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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRAYER	115
MINISTERS' STATEMENTS	115
11-15(5) - SESSIONAL STATEMENT	115
12-15(5) - COMMITMENT TO TOURISM	118
13-15(5) - SPECIES AT RISK AND WILDLIFE LEGISLATION	118
MEMBERS' STATEMENTS.....	119
MS. LEE ON WCB POLICY REGARDING CHRONIC PAIN SYNDROME	119
MR. BRADEN ON UPDATE ON THE PROGRESS OF THE NORTHERN STRATEGY	119
MR. MENICOCHÉ ON SINGLE-RATE-ZONE POWER RATE	120
MRS. GROENEWEGEN ON RECOGNITION OF THE COAST GUARD DURING WATER SAFETY WEEK	120
MR. ROBERT MCLEOD ON RECOGNIZING THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE SIGNING OF THE INUVIALUIT LAND CLAIMS AGREEMENT ...	121
MR. HAWKINS ON PURSUING FEDERAL PUBLIC TRANSIT FUNDING	121
MR. RAMSAY ON NEED FOR A COORDINATED APPROACH TO CARIBOU MANAGEMENT	121
MR. YAKELEYA ON RECOGNITION OF THE PARENTS AND GRADUATING STUDENTS OF THE SAHTU	122
HON. DAVID KRUTKO ON RECOGNITION OF FORT MCPHERSON GRADUATES AND APPRECIATION FOR ASSISTANCE DURING AKLAVIK FLOOD	122
RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY	123
ORAL QUESTIONS	123
WRITTEN QUESTIONS	134
MOTIONS.....	134
1-15(5) - DESIGNATED BUDGET FOR ART IN GNWT BUILDINGS	134
FIRST READING OF BILLS.....	138
BILL 1 - SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT, NO. 4, 2005-2006	138
BILL 2 - SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT, NO. 1, 2006-2007	138
BILL 6 - ENGINEERING AND GEOSCIENCE PROFESSIONS ACT	138
BILL 7 - PHARMACY ACT	139
BILL 8 - MISCELLANEOUS STATUTES AMENDMENT ACT, 2006	139
BILL 10 - FORGIVENESS OF DEBTS ACT, 2006-2007	139
BILL 11 - TOURISM ACT	139
BILL 12 - GARNISHMENT REMEDIES STATUTES AMENDMENT ACT	139
SECOND READING OF BILLS.....	139
BILL 1 - SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT, NO. 4, 2005-2006	139
BILL 2 - SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT, NO. 1, 2006-2007	140
CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS	140

REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE.....	149
ORDERS OF THE DAY.....	149

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Monday, June 5, 2006****Members Present**

Honourable Brendan Bell, Mr. Braden, Honourable Paul Delorey, Honourable Charles Dent, Mrs. Groenewegen, Honourable Joe Handley, Mr. Hawkins, Honourable David Krutko, Ms. Lee, Honourable Michael McLeod, Mr. McLeod, Mr. Menicoche, Honourable Michael Miltenberger, Mr. Pokiak, Mr. Ramsay, Honourable Floyd Roland, Mr. Yakeleya

ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good afternoon, colleague. Welcome back to the House. Orders of the day. Ministers' statements. The Honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**Minister's Statement 11-15(5): Sessional Statement**

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take this opportunity to highlight a number of important initiatives undertaken by this government over the past year. I also want to bring Members up to date on an important national initiative that will be a large focus of our work over the remaining seventeen months of our mandate.

First, I would ask all Members of this Legislative Assembly to join me in recognizing and thanking the people and community of Inuvik, along with all the volunteers, emergency personnel, GNWT staff and others who assisted the people of Aklavik during the recent flood in that community.

---Applause

Mr. Speaker, we are very proud that community spirit such as this is alive and well in the Northwest Territories.

I also want to congratulate all Northwest Territories graduates. Last week, Minister Dent spoke about the record number of graduates we are seeing from high school and post-secondary institutions that bodes extremely well for the future of this territory. For each of these graduates and for all other students, I salute your hard work and commitment and I encourage you to put your knowledge and skills to work to build an even better territory for future generations.

Mr. Speaker, when the Members of this Legislative Assembly were first elected, we consulted widely with the people of the Northwest Territories on the priorities we should pursue during our term. Out of this consultative process, the government developed a strategic plan based on a vision of "self-reliant individuals and families sharing the rewards and responsibilities of healthy communities and a prosperous and unified Northwest Territories."

Today, I want to highlight a number of initiatives we are undertaking with our partners to accomplish the vision set out at the beginning of our mandate. A number of these initiatives have been aimed at providing individuals with the tools to become more self-reliant.

Eliminating the incidence of violence against women and children is a priority of this government. In 2004, we tabled our response to the NWT action plan on family violence. While a great deal of work remains to be done to fight the scourge of family violence, I am pleased to report that the major elements of the action plan have been implemented. This accomplishment is, in large part, a result of the support and dedication of our NGO and federal government partners. Building on our achievements to date, we are committed to developing phase II of the action plan.

Last year, the Members of the Legislative Assembly enacted the Protection Against Family Violence Act. The provisions of this act have been used over 100 times to protect families from violent family members. Mr. Speaker, these court orders are more accessible and do not require a lawyer. In fact, victims can apply by telephone from any community in the Northwest Territories.

We are also committed to providing better policing services to protect our communities. In the past three years, 28 new RCMP positions have been added in our communities and we are continuing to work towards opening new detachments in communities currently not served full time.

---Applause

In the interim, RCMP officers are doing more patrols in these communities. We are also working with other available resources in new ways. For example, in Yellowknife, police are now doing foot patrols with bylaw officers.

Mr. Speaker, based on advice of Members, we will be piloting two new elder wilderness camp programs for eligible offenders in the Sahtu and Tlicho regions.

---Applause

These programs will allow inmates to participate in traditional activities under the guidance of an elder.

We are expanding critical health services. Beginning this year, Health and Social Services and ECE, in collaboration with regional health authorities, will create four new rehabilitation teams to serve clients in the South Slave and Beaufort-Delta regions, and to expand the outreach services provided through Stanton Territorial Hospital. These services include speech and language therapy, audiology, physiotherapy and occupational therapy. This will help reduce wait times and strengthen the capacity of our regions to help children and adults overcome functional limitations.

As well, we are expanding dialysis services for people with kidney problems to allow patients who need dialysis

to remain closer to home. This service will be expanded to Hay River this year and we are looking at the feasibility of further expansion to Fort Simpson in coming years.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard the message loud and clear from the Members that we must focus more of our limited resources on programs for youth. To this end, we have established new funding to help youth develop skills and contribute to their communities. For example, MACA will be working with ECE on a Summer Trades Institute and other community-based leadership programs.

We are also taking significant steps to help build more self-reliant communities. Recognizing the financial pressures facing our communities, the government allocated \$35 million of the Northern Strategy trust to be spent on local priorities agreed upon by all local governing bodies.

While this program has not been without its challenges in some communities, it is clear from the applications processed to date that this funding will result in a meaningful legacy for northern communities. Some of the exciting projects moving forward in communities include:

- support for the local hydro development project in Whati;
- an adult education centre for the Katlodeeche First Nation;
- expansion of the planned community office buildings in Fort McPherson and Fort Liard, which will include facilities such as a community interpretive centre;
- updating of playgrounds and purchase of recreational equipment in Gameti, Yellowknife and the Katlodeeche First Nation;
- new youth facilities in Fort McPherson and Whati;
- many communities are upgrading critical infrastructure including roads, community halls, and mobile equipment purchases; and,
- investment in new economic opportunities such as community sawmills for Wrigley and Gameti.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, we are providing \$28 million in direct new funding to communities to provide a more stable funding base for community infrastructure. This represents an increase of \$11 million over historic average spending and, combined with the new federal funding through the Gas Tax Agreement, will provide communities with significant resources to help address their critical infrastructure deficit.

Mr. Speaker, the quality and security of drinking water continues to be an issue across Canada. Public Works and Services, Municipal and Community Affairs, Health and Social Services, and Environment and Natural Resources, are partners in implementing a drinking water quality framework.

New regulations that came into force this year required increased rigor by community governments in testing the safety and quality of drinking water, both at source and after treatment. New funding is available to help communities comply with regulatory requirements and to assist with the costs of increased testing.

In addition to continued investments in community infrastructure, we are also focussing on our commitment to support active living. This year will see the construction of the first gym facility of Nahanni Butte, a new arena for Lutselk'e and an expanded gymnasium as part of the new school project in Gameti.

Mr. Speaker, this government has also focused on a number of important territorial issues.

The face of governance in the Northwest Territories is changing as aboriginal rights negotiations are concluded and agreements are implemented. The completion and implementation of aboriginal rights negotiations will change the nature and function of the territorial government itself and bring certainty to the shape and structure of governance in the Northwest Territories, which is a positive step for those who live or do business here.

The government fully supports the timely conclusion of aboriginal rights negotiations and is committed to meeting its implementation obligations. A number of tables are close to significant milestones.

We are at the latter stages of negotiating a final self-government agreement with the Deline First Nations and are very hopeful that this agreement can be signed within the mandate of this Legislative Assembly. At the Northwest Territories Metis Nation table, we have made significant progress on an agreement-in-principle on lands and resources and are working to finish this AIP over the summer.

Mr. Speaker, an important part of increasing self-reliance is doing more to protect our environment. Environment and Natural Resources has been working with territorial land claim organizations in a collaborative process aimed at drafting a new Species at Risk Act. We believe this partnership will result in the finalization of this critical legislation during the life of this Assembly and could serve as a model for drafting a new Wildlife Act for the Northwest Territories.

Recent surveys have shown a sharp decline in the population of our barren ground-caribou herds. In response, we have taken steps to protect our caribou herds for future generations. In conjunction with our co-management partners, we have developed a Caribou Management Strategy to halt or reverse this trend.

Mr. Speaker, we are also providing the tools for individuals and organizations to do more to protect our environment. During the first five months of operation, almost seven million containers have been returned to depots across the Northwest Territories under the Beverage Container Program. In keeping with the direction of this House, every resident of the territory has access to this program in his or her home community.

Another important focus has been to improve critically required territorial transportation infrastructure. Work is expected to begin this year on the Bear River Bridge in Tulita. This bridge will improve the reliability and length of operating season for the Mackenzie Valley winter road. We are working towards the completion of a \$7 million airport improvement project in Norman Wells that will see the runway, taxiways and apron at this airport resurfaced. We will also be partnering with industry and the federal government to undertake a more detailed study for

options for winter road realignment and an all-weather road in the Tlicho area.

The Deh Cho Bridge project is a critical project that will permanently connect the North Slave region to southern Canada. We are working with the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation on federal assistance to help offset the increased costs of this project resulting from rising steel and labour costs.

A relatively small initiative but one of great interest to Members and to the people of the Northwest Territories is the recent introduction of a new driver's licence. This new licence will meet all national standards for document security and will also be more readily accepted in the South for identification and border crossing purposes.

Mr. Speaker, a self-reliant territory must have a strong and growing economy. We have undertaken a number of important initiatives to strengthen and diversify our economy.

Tourism is the largest renewable resource in the Northwest Territories. It benefits all communities and residents of the Northwest Territories and has great potential for growth with continued support and investment. To foster this growth, we have increased our tourism budget by an additional \$1 million. As well, Industry, Tourism and Investment has worked with industry on Tourism 2010, a five-year plan to grow the tourism industry in the Northwest Territories.

The traditional economy plays an important role in small communities by allowing our people to realize economic, social and cultural benefits from existing and accessible resources and as well displacing costly imported food commodities. To ensure the growth and sustainability of this sector, MACA, ITI and ENR will be expanding the youth trapper training to give young people more on-the-land skills.

With respect to the Mackenzie gas pipeline project, we are pleased with the Joint Review Panel and the National Energy Board reviews of this project. These are important processes that allow all residents and stakeholders of the territory to have input into the process.

As Members know, we believe this project is vital to the long-term economic and social well-being of the Northwest Territories. We are working with the proponents of the project to conclude a socio-economic agreement that will set out concrete expectations for this project both in the construction and operational stages.

Mr. Speaker, this is an exciting time for our territory. The election of the new federal government earlier this year, combined with the development potential of our territory and the heightened interest this brings, creates a political environment offering great opportunity.

I am pleased with the solid working relationship that we have established with the new national government, particularly with Prime Minister Harper and the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, the Honourable Jim Prentice. We are delighted that Minister Prentice could join northern leaders at the Third Annual Northern Leaders meeting in Norman Wells in April to discuss issues and priorities important to northern governments.

