, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2013-2014, 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 Tuesday, March 11, 2014, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Opening Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
 - Motion 17, Interim Measures for the Commercial Harvest of Wild Mushrooms
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
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 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 Resources Revenue Sharing Agreement Act
- Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council 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 Tuesday, March 11th, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 6:05 p.m.