The recent decisions of the new federal government to honour the \$500 million socio-economic impact fund, the \$50 million affordable housing initiative and the residential schools agreement have been important early steps in building good relationships with Ottawa.

Mr. Speaker, as I stated earlier, the process being undertaken nationally to address the fiscal imbalance will significantly impact the work we do as a government and Legislature over the next year and a half.

As the Minister of Finance noted in his fiscal update last week, provincial and territorial Premiers established the Council of the Federal Advisory Panel on Fiscal Imbalance in May 2005 to conduct an independent review of both horizontal and vertical fiscal imbalances and to recommend solutions to resolve these imbalances.

The advisory panel recognizes the three territories face "enormous difficulties" in providing basic public services to their residents and must deal with critical social issues. The report acknowledged these difficulties and emphasized the unique territorial characteristics of small, dispersed populations, developing economies, underdeveloped infrastructures, high living costs, challenging social conditions relative to southern Canada, and evolving political systems.

The panel made a number of recommendations to address these issues including a new financing mechanism based on the expenditure need and eligible revenues for each territory, future adjustments following an adequacy review, and specific recommendations concerning per capita funding and devolution and resource revenue sharing.

Today, the federal Minister of Finance released the report of the federal Expert Panel on Equalization and Territorial Formula Financing. At first glance, we are generally pleased with the recommendations contained in this report. On Thursday, I will be joining my provincial and territorial colleagues in Edmonton to be briefed on this report in more detail by the expert panel.

These two reports will form the basis for discussions over the course of the summer on new fiscal arrangements that will have fundamental and long-term implications for the Northwest Territories. For too long, we have had fiscal arrangements that do not address the fundamental issues we face and are unresponsive to our new economic realities. We are hopeful this process will lead to a resolution of these issues.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, we remain firmly of the view that the long-term solution is to transfer responsibility for land and resources and revenues they generate to northern governments. We are encouraged by the statements of Prime Minister Harper and Minister Prentice that northerners should be the primary beneficiaries of development of northern resources...

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

HON. JOE HANDLEY: ...a principle fully embraced by all Canadian Premiers.

Mr. Speaker, all Members of this Legislative Assembly have an important job to do in keeping the priorities of the Northwest Territories on the radar screen of the federal government. In April of 2005, we joined with aboriginal

and business leaders to go to Ottawa to explain our case to federal leaders. I am hopeful we can undertake a similar initiative in the fall to meet with the new federal Ministers and other representatives in Ottawa to explain the challenges and opportunities that exist in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, we have been busy since the end of the budget session in working with our partners on issues of importance to this territory. I would like to thank all Members for their work and look forward to continuing our collaborative approach this summer in meeting with our aboriginal government partners during their respective annual summer assemblies. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bell.

Minister's Statement 12-15(5): Commitment To Tourism

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is National Tourism Awareness Week in Canada, a week aimed at raising awareness of the tremendous economic, cultural and social benefits provided by this sector to all Canadians.

In the Northwest Territories, tourism is a \$100 million industry. That is the amount spent by the over 61,000 visitors to our territory every year.

Mr. Speaker, tourism dollars are new dollars to our economy and flow into our communities through our many valued tourism operators and outfitters. Along the way, this benefits NWT residents and businesses working in areas such as the transportation and accommodation sectors, retail and food outlets, recreation and entertainment industries.

The Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment is working in partnership with Northwest Territories Tourism on a number of initiatives to mark this week and to celebrate tourism in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to seek unanimous consent to conclude all Ministers' statements filed with the Clerk for delivery today.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The Minister is seeking unanimous consent to conclude all Ministers' statements filed with the Clerk today. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You may continue, Minister Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, colleagues. An open house was held last week in Hay River. A brochure highlighting the tourism industry is being distributed in all NWT communities, and we are working with the Northern Frontier Visitors Association to support the second annual Discover North Tourism Awareness Golf Tournament this Friday.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate our tourism industry personnel for their dedication to this important industry and thank them for a job well done. I would also like to take this time to underscore some major initiatives that this government has undertaken in support of the tourism industry.

Through our Tourism 2010 Strategy, we have invested an additional \$1 million this year into marketing, product development, infrastructures, human resource training, research and planning; a serious commitment to developing tourism in the Northwest Territories that will generate returns well beyond the five-year focus of our plan.

Earlier this year I approved the appointments for a new Tourism Marketing Advisory Committee to more clearly differentiate between the lobby and marketing mandates of the Northwest Territories Tourism Association. This committee, which consists principally of private sector representatives, will act independently of the paid membership of the association to provide strategic direction in the development of marketing strategies for implementation by Northwest Territories tourism.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, later today I will be introducing a new Tourism Act to replace the Northwest Territories Travel and Tourism Act.

The new Tourism Act will streamline and simplify licensing requirements for tourism operators, and provide a more transparent and user-friendly regulatory environment for members of the NWT tourism industry.

Mr. Speaker, tourism is by far our largest renewable resource. It continues to be a key priority for this government; a commitment that I believe has been reflected in our work to date and in the initiatives outlined to you today. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. Miltenberger.

Minister's Statement 13-15(5): Species At Risk And Wildlife Legislation

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the natural resources, clean air, water and wildlife found in the NWT make us the envy of numerous jurisdictions. Protecting these elements is of the utmost importance to the economic, social and cultural sustainability of our territory.

Two key pieces of legislation are planned to help achieve these goals: an updated Wildlife Act and a new Species at Risk Act. Both pieces of legislation have been under development for a number of years by the Government of the Northwest Territories land claim organizations. Progress has reached an impasse over how the legislation would be developed and drafted.

In April 2005, along with the Minister of Justice, I met in Inuvik with the aboriginal organizations with settled land claims and reached agreement on these process issues. It was agreed that because of the short time left in the life of the 15th Assembly, that it would be best to focus on getting a Species at Risk Act ready and into the House for passage. The Wildlife Act, a more complicated piece of legislation, would follow, using the same processes agreed to for the development of the Species at Risk Act.

Currently, Mr. Speaker, the NWT has no legislation to protect species at risk. If our government does not provide appropriate legal protection for these species, the

federal government is obligated to step in. While this may work as a stop-gap measure, federal legislation does not address any of the unique challenges that exist in the NWT.

Over this past winter, Mr. Speaker, we have been working in conjunction with land claim groups on the development of a "collaborative drafting process" for a new Species at Risk Act. This process allows for the direct involvement of land claim organizations in the development of the draft bill. This cooperative approach has recently led to an agreement on models which will govern both the assessment and the listing of species at risk. To date, Mr. Speaker, the working group is reviewing draft legislation and is making recommendations on improving it.

By the early part of fall 2006 we expect that the draft act will have made its way through this collaborative process and will be available for public review. Following a public consultation period during the fall of 2006, we anticipate introducing a bill during the early part of 2007. This timeline would allow us to introduce and pass an important piece of legislation during the life of this government.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, there are strong linkages between species at risk and wildlife legislation. Members of this and previous Assemblies have sought to develop a new Wildlife Act for residents of the Northwest Territories. While substantial work has been done in this area, the introduction of such legislation remains. The reasons for this vary but centre around the process by which all stakeholders are involved in the development of any new legislation.

We believe that the process established through the development and finalization of the Species at Risk Act can serve as a roadmap for a new NWT Wildlife Act.

Mr. Speaker, advancements such as these do not happen by themselves and only come about through hard work. Members of the Species at Risk Working Group, which include land claim organizations as well as staff from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, are to be commended for their creativity and cooperation on this file. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Ministers' statements. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On WCB Policy Regarding Chronic Pain Syndrome

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to speak in regards to the WCB's policy toward those with chronic pain syndrome and the implication of the Valic decision.

Mr. Speaker, from my reading, this is a groundbreaking decision that requires substantial changes to the WCB policy and its failure to allow for permanent and partial disability to those with chronic pain syndrome at all levels of adjudication. It is not a good thing in administrative law, Mr. Speaker, to be told that a decision body was patently unreasonable, violated natural justice, it's fettered its

discretion and it has violated someone's Charter rights under section 15. I have to say to the Minister and the board, in case your lawyer is not telling you this, this is definitely a Supreme Court judge telling you that somebody somewhere in your organization, and I see many in the decision, have missed the boat and you better clean it up and clean it up fast. That means doing a lot more than simply reconstituting a new appeals tribunal as suggested by the Minister last week.

Mr. Speaker, Justice Schuler also ruled that the tribunal did not give any real consideration to reports of physicians who had provided evidence of Mr. Valic's impairment that could qualify for PPD. Where have I heard this before, Mr. Speaker? There are so many cases similar to Mr. Valic's situation in my constituency. Justice Schuler also rejected the board's argument that Mr. Valic was not discriminated against, because, basically, he was treated as badly as everyone else with chronic pain syndrome. Thank goodness, Mr. Speaker, the court had the sense to say that two wrongs or many wrongs done equally does not get you out of section 15 requirements.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, in paragraph 76 of her decision, she stated that because WCB recognizes chronic pain as a temporary condition only, it lends itself to the interpretation that if treatment is unsuccessful, that is likely the fault of the worker. This approach to chronic pain as a temporary condition does not accept that some workers may be permanently disabled by it. Accordingly, WCB does not provide for these workers and, in failing to do so, discriminates against these workers infringing on their section 15 rights.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you, what could be more clear? I suggest that the Minister and the board stop listening to their in-house counsel and step up to the plate and start making some real progressive and proactive policy changes forthwith. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Member's Statement On Update On The Progress Of The Northern Strategy

MR. BRADEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. About a year and a half ago, all three territorial governments and Canada agreed that the North needs a new deal with Canada. A very interesting process was created, Mr. Speaker, called Developing your Northern Strategy. It was an initiative that was launched by the previous federal government, again at the urging and with the collaboration of all three territorial governments. It canvassed many residents, Mr. Speaker, and solicited government involvement. It was something that I think we all entered into realizing that this was not going to be the golden answer to all our issues, but it marked the turning point, at least for me, Mr. Speaker. It suggested that Canada, after 140 years of paternal, colonialist governance of the northern frontier, was going to do something to help us make sure that our voice was going to be heard as loudly, as clearly and as equally as other Canadians. We have come a long way. With the new government in place, I want to ask, where are we now?

Mr. Speaker, Minister Jim Prentice, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, the person most responsible for this file, did give us some words of encouragement in Norman Wells a little while ago at the Circle of Northern Leaders. He said, and I quote, "This government recognizes that the North now plays a larger role than ever in Canada's sovereignty and prosperity. Northerners must help define the North's role in Canada by participating in decision-making processes that shape key policies." Further, Prime Minister Harper has committed to ensuring that northerners participate in benefits from resource development projects. Great words, Mr. Speaker, but I want to find out some more about this.

With the development of our natural resources by the year 2010, the federal government stands to harvest \$1.3 billion in taxes and royalties. Only about \$100 million out of \$1,300 million is going to come to the NWT. Clearly, Mr. Speaker, we still need progress on our arrangement with the federal government on our future with Canada. I am going to be asking the Premier for an update on this progress later on today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Single-Rate-Zone Power Rate

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the fate of the flat-rate power debate, one-rate zone, what is it? What are we debating about? How will it affect me and my constituents? These are questions constituents have been expressing to me over and over again. The Public Utilities Board is submitting the rates that is due this fall. Under the current situation, large and hydro communities benefit while small communities that rely on diesel powered generators will be hit hard. When I think of this government's approach on the flat-rate debate, I ask, can this government evaluate all the impacts that changes will have on the communities? I believe we can. Can this government thoroughly explore other options mutually beneficial to all NWT residents? I believe we can. Can this government discuss and consult these issues with the communities? I believe we can. Will this government work with the PUB to compose and approve an equitable ratio to all residents? I believe we can.

Mr. Speaker, I also ask, is this government going to approach a dramatic increase in the cost of fuel with the status quo or, even worse, start offloading costs onto the communities through a complex and unfair formula or a non per capita basis? The Northwest Territories is always talking about a red hot economy and using this as a reason why certain things are done or certain services are reduced. As an MLA, we all have the honour and privilege of talking with our residents, our youth and our elders. Lately, these discussions have been primary on increasing costs of living in the small and remote communities.

Last winter, the MLAs asked the various ministries to be proactive rather than reactive to what was inevitable. Many constituents have stated that with the escalating costs of living, choices in healthy living is quickly becoming a lifestyle for the privileged. The phrase "one-

rate zone" means that families do not have to choose between food or power, trading living needs for fuel. When this government discusses the flat rate debate, we should consider that we don't approach our community services differently when it comes to health care or education, so why central utilities, Mr. Speaker? Mahsi cho.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Member's Statement On Recognition Of The Coast Guard During Water Safety Week

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, June 5th to the 11th is Water Safety Week in the NWT. I mention this because every year about 500 Canadians drown in water related fatalities. Each year, more than 100 children and youth in Canada drown and many more have close calls and injuries.

Mr. Speaker, in recognition of Water Safety Week, I just want to recognize the Canadian Coast Guard and the work that they do in Hay River and in the North. They put their lives at risk for us in order to ensure our safety when we are out on the water. In 1962, the Canadian Coast Guard selected Hay River and its abundance of good harbours and docking areas in the small delta as the main base for their operations which stretch from Saskatchewan and Lake Athabasca to the Arctic Coast. In the Northwest Territories, the Canadian Coast Guard has three major programs: rescue, safety and environmental response, ice breaking, and communications and traffic service.

Hay River is the principal transportation link for the movement by barge of bulk petroleum products and dry cargo to many communities, oil and gas exploration sites, and defence installations across the North. If the pipeline goes ahead as planned, Imperial Oil and its partners are planning to send dozens of barges loaded with fuel and supplies onto the Mackenzie River and this will increase the traffic on the river dramatically, Mr. Speaker.

We are fortunate to have an organization in the Territories keeping our waters navigable and keeping our waters safe. So many communities rely on the water of the Mackenzie River. Most of us, however, are just familiar with the Coast Guard's search and rescue services, which include monitoring for mariners in distress and rescuing them and coordinating with the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary, a volunteer rescue program. Every time we're out on the water or someone we know is out there, whether they're barging, fishing or just boating, we can be grateful to know that the Canadian Coast Guard is never far away.

Mr. Speaker, I know that you will join me today in thanking the Canadian Coast Guard and the volunteer auxiliary service for their contribution to keeping northerners safe. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

Member's Statement On Recognizing The Anniversary Of The Signing Of The Inuvialuit Land Claims Agreement

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, June 5th is a significant day for the Inuvialuit. It was June 5, 1984, when they signed their land claims agreement and many Inuvialuit in the Inuvialuit settlement region are getting together today, enjoying a day off, but there's three of us still working.

---Laughter

Since that day, Mr. Speaker, the Inuvialuit built their capacity and invested wisely, and many Inuvialuit have and will benefit from the investments that come from dividends they invest into the education and assisting harvesters and so on. Many Inuvialuit still continue to practice a traditional lifestyle, but also realize that development is coming and are getting themselves into position to take advantage of the opportunities. Mr. Speaker, many of us still believe that we can have the best of both worlds. The Inuvialuit are proud, confident people who know that they have the ability and capacity to be major players in any type of development without losing sight of who we are and where we came from.

Mr. Speaker, I'm also pleased to see other groups down the valley starting to work on settling their claims. Their people will benefit and I urge the leadership from across the NWT to work together and be visionaries and know that we have to take advantage of anything that goes on in the Northwest Territories, not be left out in the cold while our resource money continues to go south. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Member's Statement On Pursuing Federal Public Transit Funding

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today my Member's statement is about the federal transit funding for the City of Yellowknife; the transit money, Mr. Speaker. In addition to the funding available under the New Deal for cities and communities, the federal government is making over a million dollars available for existing NWT public transit systems. I've been given to understand that this money is available and is just being held up by MACA's inability to come up with a definition of what they can't decide is existing transit, Mr. Speaker. This money's been available since its initial announcement of June 1st of last year under Bill C-48 and it was finally profiled under Parliament's Bill C-66 in November. So, Mr. Speaker, it's been out for over six or seven months.

If the MACA Minister can't decide what he wants to do, well, let me inform him that Yellowknife has the only operating public transit system. I'm sorry to say, but there are no other communities in the Northwest Territories that have one. Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to quibble with the Minister on whether community buses or community groups, NGOs or other agencies that transport either the handicapped, the elderly or whatever, constitute as a public transit system, but the fact is, sadly, I have to admit, the federal program does not recognize them as existing

public transit systems. So the point here is, Mr. Speaker, we have one transit system here in the Northwest Territories. Why does the Minister want to again quibble, or I should say dither, over the definition of what transit is?

Mr. Speaker, the City of Yellowknife needs this cash infusion sooner rather than later. It will improve our transit ridership in Yellowknife, it will get more people off the streets, and you know what? It may even spill into solving problems created and acknowledged by the Kyoto problem. Mr. Speaker, we need the MACA Minister to show some political leadership because if he continues to want to dither over this money by trying to re-profile it, well, let's at least take the initiative of giving the City of Yellowknife 80 percent of their money and then we can continue to discuss this a little further. Let us drill down to the facts, Mr. Speaker. This doesn't mean the transit ridership should not be ignored anywhere else in the Northwest Territories, but the fact is Yellowknife money is being held up by the MACA Minister.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, Yellowknife MLAs such as myself would never stand in the way of community money, such as the \$500 million for the federal pipeline money that will go to affected pipeline communities. The fact is, I look for the same support from the MACA Minister when Yellowknife's money is being held back by a MACA Minister. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's all I have at this time.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

Member's Statement On Need For A Coordinated Approach To Caribou Management

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to discuss the issue of caribou management in the Northwest Territories and how our government seems to be avoiding some very important steps along the way. In February of last year, the Bathurst caribou management plan was tabled in this House. It is very clear what caribou provide to us and their overall importance, as they have been ever since man first set foot here; to our culture, our way of life, our economy and our identity. My concern last year was the fact that we need a comprehensive, coordinated approach to caribou management. The government seems intent, for whatever reason, to study and manage individual herds. In fact, it's going to continue to be a costly proposition to continue this shotgun approach to caribou management.

In the Northwest Territories and Nunavut there are eight recognized herds sharing the same land area. What needs to happen is that all jurisdictions from east to west, Labrador to Alaska, have to come together to understand what is happening to the caribou in northern North America. Caribou do not recognize borders; they migrate great distances, they intermingle, interbreed, and as such need to be managed in an all-encompassing way. We should try to avoid any duplication in the management of the various herds.

What I would like to know is why there has never been a meeting of all the stakeholders. I just don't see any coordination and, like I said last year in this House, when these herds move around as much as they do it's

imperative that we deal with the total number and act accordingly.

The Government of the Northwest Territories has an opportunity to bring all stakeholders together under one forum. Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, they could call it the Caribou Summit. Invite all jurisdictions and stakeholders to attend. Share their experiences, data, and understanding with each other. All governments involved should be ready to participate and jointly fund such an effort, and, Mr. Speaker, if you're going to do anything I always say make sure that you do it right. I have to say, there isn't any evidence to date that suggests that the Government of the Northwest Territories is doing this in terms of caribou management. Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister at the appropriate time. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Member's Statement On Recognition Of The Parents And Graduating Students Of The Sahtu

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this month and last month, many parents down the Mackenzie Valley and the whole Northwest Territories and all the students in the schools had something to celebrate. A lot of these parents put their children through high school; blood, sweat and tears of these young students. I know; I put a couple through myself, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, these parents when they first put their little ones into kindergarten, you know how time flies. The number of hours, the number of times you talk to your children, get them to school, get dressed, comb your hair, you know? Kiss the boo-boos when they get hurt in school. This bunch, of all the parents that are going to be celebrating in their heart, you know, they wish the best for their children. Some of these students have dropped out, Grade 10, Grade 9, 11, and, lo and behold, some of these students go back into school to get their Grade 12. There were a couple in our region last year that graduated. I understand this year also down in the Sahtu there's a few students going back to school. There might be some down in your own communities.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to say, along with the Minister and Premier who announced today, there is a record number of students who have graduated. Our students are going through the system. They are making it. In the Sahtu, you know, in high school, 33 students this year are going to be graduating from high school.

---Applause

In Deline there's 15 students, for example. Deline has always been a strong community in terms of getting their kids through the high school system. In Tulita there's only nine this year. So those numbers are improving. We can say a lot of things about our education system, but the parents, they know the value of education, they know what it takes and these communities also. So we've got to really tip our hats off to these students that are going to school in this time and age. It's not like we used to go a long time ago. So in all, in the post-secondary education system and through all different funding from the Sahtu, total of students in our whole region, 61 students at post-

secondary school or certificate management, that's a huge number. So we know we've got a bright future. So I wanted to say thank you to all the parents, all the teachers, all the hard work they have done to get these students. These students are number one in my heart and number one in the Territories. You know, they've got a good future for them. So thank you, Mr. Speaker. Congratulations.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Members' statements. The honourable Member from Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

Member's Statement On Recognition Of Fort McPherson Graduates And Appreciation For Assistance During Aklavik Flood

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I had an opportunity to travel back to my riding this weekend and I would like to congratulate the 20 graduates from the Chief Julius School in Fort McPherson.

---Applause

I would like to encourage each and every one to continue on with their education and that path and also take on the concept of lifetime learning. I think it's important that they all take advantage of the many opportunities we have in the Northwest Territories and especially what we have to offer.

Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, I travelled to Aklavik to see firsthand the effects of the flood from last week. I had a chance to talk to my constituents and also work with the different agencies on exactly what it's going to take to resolve this problem. Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of flood damage to individuals' homes and also the private property and also the infrastructure in the community. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the mayor, his council, the many volunteers and the RCMP for their long hours that they've put in over the last week just to ensure that people were able to be evacuated safely and also be able to get them back home.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the community of Inuvik for the hospitality that they gave to the residents of Aklavik when they hosted them last week. More importantly, I'd like to thank the mayor, his council, people in the emergency measures staff, especially John Picek in regards to MACA and his staff, and also the Department of National Defence for allowing us to use their base out at the airport. With that, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank all the departments and agencies I may have missed, but, more importantly, I'd like to thank them on behalf of the people of Aklavik for their support and say mahsi cho. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Members' statements. Returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to recognize my former constituent who lived in Weledeh and is now living in Winnipeg, continues to be my constituent-at-large and was in town for the graduation of one of her children. Thank you. It's Ms. Major Karen Hoef. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member from Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to recognize Paulette Panzeri, the director general for human resources for Indian and Northern Affairs Canada who is also my older sister and it's the first time I've had the opportunity to welcome her to this House.

---Applause

I'd also like to recognize Mr. Daryl Dolynny, a pharmacist who works at Shoppers Drug Mart, past-president of NWT Pharmacies Association who has been very instrumental in the work we've been doing on getting a Pharmacy Act brought forward.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member from Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize, as well, Mr. Daryl Dolynny, a former constituent, president of Aurora World Corporation. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member from Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the past few minutes I have seen a constituent of mine, Mr. Lee Selleck in the gallery and I would like to welcome him to the Assembly. Thank you.

---Laughter

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member from Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Although mentioned a couple times already, I'd also like to recognize Daryl Dolynny, a well-known community supporter in the city of Yellowknife and he goes a long way to helping a lot of good causes. So thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. If we've missed anybody in the

gallery today, welcome to the gallery. It's always nice to have an audience. Oral questions. The honourable Member from Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 50-15(5): Capacity Of North Slave Correctional Centre

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister responsible for Justice. Recently we've heard some news in the media that perhaps the North Slave Correctional Centre doesn't have the capacity that's required for persons incarcerated in the Northwest Territories. I'd like to ask the Minister, when the North Slave Correctional Centre was built, how many inmates was it intended to house in relation to how many are in it today? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister responsible for Justice, Mr. Bell.

Return To Question 50-15(5): Capacity Of North Slave Correctional Centre

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The design was for 154 beds. I believe that's the number of beds that are there now. My understanding, the latest numbers are in the neighbourhood of 128 and 130. I don't have today's numbers, but that's fairly recent. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 50-15(5): Capacity Of North Slave Correctional Centre

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, is the Minister in possession of any trends or projections which might indicate that these numbers are going to increase in the near future? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 50-15(5): Capacity Of North Slave Correctional Centre

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, I guess I would say that we hope not, but 128 is close to the capacity at 154. We're not there yet, but should we see pressures, we do have to talk about our corrections model. That is why you've seen some of the piloting of on-the-land corrections camps and we'll continue to look at other ways that we can do that. But it, going forward, could be a concern for us and we'll have to continue to keep an eye on it. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 50-15(5): Capacity Of North Slave Correctional Centre

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to know if a demand for increased capacity would include re-examining the vacant space and vacant cells which now exist in the South Mackenzie Correctional Centre in Hay River. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 50-15(5): Capacity Of North Slave Correctional Centre

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, yes, it would. We're going to have to make sure that we're utilizing all of our facilities to the fullest extent possible. We are in discussions with the warden and our management people around possible uses for some of the space at SMCC and we'll continue that. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 50-15(5): Capacity Of North Slave Correctional Centre

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the interim, then, the positions in Hay River that were going to be reduced through attrition that has not taken place, what is the Minister's plan for those positions at this time? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 50-15(5): Capacity Of North Slave Correctional Centre

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're still discovering that, or still analyzing that. As the House will remember, we reduced the budget, so the money is not there for the facility, but the plan was to reduce the...(inaudible)...allocation for attrition. That, by and large, has not happened. We are talking about the possible uses for some of that space that will probably require new programming and I think we need to have that discussion when we come forward in the business plan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Oral questions. The honourable Member from Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Question 51-15(5): Pursuing Federal Public Transit Funding

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On the heels of my Member's statement today, I wish to seek clarification from the Minister as to what is the holdup of the money that is rightly deserved to the City of Yellowknife for the transit system. So I ask the Minister, Mr. Speaker, why has the Minister delayed in inking a deal for the federal money to come to the Northwest Territories, the infrastructure money that is much needed by the City of Yellowknife? What has held the Minister up from doing that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. McLeod.

Return To Question 51-15(5): Pursuing Federal Public Transit Funding

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The discussion for the public transit funding came about in November of 2005. As Members will recall, the election was called shortly after that. There was no further

discussion on this initiative. There was no negotiations, and negotiations only picked up as recently as March and we've had some initial discussions. What is holding us up from signing a deal is lack of an agreement at this point and the discussion over the allocation of the money. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Supplementary To Question 51-15(5): Pursuing Federal Public Transit Funding

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister has been well aware, since the initial announcement in June of last year, that this transit money was coming. The Minister is also aware, because he just pointed out, that in November, seven months ago, that the deal was being processed. So now we are talking about March of this year and who knows what else is going to be the next stumbling block. So obviously the Minister is probably glad to see him here to help straighten him up. We have three problems. The first one is Yellowknife has the only transit system; the second is the federal money was earmarked for existing transit systems; and, thirdly, we know this money has been in existence for over a year. Again, I have made that point. So what is the obvious stumbling block, from MACA's point of view, of defining what a transit system is, when I can show him if we go outside here? I will show him a bus that goes by. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 51-15(5): Pursuing Federal Public Transit Funding

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the offer of the Member to straighten me out, but first he has to get his facts straight. Mr. Speaker, the definition of the public transit funding and what projects and programs can qualify under there has not been defined. There is a general terminology that has been used that allows a number of initiatives to qualify, but rapid transit, buses, intelligent transportation systems, bike lanes, these things are all general terms being used. However, in jurisdictions such as the Northwest Territories there is, in the agreement, the provision for greater flexibility. We have yet to have the opportunity to sit down and negotiate what those terms will be and we plan to do that as soon as the federal government gives us a slot where we can start negotiating. That is where the holdup is. We need to sit down and negotiate an agreement. There is not an agreement we can just sit down and sign. That agreement does not exist up to this point. So we have to sit down and negotiate the terms, come up with an agreement that we are both satisfied with and then be able to sign the agreement. I would expect that to take place later on in the calendar year. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Supplementary To Question 51-15(5): Pursuing Federal Public Transit Funding

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the definitions the MACA Minister was rambling off don't apply to the Northwest Territories. I have lived here almost 30 years and I have never seen a bicycle lane. I haven't

seen some of the infrastructure he's talked about. None of them apply directly to the Northwest Territories. Yellowknife has the only transit bus system here. So can we get some type of commitment from the MACA Minister today that we will at least start by committing 80 percent of that funding, which rightly belongs to the City of Yellowknife, which has said it belongs to the City of Yellowknife through the paperwork, before we lose this million-plus dollars? Will the Minister commit to that fact? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 51-15(5): Pursuing Federal Public Transit Funding

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, we will commit the money that would go to Yellowknife once we have that defined. We have yet to go and have the discussion with the NWT Association of Communities. We will look at the criteria that is required across the Territories. This is not Yellowknife money, as the Member has referenced these dollars for. There are a number of criteria possible. There is community vans, handy vans, bike lanes, intelligent transportation systems. There are a number of things that could qualify. That is something that is available to us to negotiate. There have been special provisions provided to the Northwest Territories for us to do this and we will take the due diligence and the time required to negotiate a proper deal for all the residents of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 51-15(5): Pursuing Federal Public Transit Funding

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, the Minister is dithering over these explanations because there is no intelligent transit system in the Northwest Territories. Again, there is no bike lane system in the Northwest Territories. Is he suggesting now that we are going to start funding bike paths on this transit money? Maybe we should get some clarification from the Minister on his context of what transit system means. I think that is the issue. Mr. Speaker, would the Minister be clear on what transit system means, because we seem to mean everything under the sun? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 51-15(5): Pursuing Federal Public Transit Funding

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess first thing we have to get clear is the NWT is made up of 33 communities and this initiative is geared towards the Northwest Territories. We will define what the criteria is through negotiations, through discussions with the NWT Association of Communities. If that does mean bike lanes and we would like to create bike lanes, then that's what we will do. We have to have that discussion. We have not had the discussion with the NWT Association of Communities and set up a working group and have this talk to further define what will be allowed. We need to have the federal government take the time to sit down and negotiate an agreement. That's all going to take time and is part of the process we have to work on. Once that

happens, we will inform the Member what will be going to the City of Yellowknife. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 52-15(5): Results Of The Alberta Achievement Tests In Rural Communities

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment with respect to the news item on small town students faring poorly on standardized testing in the NWT. I really raised my eyebrows when I saw that in the news of late. The Minister did comment on it. The Minister probably had more time to think about it and it's a huge thing, because I represent lots of small communities. Can the Minister detail for me some of his outlooks on the report and perhaps even mention what type of plan he has to address this very pressing need in the communities? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 52-15(5): Results Of The Alberta Achievement Tests In Rural Communities

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, while we had hoped to see better results from all the communities in the Alberta achievement tests, the Member is right that the results themselves from the small communities caused us some concern. I think we were aware that we have in the Northwest Territories a challenge with literacy and numeracy and, because of that, we already have started to strengthen the program and curriculum to deal better with those challenges.

In a small community, it is more difficult to offer the breadth of programming and the level of service. Sometimes the small communities in the past have been challenged with...(inaudible)...with distance education, for instance. This government has moved to try to correct that for next year and we are hoping that over the next few years we will see a significant improvement in the numbers from all communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent.

Supplementary To Question 52-15(5): Results Of The Alberta Achievement Tests In Rural Communities

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand that the standardized testing is something new that we are gauging our students in the North on. With the initial results, does the Minister have an interim plan, or will he look at some type of plan to address what the core issues are? I understand there was a small school report that was done three or four years ago. It spoke in there about classroom size and just the range of students being serviced by one or two teachers was an issue. Is there an initial plan or some kind of overview that the Minister will address this issue with? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 52-15(5): Results Of The Alberta Achievement Tests In Rural Communities

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We will certainly be following up on this. We have had some initial discussions with the chairs of all the divisional education councils across the Northwest Territories. Since the report the Member talks about has come out, there have been some changes to the formula that is used to fund schools and the funding has been disproportionately increased for the small schools in comparison to larger schools in recognition of some of those challenges. We are planning to continue our work with divisional educational councils to ensure that we are delivering as good a program as possible in the small communities, but I would like to say, as I said in my statement on Friday, we have some good news.

While it's not all great news coming out of the Alberta achievement tests, you have to remember that those tests are not designed for our population. We are not positive that they reflect our population, particularly in small communities where students may be coming in with another language as their first language. So we have to recognize that the best indicator of how students are doing is their teachers. The fact that we are seeing an increase in 34 percent of the numbers of students from small communities registered to write departmental exams this year leads us to believe that we are on the right path when it comes to delivering education in the small communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

Supplementary To Question 52-15(5): Results Of The Alberta Achievement Tests In Rural Communities

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Another item that the actual article speaks about, Mr. Speaker, is that the challenges of the parents or single parents in the smaller communities helping their children. Is there some type of plan that the department would look at in order to assist our families back in the smaller communities in helping their children as well? I know that as more of our adult population returns to school, it just becomes more of a...students can look up to their parents and community more. Is there another way of helping our adult population out there help their children, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 52-15(5): Results Of The Alberta Achievement Tests In Rural Communities

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This, too, is something that I have discussed with the chairs for the divisional educational councils over the past couple of years. There are a number of different initiatives, depending on the community, ranging from elders who act as mentors or counsellors for families to homework clubs and assistance in after school programs to learn how to do things like homework and how to help out. So, yes, it is something that almost needs to be handled on a community-by-community basis. I know that from talking to divisional educational councils, they are interested in looking for whatever works. In some communities that is finding counselling services to help. In others, it is by finding assistance with childcare. So this is an area that, yes, all divisional educational councils are aware that

there is a need to work with individuals and families to support parents getting their kids into school. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Final supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

Supplementary To Question 52-15(5): Results Of The Alberta Achievement Tests In Rural Communities

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Does the Minister know if these standardized tests compare to other jurisdictions like the Yukon, Nunavut or any other rural ridings in the other provinces? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 52-15(5): Results Of The Alberta Achievement Tests In Rural Communities

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We need to be careful that we are not using these tests for comparison purposes, because we can't. These tests are administered in our jurisdiction in a far different way than they are anywhere else that they are used. We don't allow or don't have the exclusions that are found in other jurisdictions, so that means that all of our students are participating in these exams whether they are on an individual education program or a modified program. In many other jurisdictions, that doesn't happen. So we don't have comparison.

These tests are designed for us to take a look at over time. This year, we have baseline information. As we get the next five years' results, we will have an indication of whether or not our system is improving. That is the sole purpose for these tests. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

Question 53-15(5): Update On The Status Of Devolution And Royalty Negotiations

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, after the federal election, I asked the Premier about the status of the royalty talks. It has been four months now. I would like to ask the Premier again, has there been any progress made in the status of the devolution and royalty talks? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 53-15(5): Update On The Status Of Devolution And Royalty Negotiations

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, there has been progress. In fact, substantial progress has been made in the last couple of months. With regard to resource revenues, royalties, as the Member referred, we did receive the report of the council federation expert panel. It was made available on April 6th. It was a report that was very favourable in terms of how the three territorial governments should be treated on resource revenues.

Mr. Speaker, this morning, the federal Minister of Finance made available the federal government's expert panel report. So we now have that report. Mr. Speaker, I will say the Minister of Finance will be making a statement on

that one tomorrow, once we have a chance to look at it more carefully.

Mr. Speaker, there has been a lot of progress. The reports, the experts across the country have come out in agreement with our position regarding resource revenues. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

Supplementary To Question 53-15(5): Update On The Status Of Devolution And Royalty Negotiations

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, travelling down the Mackenzie Valley in some of the communities, a wise man once told me that our common goal should be greater than our common enemy. With that being said, I would like to ask the Premier, is part of the delay the inability of the leadership of the Northwest Territories to get at the table and be on the same page? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 53-15(5): Update On The Status Of Devolution And Royalty Negotiations

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, yes, we have a number of aboriginal governments and aboriginal organizations across the Territories. Some have settled claims and they would like to get on with and join the economic benefits that come from their claim and from economic activity. We have others who are in the process of negotiating claims. They would like to settle those negotiations first.

Mr. Speaker, let me say, when Minister Prentice was in Norman Wells in April for the Circle of Northern Leaders, he was quite clear there that he was ready to proceed in what he called the best interest of the majority of northerners. Mr. Speaker, at some point, in spite of differences, and I think I agree with Mr. Prentice, we have to move forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

Supplementary To Question 53-15(5): Update On The Status Of Devolution And Royalty Negotiations

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Premier for the update. Two hundred seventy-five million dollars left the Northwest Territories in 2004, and that was just from the diamond mines. That should cause the leadership of the NWT a great deal of concern. As we continue to try to hash this out, money continues to flow to Ottawa. As my final question, what is our next step? Where do we go from here? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 53-15(5): Update On The Status Of Devolution And Royalty Negotiations

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, there are a couple of things that are happening simultaneously. First of all, the majority of aboriginal leaders agree with what the Member has said. They want to move forward. The Aboriginal Summit has created what they call a working committee. On their side, it is three representatives from

the summit. On our side, it is three representatives from our Cabinet: myself, the Minister of Finance and the Minister of ITI. We have had a phone meeting. We have made a commitment that, as soon as we got the second expert panel report, we would brief them. We will try to go forward from here working together.

Mr. Speaker, as well, as I mentioned in my sessional statement, I am going to Edmonton on Thursday to meet with the other Premiers of provinces and territories to continue to negotiate any questions to be briefed on the expert panel report.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of things going on. I think generally we are seeing a coming together of the different views. I am optimistic that, over the next months, we will move forward in a way that doesn't pre-empt anybody, but, at the same time, allow us to benefit from those rather huge and increasing resource revenues that are coming from the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Question 54-15(5): Update On The Progress Of The Northern Strategy

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to address some questions to Premier Handley. This is in relation to the ongoing and, perhaps this is the point of my question, Mr. Speaker, whether or not there is indeed any ongoing activity related to the Northern Strategy process.

Mr. Speaker, indeed, we have seen some positive things flow from this, not the least of which was the \$120 million fund that the previous government set aside for all three territories. We are now, in fact, going through the process in deciding how to invest our \$40 million. The Council of the Federation and the expert panels have also given their thumbs up to the kinds of things we want to see, but the real crunch is, is there a process underway between Canada and the three northern territories to continue the ideals that were started about a year and a half ago, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

Return To Question 54-15(5): Update On The Progress Of The Northern Strategy

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As Members know, the Northern Strategy was an initiative that was undertaken jointly by the three northern Premiers and the Prime Minister of the day. There was an agreed need to take a long-term vision on northern issues as well as to deal with immediate issues. That strategy has resulted in the \$40 million that was made available to our territory. Thirty-five million dollars has gone to the communities in community initiatives.

Mr. Speaker, with the new federal government, Minister Prentice has indicated that, yes, he wants us to work with him on what he referred to as a northern vision. He has asked us to provide him with some of our ideas about what should be included in this vision.

Mr. Speaker, even though the new government is only 100 and some days old, this initiative has been undertaken. We have provided them with some ideas. As it becomes more formalized, I would expect that we would see the same kind of consultative process happening. Again, that is in Minister Prentice's hands right now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Supplementary, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary To Question 54-15(5): Update On The Progress Of The Northern Strategy

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess I would ask, is this really all in Minister Prentice's hands? I think this is a process that all three territories undertook, as well, in good faith. We made investments in it and I remember considerable discussion among our committees and at levels of this Legislature. Do we have a new northern vision process under Minister Prentice, or is it, in reality, a continuation of the Northern Strategy process that we have already agreed to and already put significant investment in, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 54-15(5): Update On The Progress Of The Northern Strategy

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, certainly our vision, from our government's perspective or from northerners' perspective, our vision of the North has not changed because the federal government changed. It is still the same vision. So when you look at the basic principles, those principles have not changed. We look at some of the main goals, whether it is on governance, protecting the environment or establishing a strong foundation for economic development, so those are the same.

Mr. Speaker, all of that information has been provided to the federal Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. It is now in the hands of the federal Minister in the sense that he will want to put his own vision together with those that we have provided to him and I think come up with a vision that is probably going to be very similar from our perspective, but yet will be a document between his government and our governments. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Supplementary, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary To Question 54-15(5): Update On The Progress Of The Northern Strategy

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, the \$40 million that is now under review for investment, \$35 million of which at the community level, was something that I believe was extended to this government and our sister territories really, Mr. Speaker, as a down payment toward the establishment of a new deal with Canada, not so much something that was going to be looked at as a payoff, if you will. Here is some money; take it and have some fun. This is a down payment, a promise toward a better deal with Canada. What are we doing to continue these negotiations, Mr. Speaker, and to make this a reality?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 54-15(5): Update On The Progress Of The Northern Strategy

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, the Member is correct; the \$40 million was a down payment. The government-of-the-day agreed to provide \$40 million to each territory to be able to deal with issues that were of greatest urgency in each territory. That is why we allocated to the community governments to allow them to determine their first priorities.

It has always been felt that resource revenue sharing and fixing the formula were a key piece of any northern vision. That is the piece that we have been focussed on recently with the two expert panel reports, the most recent of which was released today. Fixing the resource revenue sharing so more of that revenue stays in the North will enable us to be more self-reliant, self-determining ourselves. That has been our thrust up to now. Mr. Speaker, in doing that, we have laid out to the federal government a number of strategies saying here is what our priority is, whether it is on infrastructure or on social programs or any other areas. Clearly, the focus over the last few months and probably over the next few months will be on a new formula and new resource revenue sharing arrangements. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary To Question 54-15(5): Update On The Progress Of The Northern Strategy

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, one of the key ingredients in this is the understanding, support and collaboration of the provinces in Canada. The report by the Council of the Federation really is a striking endorsement of our goals. I wanted to ask the Premier what his plan is for continuing to strengthen that relationship with the provinces, as he says we have done with the federal government, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 54-15(5): Update On The Progress Of The Northern Strategy

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I assure all the Members in this House that we are going to continue to work in cooperation with all of the Premiers. We met last week in Gimli. We did talk generally about this. This is the expert panel report. The Premiers all assured myself and the other northern Premiers that they are 100 percent on side with us. We are meeting again on Thursday. We will be talking about the territorial report as well as the provincial report dealing with equalization. We have full agreement that they are 100 percent behind us, that our situation is unique, that we shouldn't be drawn into some formula that applies to the provinces, Prince Edward Island and Saskatchewan or something. Ours is unique.

Mr. Speaker, I will be taking every opportunity to make sure that we maintain that kind of solid support from all the Premiers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Question 55-15(5): Update On The Chipseal Program For The Sahtu

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of MACA on the Chipsealing Program. Could the Minister of MACA tell me if the plans for the Chipsealing Program in the Sahtu region is still as per schedule? We had some discussion last year on this issue. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 55-15(5): Update On The Chipseal Program For The Sahtu

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, yes, they are.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

Supplementary To Question 55-15(5): Update On The Chipseal Program For The Sahtu

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you. Can the Minister then tell me whether the plans are for communities in the region in terms of the Chipsealing Program? I may have to get a little more specific in saying Fort Good Hope. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 55-15(5): Update On The Chipseal Program For The Sahtu

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the plans haven't changed from last year, so I will repeat the answer I gave last year. Mr. Speaker, we had done design and drainage studies. We have embarked on doing the changing of the culverts and also providing the solid base for the community. I believe that is going to be upgraded and some of the areas that were not completed during that year will be finished off this year. We intend to move forward with the Chipsealing Program, providing the budgets are still sufficient to do all the communities that we had intended to do. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

Supplementary To Question 55-15(5): Update On The Chipseal Program For The Sahtu

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Chipsealing Program in Fort Good Hope is the issue of the chipsealing and dust control in our communities. Does the government provide enough funding in the formula to do adequate dust control in our communities? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 55-15(5): Update On The Chipseal Program For The Sahtu

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, we did some additional studies over this past fiscal year. We have done an analysis in each community. We have also looked, as part of this analysis, to see what would be the best method of applying dust suppressant, whether it is chipsealing, calcium or others. I would not be able to

speak specifically regarding what would be the best mode of applying dust suppressant in Good Hope, but I would say that, with all the new dollars that are available with what is currently in the community government's budget, I would be very comfortable in saying, yes, there are adequate resources to do dust control. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 55-15(5): Update On The Chipseal Program For The Sahtu

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last year in Tulita, they had dust control. I think they did about 100 feet of dust control because that is all the funding they had. So everybody got into 100 feet of the air so there is no dust in that area. If the Minister can come into Tulita this summer or in the Sahtu communities and see for himself the kind of funding that goes into dust control programs so that the whole main streets in each of the Sahtu communities are adequately funded and to have proper dust control measures in there. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 55-15(5): Update On The Chipseal Program For The Sahtu

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is a lot of new money that is flowing into the communities. Up to now the money that was earmarked for dust control was part of the formula that was calculated for community governments. The community had to set dust control as a priority. Since we have new funding this coming fiscal year, we have the community capacity fund that can be used for dust control, the gas tax, the definition in the agreement allows for greater flexibility, there's allowance for this money to be used for chipseal or dust control. So there's a lot of different things. There's also the new capital formula that's being unveiled and that will be able to have the flexibility of using those dollars for chipseal if that's a requirement. So there are a number of initiatives, a number of new pots of money there. I think there's more than enough to deal with the issue in the communities regarding dust. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Question 56-15(5): WCB Policy Regarding Chronic Pain Syndrome

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister responsible for WCB and it's further to my Member's statement. Mr. Speaker, the basic rule of WCB is to have an insurance system that keeps the employers and the employees out of the core system. It's very unfortunate that workers have had to go through the judicial system to get some relief. But if any, especially those suffering from chronic pain conditions, thought that the Supreme Court of Canada decision Martin or the Supreme Court of the NWT decision Valic were going to give them any relief and justice, I'm not sure if they're not sitting there scratching their heads, especially in light of the Minister's answer last week.

Mr. Speaker, my colleague Bill Braden has raised many questions, but the answers from the Minister were wholly unsatisfactory. Mr. Speaker, I have to ask the Minister

what is the discussion, what are the instructions, what are the plans of the board in terms of dealing with changing its policy and operation in order to fit with the latest Valic decision? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister responsible for Workers' Compensation Board, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 56-15(5): WCB Policy Regarding Chronic Pain Syndrome

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe I told the House in February that the governance council would be reviewing its chronic pain policy and revising that in light of the decisions in the courts. Their intention now is to finalize that this month and once that's done, they will refer the policy, the new policy, to the Supreme Court for reference to ensure that it is in compliance with the Charter and court decisions.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 56-15(5): WCB Policy Regarding Chronic Pain Syndrome

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to be satisfied with that, but given the Minister's answers in the House last week, which seems to suggest that this decision is not as far in depth and breadth as they should be, I think that this was quite a decision. The courts said that the board violated natural justice, basically saying the process was denied. The board failed to ask for rehearing when it should have. The board failed to give notice to Mr. Valic when it should have. A tribunal fettered its discretion, meaning it didn't do its job. The tribunal did not look at the details of the case, and, also, the board policy violates equality rights under Charter in that it treats people with chronic condition differently than other conditions. So I'd like to ask the Minister, I think we...I don't want to see the board and Minister narrowing its actions to the decision only. So I'd like to know what broad policy changes the board is willing to get into. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 56-15(5): WCB Policy Regarding Chronic Pain Syndrome

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The board has announced or said that they are not going to appeal the Valic decision. As I said, they are reviewing their policy. Their policy will be rewritten. They had, in September of 2004, issued a new policy for pain which dealt specifically with chronic pain and had felt that at that time that that policy would be in compliance with court decisions at that time. Now they are in light of more recent court decisions and they are reviewing their policy. So the understanding of the field has changed and the board is responding to that reality and will have a policy in place, as I said, later this month and they will check with the courts to make sure that policy is one that meets the test. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 56-15(5): WCB Policy Regarding Chronic Pain Syndrome

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions to the Minister are dealing with not only the court decision and dealing with the tribunal process, but a lot of other things that have to go in. Mr. Speaker, one of the things that Justice Schuler has said is that this WCB continues to deal with chronic condition as a temporary measure. They look at it as an injury. You're going to get treated and if you don't, well, too bad, so sad. You're not going to be entitled to permanent partial disability or the same treatment as everybody else would. So I'd like to ask the Minister, as a Minister outside of this court decision, what he's doing to change this policy and the way the board treats people with chronic condition. I don't think he should just leave it to the court. I think he should do something as Minister of WCB, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 56-15(5): WCB Policy Regarding Chronic Pain Syndrome

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The governance council has told me that their intention is to develop a new policy and to refer to the courts to ensure that it is one that meets all of the tests. That, Mr. Speaker, I think meets all the requirements that are set out in the recent decision on Valic and it shows a responsiveness to the situation. The decision in Valic does not at any point say that somebody was negligent on the board and how they handled things. It does say that they did not, the court did not think that they handled the case according to the Charter, but it doesn't say that it was done with any sense of negligence. The appeals tribunal has independent legal counsel. It's not the counsel from the WCB. They felt that they had competent advice and that they were following it. So it's a situation where the board had made changes over time in dealing with chronic pain. If it's found not to be acceptable, then it will be one that is going to be changed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Final Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 56-15(5): WCB Policy Regarding Chronic Pain Syndrome

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I reject everything that the Minister has said in terms of how the board understands this decision. It's very clear in the Minister's answer last week that he's going by what the board is saying. I'm telling you, this decision is saying that the board, the tribunal, the appeals tribunal, and the reassessment team screwed up. Okay? I mean, people have done wrong things. So I'd like to ask the Minister, because I could see that this could, I think the only way to fix this is the workers have their own lawyers to go through the process. So I'd like to ask the Minister if he would consider setting up a legal fund for the workers who have to keep fighting the legal system to get the WCB to do the thing that they're entitled to? Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 56-15(5): WCB Policy Regarding Chronic Pain Syndrome

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess as a Legislative Assembly we could have a discussion about the policy and whether or not we think that the no-fault insurance way in which the WCB has operated is the way that we want to do it. We could get rid of the WCB, bring in private insurance like they do in the States, and allow all sorts of litigation in order to see whether or not people get compensation. I think the system that we have, Mr. Speaker, is one that works well. There are some people who don't feel that they've been satisfied and we have, with Valic's situation, a case where the courts have directed that an applicant be heard again. That will happen, Mr. Speaker. But by and large the system works as it should and it is delivering a very good service to the people that it serves. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

Question 57-15(5): Coordinated Approach To Caribou Management

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of ENR, the Honourable Michael Miltenberger. It goes back to a statement I made in the House last February and one I made again today, that is my concern over the management of caribou in the Northwest Territories. The first question, and the concern is out there, is why hasn't there been a meeting of all stakeholders concerned and that are involved in the management of caribou in the Northwest Territories? I'd like to ask the Minister that direct question. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister responsible for Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. Miltenberger.

Return To Question 57-15(5): Coordinated Approach To Caribou Management

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there has been extensive meetings and consultation across the Northwest Territories on the issue of caribou management. We just recently prepared and released an NWT Barren-ground Caribou Management Strategy that links all the pieces, the work that's been done on the differing herds. As we speak, work is underway for a major gathering, what I have also been referring to publicly for the past couple months as a caribou summit. In the coming year, once all the information is in from all the various censuses that are currently underway, and surveys. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

Supplementary To Question 57-15(5): Coordinated Approach To Caribou Management

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I haven't seen the type of coordination the Minister speaks of. All I see is study one herd and another herd and try to bring it all together. I think what really needs to happen here is an all-encompassing, a comprehensive look from the east to the west, and that includes multi-jurisdictions,

and have a look at the management of caribou in North America. I think that's the important thing here. I think we just keep spinning our tires, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the Minister specifically where the resources -- and I'm talking about the financial and human resources -- are going to come from to come up with the surveys that he talks about and to carry out the work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 57-15(5): Coordinated Approach To Caribou Management

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we've been working very diligently here for almost a year on this particular issue. We've been consulting. It's a question of us getting our own house in order, getting our numbers clear, getting within the Northwest Territories a consensus on first the situation and then looking at recommendations and next steps. We as well have been in contact with our other jurisdictions, with Nunavut, with the Yukon, with Alberta, with Saskatchewan, on these issues as well. But before we launch into some major interjurisdictional gathering, we have to do our own homework which is what we're doing. We have to get buy-in from all the stakeholders in the Northwest Territories. We've been using some of our existing funding. As well, we were given supplementary appropriation last year to keep the work going. As well, we're building in additional funding in the business planning process that is currently underway right now. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

Supplementary To Question 57-15(5): Coordinated Approach To Caribou Management

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to my knowledge there has never been, even in the Northwest Territories, a meeting of all stakeholders involved in caribou management here in the Northwest Territories. It's one group, the department might be with one group, another group, and another group. They just don't all come together and put all their cards on the table and discuss the issue of caribou management. I think it's incumbent upon the Minister to try to get us to that stage where people can come under one roof and discuss caribou management.

Mr. Speaker, the next question I've got for the Minister, in terms of consumption, and that's a big part of the caribou management plan that he unveiled late last year, I'm wondering if he believes the government or if he's satisfied that his department is getting all the information from the mines, the outfitters, and the aboriginal groups in terms of consumption of caribou? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 57-15(5): Coordinated Approach To Caribou Management

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, first to the issue of a gathering of

the stakeholders in the Northwest Territories. I've indicated in this House just a few minutes ago that in fact we're working on that as we speak. Planning is underway. I've made public announcements to that effect that once all the information is in, we are going to gather all the players together and we're going to sit down and we're going to look at what the information is, what it tells us, and start mapping out the next steps.

In the issue of consumption, Mr. Speaker, there are some areas that need further work. We can tell you how many tags we give to sports hunters, to resident hunters. The one big piece that is not clear and which we are working on with the co-management boards is the issue of the aboriginal harvest and that piece is being looked at as we speak, as well. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Final supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

Supplementary To Question 57-15(5): Coordinated Approach To Caribou Management

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister says that, you know, a meeting of stakeholders will take place soon, but he already has a caribou management plan in the absence of a meeting like that taking place. That causes me a great deal of concern that people have not been able to come together to come up with a plan jointly. I'd like to ask the Minister, you know, will he revise this management plan if he can get all the stakeholders under one roof? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 57-15(5): Coordinated Approach To Caribou Management

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member is correct; there has never been a territorial gathering to discuss the broad issue of caribou and all the various herds and all the issues that are at play here. The intent is to do that in the coming months, once all the census work and survey work is in. We have to look at what the numbers tell us. We have to try and factor in the hunting, the predation, the climate change, the development issues, and it's a very complex issue. In the meantime, we can't sit here in a vacuum. We have taken steps with the information that is available. We have put together a plan very clearly. Once we have a major gathering, that will, to a large degree, inform the next steps and further decisions that have to be made to adequately manage this wildlife that we're looking at, caribou. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

Question 58-15(5): Accessing Federal Investment Funding

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Honourable Brendan Bell, the Minister of ITI. I'd just like to tell the Minister that for several years now I've been trying to track down this SINED fund and I found it in today's News/North.

---Laughter

The Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, they've changed their name again, too, by the way, Mr. Speaker, and they're calling it now TIPs, Targeted Investment Program. I'm just wondering, how is our Department of ITI involved in this and how can we support that project to tap into these funds? Mahsi cho.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bell.

Return To Question 58-15(5): Accessing Federal Investment Funding

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, this money is long awaited. The TIPs initiative was one that was rolled out or at least discussed when the SINED program was created. The SINED name was given. It really talks to some strategic focus for this money. The federal government has been in discussions with our government about areas that they would like to see supported. We've talked about tourism. We've talked about geoscience. There still will be a pot of money, I understand, that the federal government will have that will be application based. So residents from across the territory can apply for that pot of money. We had thought the funds would start to roll out in May. That hasn't happened. We're now being told June. So, Mr. Speaker, we are encouraged that the money we think is very close and as soon as I have some more information, I'll certainly bring that forward to Members. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

Supplementary To Question 58-15(5): Accessing Federal Investment Funding

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad to hear that response from the Minister. One of the projects that I've been championing for the Nahendeh region is, of course, Nahendeh Air. I've seen some guidelines with regard to transportation. Is this something that will fit that guideline and would the Minister support a joint submission that would support a regional airline for the Nahendeh riding? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 58-15(5): Accessing Federal Investment Funding

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Sorry, Mr. Speaker. It's tough for me to say if that would meet the program criteria and requirements. It is obviously a federal program, but as to our government's support for that initiative, we have been very supportive. We've been involved in helping with the planning. We think there's a lot of merit and we do think and would like to see regional interests more involved in the businesses in their communities and in their regions. So we're firmly supportive of this and whether or not that will be eligible for SINED funding will be a decision that the federal government makes, but the Member can be assured that he has my support for this initiative. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Question 59-15(5): Status Of Universal Childcare Benefit

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier in this year the Conservative government initiated through discussion about \$100 per month per child...National Childcare Allowance Program. As a parent with two little monsters, any extra money is certainly welcome. But the fact is, I'm not here to advocate the system that they've sort of instituted because the bottom line is their \$100 a month pays for three days and what about the other 17? But, Mr. Speaker, my questions here today are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment from the income support point of view. With that said, Mr. Speaker, what will the policy be with respect to this money that these parents will be receiving, such as the \$100 per month per child? Will it be clawed back if you're on income support? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 59-15(5): Status Of Universal Childcare Benefit

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've sent a letter to all Members already advising that this money will not be considered income under the Income Support Program.

AN HON. MEMBER: Good government.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Question 60-15(5): Support For Deline As The Birthplace Of Hockey

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Minister Brendan Bell made a statement today about tourism. I'd like to ask, I don't know if it's either him or it's the Minister of MACA, in terms of the Northwest Territories tourism initiative. The birthplace of ice hockey in Canada in the Northwest Territories is at stake here. So I want to ask the Minister of Tourism if his department or staff could look at any type of initiative to support this claim here in the North here. Would the Minister provide me with some direction in terms of what can his department do to fully support the community of Deline and the Northwest Territories to bring prominence to the community of Deline in the Northwest Territories on the birthplace of ice hockey?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bell.

Return To Question 60-15(5): Support For Deline As The Birthplace Of Hockey

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're really getting down to it at the end of question period; it's commitment time. I appreciate the work that the Member has done in raising the profile of Deline as the birthplace of Hockey. He did draw national attention to this. He's done some good work in this regard. I know that the NWT Tourism Association has been interested in this. Certainly our department and region is aware of it and if there are

proposals that come forward, I know that the department would consider those. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

Supplementary To Question 60-15(5): Support For Deline As The Birthplace Of Hockey

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now the gloves come off here.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Oooh.

MR. YAKELEYA: I'm looking forward to commitments from the tourism department. Why, Mr. Speaker, why can't his department and his people go into Deline, talk to the elders and talk to them in terms of what the community wants to do? Why couldn't he go in there, because it's always up to the people? Something like this, you know, it's going to take quite a lot of energy from a lot of good people just to put this thing on the map here. So the birthplace needs to be told and it needs to take the Minister from this department to go into Deline, talk to people, they have some wonderful ideas. So will the Minister direct his staff to go into Deline, talk to the original hockey players on the birthplace of hockey in Canada? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 60-15(5): Support For Deline As The Birthplace Of Hockey

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wasn't aware that anybody who played in that game was still around to talk to.

---Laughter

But seriously, Mr. Speaker, I think it's a good initiative and I think there's lots of reasons that we should champion an initiative like this. Of course, our department works with would be entrepreneurs who have business ideas. We want to support them. Our NWT tourism folks are the champions of our destination marketing and they would very much be involved. But I will, again, bring this to the attention of my regional people in the Sahtu who I am sure would be more than willing to sit down with the community and talk about their plans going forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

Supplementary To Question 60-15(5): Support For Deline As The Birthplace Of Hockey

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with bannock and lard we live long.

---Laughter

You know, the people in the Sahtu. So, Mr. Speaker, again, I ask the Minister of Tourism maybe if he can chat with the Minister of MACA in terms of can their departments get together and look at getting this...(inaudible)...sports and also tourism and come to a decision as to let's put some money aside, let's bring the community of Deline and the original birthplace of ice hockey on the map. It's hockey time, it's hockey season

and it's hockey night in Deline. Let's do something for Deline and the people of the Northwest Territories and Canada and show them we mean business, okay? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 60-15(5): Support For Deline As The Birthplace Of Hockey

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Hockey night in Deline does have a nice ring to it and I don't want to rope MACA in here as well, but, Mr. Speaker...

---Laughter

In our Tourism 2010 Strategy there is quite a bit of money for product development, but it has to be regionally driven, it has to be about regional priorities and it would have to be a community-based proposal and submission. But if that were to come forward, I know that we would work with the community to try to advance this as a priority. I think it makes a lot of sense notwithstanding whether or not MACA can be involved, I think government-wide there certainly is rationale for an initiative like this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Final supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

Supplementary To Question 60-15(5): Support For Deline As The Birthplace Of Hockey

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was hoping the Minister would give the hook to the Minister here in terms of pulling into this initiative in terms of at least documenting the oral tradition of Sir John Franklin's diary into a written document by the elders. So can the Minister, again, I would ask him, I would appreciate his response, if we would ask the Minister of MACA to look at some form of funding or any one of his departments in terms of documenting this important history here. It's got to be told, and let's do it; our government is willing to make a motion and to pass it; let's walk our talk in terms of putting some serious onto this statement here. Thank you

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 60-15(5): Support For Deline As The Birthplace Of Hockey

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure what I'm able to do in terms of making the Minister of MACA aware of this initiative. He's obviously right beside me, I know he has heard the questions and, Mr. Speaker, there's not much more that I can say other than if there's a community-based proposal, we'll certainly work with the community. It is an interesting idea and it's a fascinating and compelling story and if there's a way for us to support Deline as the birthplace of hockey, that is something we'd be prepared to do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Time for oral questions has expired. Written questions. The honourable Member from Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

ITEM 7: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Written Question 5-15(5): Criminal Charges And Convictions Statistics For The Fort Simpson District

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My written question is for the Minister of Justice.

- 1) Please provide the number of charges per month since 2002 in the Fort Simpson district;
- 2) the number of convictions per month since 2002 in the Fort Simpson district;
- 3) the conviction ratio per month since 2002 in the Fort Simpson district; and
- 4) the number of charges per year and number of convictions since 2002 in the Fort Simpson district.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Written questions. Returns to written questions. Replies to opening address. Petitions. Reports of standing and special committees. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. Motions. The honourable Member from Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

ITEM 16: MOTIONS

Motion 1-15(5): Designated Budget For Art In GNWT Buildings, Carried

MR. MENICOCHÉ: WHEREAS the vision for the NWT Arts Strategy is "to secure the stability of a vibrant arts sector that is integral to the economic, social and cultural fabric of the NWT and contributes positively to the quality of life within the NWT;"

AND WHEREAS government should contribute to the development, recognition and support of a vibrant artistic community;

AND WHEREAS a healthy artistic community creates economy, awareness and appreciation of northern culture;

AND WHEREAS there should be access to appropriate artistic expression in public places;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Great Slave, that the Government of the Northwest Territories establish a policy requiring it to spend the equivalent of up to one percent of the budget of each new GNWT building or major building renovation on northern art creations displayed or integrated into the design of that building;

AND FURTHER that the policy provide for the establishment of a selection process for deciding on acquisitions;

AND FURTHERMORE that the policy be in force by April 1, 2007.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Motion is on the floor. Motion is in order. To the motion. The honourable Member from Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is my honour to provide this motion to the House for consideration. It's just one of the things that constituents of mine and the artistic communities throughout the North have always been looking for assistance to help them develop their trade, their craft and, indeed, too, all the micro industries like all the basket makers in Fort Liard and the slipper makers in Wrigley and just throughout the valley, Mr. Speaker.

I had the opportunity to travel to Alaska, Mr. Speaker, and I saw this in action. We actually went to visit a hospital in Alaska and we toured the facility, it was a very nice facility. On every floor there was these glass display cases. There was, like, well, totem poles are still part of their culture in Alaska, there were all these arts and aboriginal crafts displayed everywhere and I said oh, that's pretty neat that the hospital is taking the time to purchase these products. But they had indicated to me there was actually a law passed by the state legislature there that offers one percent...It's actual law that one percent of all infrastructure be produced to purchase arts and crafts to display in their buildings. I thought what a huge opportunity to bolster our own arts and culture and industry in the North if we're able to do that. So that's why this motion is here before you today, Mr. Speaker.

I'd just like to say that it's a long time coming I believe, because just back in my own riding we've got Nats'enelu, it was run by the notable Mr. Darcy Moses for the longest time, but it had to shut down just because he wasn't able to turn over the product fast enough. It created a real good economy in Fort Simpson alone. It was called Nats'enelu, which means let's sew together. Just using that as a base it just means that the people were able to get together and share stories, but most of all it was able to keep the sewing alive, the crafts alive and it just created a bit of an economy, but our North wasn't prepared for it yet. There was not enough disposable income and even though they had just started the online sale of those products too, Mr. Speaker, but it really didn't take off because it was five, even seven years ago, being online wasn't a big thing, but they weren't about to successfully use that. So eventually that Nats'enelu closed down in Fort Simpson and it remains vacant to this day.

We do have one small business in Fort Simpson that sells crafts, but it's too small that it can't really turn over the crafts enough. As well, the people that are sewing out there, the people that are making arts and crafts, and drums and snowshoes, there's just not enough market for them and they're just not turning over fast enough. As well as in Fort Liard, we've got a beautiful craft shop there. It's big and with the help of our government we're able to use that one and turn over the products fast enough, but it's very a capital intensive marketing program for that.

Having a program like this by our government would be a huge shot in the arm for the arts and culture industry throughout the North, Mr. Speaker. Just take, for instance, we've got a \$40 million courthouse scheduled for Yellowknife. If you take up to one percent of the value of that building, that's \$400,000, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

Can you imagine a \$400,000 shot in the arm for the arts and culture industry? It's huge. We can create a mini industry and a sustainable industry. When I look at \$400,000 I just see all these elders sewing away like

crazy, trying to keep up the product to provide for this building.

Also in the news of late as well, about two months ago one of our famed northern artists had to leave the North because there was not enough work here in the North. By having this motion pass, by having our government support this type of industry is just one small way of bringing our northerners back and giving our northerners a place to do their business, a place to work and a place to expand on what was there.

As I was thinking about the motion here earlier today too, Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to mention that growing up as a child and watching my mother sew and do her arts and crafts and tan her moose hide, you know, it's probably a story that's given throughout all the small communities. You know, they keep saying it's a dying art and lots of people spend lots of time and try to tan hides and take the time to bring their children out there and it's very labour intensive. To keep it going is very hard work, but people aren't doing it as much. I'm thinking perhaps because it's time nowadays has to be done for other things. Time is spent in survival. We need money to run our households and I think a lot of people are leaning towards that way. But if we can make money from a hobby, all the better, and if we can make money from something that we love, something that's ingrained in us, something that we were brought up with and it was around us all the time, then I say I support that 100 percent.

That's something that my mother and father did. Like many small units throughout the North and back in the old days, is that they were independent, completely autonomous, independent and they only went to town to pick up the supplies they needed like sugar and salt, basic supplies, but everything else was made, Mr. Speaker. The blankets were made, the stoves were made. In fact, the stoves were made from discarded drums, from 45 gallon drums that were left by the surveyors back in those days, but everything was made. Canoes were made, paddles were made, dog sleighs were made, knives were made, pretty well everything that we needed to survive on the land was made. If we simulate this and if we bring it back and get our youth out there...

One of the things that Trout Lake always talks about is that we bring our children onto the land, we give them an option, you know, give them a choice of how they want their future to be. I often think about that and often share that with people as I travel throughout the North, Mr. Speaker, and they're absolutely right and they're absolutely on the right track. Even though we've got this new modern world where we have to work on a pipeline, but that's not true. If we want to maintain a simple lifestyle with arts and culture, I believe that should happen and this is one small way in which we can do that. We can support this form of life and give our arts and culture a big shot in the arm, Mr. Speaker.

With that, I'm really proud to have this motion before us today. Mahsi cho.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. To the motion. The honourable Member from Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to add, also, my support for this motion and say a few words. Mr. Speaker, I have to tell you the first time I heard this idea from my colleague Mr. Menicoche, I got really excited about it. I think it's one of the most boldest, maybe quite not new because we are borrowing it from Alaska, but why not borrow something when you see it and you like it? I just think that this is one of the most meaningful things that I'm going to leave behind as a Member of this Legislature. I see this as a start of great things. It's not only creating physical space, and of course I am urging the government to take this motion very seriously and implement this because I could tell you that this, more than anything else, will give them the legacy and they will be remembered forever for having created...

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

---Applause

MS. LEE: ...arts and crafts industries. Mr. Speaker, I am very serious. Look at this building; look at this Chamber. When people come and visit, what do they remember? I don't think they remember who is sitting in these chairs. They remember the beautiful artwork. They do remember that. Everywhere we go around the world people talk about how beautiful this Legislature is, because it's more than a building. It's a work of art and why can we not create that in every place that we build? Technology is there and it's about matter of will and matter of priority. It doesn't have to necessarily be a huge cost, you know, adventure. Mr. Speaker, I could tell you that this initiative, if the government accepts this, will help our community not only artistically and culturally, but economically. It will be, as Mr. Menicoche suggested, a shot in the arm; the catalyst to revive so many of our arts and crafts in our communities.

Mr. Speaker, I am not envisioning some elitist, fancy, million dollar artwork. I have to tell you one of the privileges of being a Member is to go to communities and get to know the communities and get to see the communities. It's really sad, Mr. Speaker, when we go to some communities where there is no market, no commercial activities. There are no stores. You have to go and try to find where we can get some arts and crafts. I know the thing is in every community, they are all sitting in people's homes, houses, basements and garages. Why can we not display them? This policy, as I see it, will set an example of the GNWT buildings to create a space, create a home, not only in that building but in our minds that we give priority to artwork. How much art is sitting in the Prince of Wales Museum? They don't have enough space to display all that. Why can't we take them out and put them in our buildings? We don't have to create a fancy museum to do that. I am hoping by the GNWT setting an example and implementing this policy, that other levels of government will see that this can happen; in municipal governments, aboriginal government buildings, because there will be lots of new aboriginal government buildings happening, diamond mines. I just think it's growing and we should find room to entertain this.

I know a lot of Members want to speak about this. I really see this as a way and a concrete way, a very precise way, a very meaningful way, a very courageous way for us to preserve what we have, arts and crafts and everything else that's happening to enhance what we have and to foster future growth of arts and crafts communities in the Northwest Territories.

I just can't say enough for this. We will be pushing this and I would strongly encourage the Cabinet Ministers...I don't know if they are taking this very seriously. I want them to take this very seriously and implement this by the deadline given in this motion; April 1, 2007. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. To the motion. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, I, too, will speak in favour of his motion and I compliment my colleague Mr. Menicoche for picking this up in his travels and bringing it to us for our consideration.

Mr. Speaker, Ms. Lee has already referenced this Assembly, this Chamber, as an outstanding example. As I was thinking geographically around the Northwest Territories, I think one of the very few examples of a public building that has made an effort to bring the art of its peoples into the building and not just in the sense of hanging something on a wall or putting something in a display case, but truly bringing the materials and the styles and the shapes of the North into the Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, the theme wall behind you is a perfect example of that. The design is reflecting many things to many different people rendered in zinc, one of our non-renewable resources materials. The glass panels, again, art that has a function in here, very handsomely reflects some aspects of our northern country and our heritage.

When we think about outstanding public art in the rest of Canada and the world, there are things that have become icons, symbols that truly represent the people of a given nation. Things that were established with some controversy; we have public sculpture that has been ridiculed and run down. We have buildings, enormous structures, things like the Eiffel Tower that were not established easily by governments of the day, but they are enormously important symbols now if we take that one of the country, nation, and people of France. It's something that I hope the government takes very seriously, not as jeepers, where are we going to find one more percent to roll into the capital cost of something, but something that can truly be looked at as part of the investment that we are making in the building as we have shown here, Mr. Speaker, in our Chamber where art can be combined with function and where it can be used to make that statement and reflect who we are, as much as Mr. Menicoche has said, provide an economic opportunity for artists and artisans to come together.

If I have a plea to add to this, it would be to think about this well in advance of the actual beginning or the start of a planning and approval process. Bringing art into the function and the story and the presence of our buildings is really where to start this kind of thing. I know that what we have here would not have been achieved, Mr. Speaker, if it hadn't been for the architects, designers, thinkers and the planners of that time who said here is what we are going to do with this building and look at it.

So we have already done it. Let's do some more of it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am going to speak about the motion here today. I really do want to start out by commending the Member for Nahendeh for bringing this forward. For all the reasons he cited, I think this is a step in the right direction. Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the motion today, but I just wanted to be realistic about a couple of things. That is, we can't forget for one second that the Northwest Territories and our government operates basically on a fixed budget and I think this is another example of why it's incumbent upon this government to finally reach a deal with Ottawa and get us some resource revenue, get us a deal so we can look at motions like the one Mr. Menicoche has raised today.

I know Mr. Menicoche was in Alaska recently. Alaska's state revenue, 85 percent of it is based on oil and gas. There is some hope for the future here for the Northwest Territories, that we will get a deal, we will be able to move forward. But this is a good motion. I wish, like everybody else in this House, that we had a deal today and we could look at this. It's a nice thing to have and it's going to do wonders for arts and crafts communities throughout the Territories. There are more pros than there are cons, and I say good on Mr. Menicoche for bringing this forward and I look forward to supporting it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, some people listening to this debate may think we have taken leave of our senses when we talk about our infrastructure and our capital deficit here in the Northwest Territories. However, I have a slightly different idea about how a motion like this and how artistic expression can be incorporated.

To me, I don't quite envision taking a bunch of northern crafts and things and hanging them on walls and having them as an add-on. I think, again, this building is a perfect example of where the culture and the artistic expression is integrated into the building. So I would like to approach it from the point of view if you are going to build a building anyway, you are going to need materials. Why not choose materials in such a way, where possible, that reflect northern materials and northern content? We put out contracts for things. We say northern content. Why don't we put out contracts that talk about artistic content as well; artistic content being integrated into the project from the beginning? I don't know how that works for existing buildings. Maybe with renovations and things like that you could do that, but I don't see us going out and acquiring a whole lot of small pieces of art and putting them here.

I like to decorate myself and I could see taking an item or an artefact and then you could design literally a whole building around it. The Thunderbird Centre in downtown Winnipeg, when you go by that, you don't need to read a sign that says this is an aboriginal gathering place. It's called the Thunderbird Centre and the roofline and the big thunderbird on the top of it, it's all carved right into the roofline. That's the kind of thing that I would envision, so I don't see it as costing anything. This just requires architecture and some forethought going into the design and construction of buildings that should be truly northern

and reflect northern culture and northern art. That is the focus that I would like to put on this.

So to our constituents out there who don't think we have enough capital dollars to go around, I think if this is done on the front end and is integrated in, you need materials anyway. I think we could take any northern culture symbol and we could literally design buildings around them. I know it could be done.

I personally have probably the largest collection of northern art of anybody in this room. My kids say I am going to have to build my own museum to display it all, but it isn't the kind of thing you can just take and plunk in any old conventional house. You need the right setting. We need to build buildings with the right setting for the kinds of things that are produced in the North. So I will support the motion. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. To the motion. The Honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to say that the government supports this motion. We support the principle of it and we won't be voting on it today because it is a recommendation to government.

Mr. Speaker, support to our artists is something that we should be doing. In fact, our deputies have been working on an art enhancement policy and they will continue to work on that and would be happy to work with the Members on how we can make that an even better policy.

Mr. Speaker, art, in our view, isn't something that should be left after you have done everything else and you have invested all your money and everything else and got it all perfect and then put money into art. I agree with some of the Members, that this should be incorporated in the way we do business.

So, Mr. Speaker, we will not be voting on this. We do take the motion very seriously. We like it, but because it's a recommendation to government, we will not be voting. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my opinion that buildings are far more than bricks and mortar. They can breathe life into our community and certainly a policy like this will breathe life into the institutions we know as government.

Mr. Speaker, a public art scale of this mass will change the culture and the way we do business and although it looks like a little piece of paper, I think it goes far beyond that. It will define us for generations to come.

From my time being a Member here for the last three years, the Leg is truly an example of doing things right and doing them upfront as opposed to trying to fix the problem later. How many times have I stood in the entranceway of this Great Hall and people from around the world, not just the Northwest Territories, come in and say they are in awe that an Assembly would take this

much attention to taking and embracing its community. So from the wood trim to the things that have been mentioned such as the backdrop in the aisle, people notice that. I think it really breathes life into our institution.

I would like to see Cabinet support this. The Premier has quite clearly said the Cabinet's intent is they like the idea. I am sure they will go back and assess it as they may. Cabinet always finds money when they want to do something. This is something that will create a legacy for everyone, not just Cabinet, not just this side. This will be here for generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, I often look around this Assembly and see that we are missing the 200 to 300 to 400-year-old piece of item, that piece of furniture that was dragged across the country. It had Sir John A. MacDonald's boots on it. It got chipped on its way over by maybe Premier Ralph Klein, who knows? We don't have infrastructure here that creates legacy, but an arts policy will create a legacy 200 or 300 years from now. We will be looking at how smart this Assembly was to put culture and art in its buildings. We will be able to look much further into the way the people enjoy working in buildings and enjoy visiting buildings that have an artistic flare to them.

Mr. Speaker, in short, I truly believe art defines us. It is the essence of what it makes us truly be from day to day. It's a policy that we need to embrace and I certainly fully support it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. To the motion. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague Mr. Menicoche for putting the motion forward. I will be supporting the motion. I thought about it quite a bit, but listening to some of my colleagues I think it's important that we keep our artistic values in some buildings here. When you walk across in the hallway, you see Mabel Ruben who has a nice painting, and those kinds of things are really valuable to buildings like this. So I think I will be supporting the motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. To the motion. I will allow the mover of the motion to have some closing comments. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank my honourable colleagues and Cabinet for all the support that this motion is receiving. Once again, it's an idea, a thought that is long overdue for our northern government to support. Often all our budget doesn't include anything for art. So this will go a long way in stimulating all our industries to revive our arts and culture sector and to give a lot of the elders out there who say we are losing touch with the elders and the old ways. That is the same for arts and culture, Mr. Speaker. So this is a huge way in which our government will stimulate and revive that sector.

Once again, I would like to thank the House as a whole for supporting this motion and I will look forward to the vote that's coming up. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The motion is on the floor and is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

---Applause

Motions. First reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

ITEM 17: FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 1: Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2005-2006

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, that Bill 1, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2005-2006, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question is being called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 1 has had first reading. First reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

Bill 2: Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2006-2007

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Frame Lake, that Bill 2, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2006-2007, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question is being called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 2 has had first reading. First reading of bills. The Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bell.

Bill 6: Engineering And Geoscience Professions Act

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that Bill 6, Engineering and Geoscience Professions Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question is being called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 6 has had first reading. First reading of bills. The honourable Member for Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Bill 7: Pharmacy Act

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, that Bill 7, Pharmacy Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question is being called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 7 has had first reading. First reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Roland.

Bill 8: Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2006

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that Bill 8, Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2006, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question is being called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 8 has had first reading. First reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

Bill 10: Forgiveness Of Debts Act, 2006-2007

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Frame Lake, that Bill 10, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2006-2007, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question is being called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 10 has had first reading. First reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bell.

Bill 11: Tourism Act

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that Bill 11, Tourism Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question is being called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 11 has had first reading. First reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bell.

Bill 12: Garnishment Remedies Statutes Amendment Act

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that Bill 12, Garnishment Remedies Statutes Amendment Act, be read for the first time.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question is being called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 12 has had first reading. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

ITEM 18: SECOND READING OF BILLS

Bill 1: Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2005-2006

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, that Bill 1, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2005-2006, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill makes supplementary appropriations for the Government of the Northwest Territories for the 2005-2006 fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question is being called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 1 has had second reading and, accordingly, stands referred to Committee of the Whole. Second reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

Bill 2: Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2006-2007

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Frame Lake, that Bill 2, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2006-2007, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill makes supplementary appropriations for the Government of the Northwest Territories for the 2006-2007 fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question is being called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 2 has had second reading and, accordingly, stands referred to Committee of the Whole. Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Committee Report 3-15(5), Committee Report 4-15(5), Bill 3, Bill 4 and Bill 5, with Mr. Pokiak in the chair.

ITEM 19: CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Good afternoon. Welcome to Committee of the Whole. What is the wish of committee? Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The committee would like to consider Bill 3, Bill 4, Committee Report 3-15(5), and Bill 5. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. We'll take a short break.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): I will call Committee of the Whole back to order. We are here to start off with Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act. At this time, I would like to ask Minister Bell if he would like to introduce the bill.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would; and, with your indulgence, I would also like to do the opening comments for Bill 4 at the same time as I do Bill 3.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, and Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act, implement many of the recommendations of the Independent Commission to Review Members' Compensation and Allowances. The report of this commission was tabled during the last sitting of the House. I want to take this opportunity to again thank the members of the commission for their thorough report and thoughtful recommendations.

Bills 3 and 4 are the first step in implementing the commission's recommendations. Many of the recommendations not addressed in this bill will be

addressed by way of regulation and Board of Management policy in the next year. Some of the commission's recommendations, after careful review by the Board of Management, are not proposed for implementation. Among these recommendations which the board has not included in these bills are the proposed nine percent increase to MLAs' salaries, the inclusion of a housing component in the northern living allowance, the inclusion of constituency assistants in the public service and a reduction in the maximum transition allowance from 12 to six months.

With few exceptions, Mr. Chairman, this bill maintains the status quo with respect to Members' compensation and allowances. Specifically, Bill 3 proposes to implement the following recommendations of the independent commission:

- recommendations three and four which link annual increases and MLAs' salaries to the consumer price index as opposed to negotiated UNW wage increases;
- \$7,500 increase in the annual indemnity paid to the Speaker of the House to bring this position closer to the pay provided to a Minister;
- the introduction of a \$3,000 indemnity to the chair of Caucus, which is currently an unpaid appointment;
- the replacement of the current penalty system for failure to attend meetings with a public attendance report to be tabled at each sitting of the House;
- the replacement of the current non-taxable allowance with an incidental expense allowance for all Members, and dual household allowance for non-Yellowknife Members;
- enabling legislation to allow Cabinet to establish additional allowances and benefits for Members of the Executive Council on the condition that the policies establishing these allowances be tabled in the House in addition to an annual report of all allowances paid.

Bill 4 amends the Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act to allow a Member to opt into the pension plan after each general election on a go-forward basis, should they elect to do so.

The effective date of all these legislative provisions is the commencement of the 16th Legislative Assembly. The bills will not impact or benefit any sitting Member of the 15th Legislative Assembly.

It's the opinion of your Board of Management that these proposed changes are balanced and reasonable given the nature of the duties and responsibilities of an MLA and the evolving social and economic realities of the Northwest Territories.

This concludes my opening remarks. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Bell. At this time, I would like to ask the Minister if he would like to bring in witnesses.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: I would, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, would you please escort in the witnesses, please.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you. Minister Bell, can you introduce your witness, please? Thank you.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: With me is Tim Mercer, Clerk of the Assembly; and Mark Aitken, legislative counsel, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. General comments by Members. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would just like to put a brief comment about some of the provisions in this bill for the record, as I am fully aware that this bill will not be going through normal committee hearing process as it has been in the convention and practice. I just want to speak on not just the provisions in this legislation but the policy changes that will come about in the next Legislature that will help, I think, the work of the Members.

I made a presentation to the commission when it was consulting and taking input from the public. I had the occasion to meet with the commission members and I made some recommendations to the commission, some of which have been adopted and some of which have not. One of the things that I spoke for, and I know that a lot of Members have asked for, and I think it will benefit the work of especially the out-of-town Members, is to increase the constituency budget for out-of-town Members that would enable them to travel to communities a lot more often than they are able to now due to cost limitations.

Mr. Chair, I have to say, and I think a lot of Members here feel the same, one of the real privileges of being an MLA is to be able to travel to all of the communities and to meet our residents in the Territories, get to know them better and to hear from them directly what is on their mind and what the issues they would like us to work on. I believe that, in the interest of good government and in our democratic forms of government, there should be no situation where constituents in any part of the Territories feel that they don't have as good an access to their MLAs as the constituents in ridings like mine, which I could go to every day of the year, unless I am travelling, and I have ready access to. I am in full support of increasing the constituency budget so that the Members that represent especially very remote communities like Trout Lake, Colville Lake or places where it is not convenient or not inexpensive to travel but that is the cost of doing business for the government. I know that we need to put a priority on good spending and be wise and economical in our spending. I am mindful of that. I think there are certain things that you can't put just dollar values on, and access to their legislators by our constituents have to be a top priority.

I also want to put on record my support for increasing the budget to allow for more Pages to visit the Assembly. I know that, whenever even for the children of Yellowknife, in any of the Yellowknife schools, any time that they spend within this Assembly is a meaningful time for them.

They will remember them. They always leave here with memories that will last them a lifetime. They always learn something about how our government works and how the procedures go. Often they get to meet the MLAs in person. Whatever we can do to inspire our young and for them to get to know our system of government and the legislators of the time, I think that is money well spent. I think these are some of the things that we can't just concentrate on dollar value. I think it is something that will be beneficial to many more young people from small communities. They will be able to come here more and to get to know us more and to experience firsthand the seat of the government and the government building here. I would just like to state my support for these provisions. I think those are some of the highlights of this legislation.

I know that people out there might be more interested in how much increase we are giving in terms of our own salary and such, but I think it should be made clear that there is not a wholesale increase to the Members' salary in any way. I probably should not venture in there because I don't know. You can never come up with a good answer as to how much an MLA should be paid. But I think it is comparable to the management level salary in the government. I think the only difference we are having with this legislation is that instead of being connected to the collective bargaining through UNW negotiations, we will be tied to the cost of living index, which is a practice that is incorporated in other jurisdictions. I hope that people out there should be able to understand that. I think, for most reasonable people, that should be agreeable.

The only last thing I just want to make a comment and the recommendation that I made to the commission that was not accepted, was a suggestion to incorporate the staff of MLAs into the public service. I do respect the debates we have had on that. I do realize that there are pros and cons to the independence of operations of MLA offices in terms of whether they should be public service and union members or not. I have to tell you that I am still...It is unfortunate, from my point of view, that we couldn't provide more comprehensive or any benefits to the staff that work for the MLAs. I think that it is a unique job. It is a good thing that a lot of people are interested in doing that job, but in this day and age there are not too many jobs in our society that work without any benefits other than what they would get normally under the GNWT health benefits and such. So it's very unfortunate that we were not able to incorporate that, but I do understand and appreciate the need for independence and the need for a sort of separate system of staffing and managing our staff that many Members felt that was more paramount.

I just want to, in the interest of keeping the record straight and just to put down what my thoughts are behind my support in general for most of the provisions that are here. I think, on the whole, it will go to some lengths at improving the work of the MLAs, especially for those Members who are from out of a Yellowknife riding, so let it be written in Hansard that the Member from Yellowknife does support the work and to do work to enhance the working conditions of MLAs from outside of Yellowknife. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Those are my comments.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Ms. Lee. General comments in regard to the bill? Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will be speaking in favour of the bill with a couple of comments that, like my

colleague, I would like to note for the record. As the Minister explained in his opening remarks, these are measures that we are bringing into play not for ourselves or this Assembly, of course, Mr. Chair, but as criteria and conditions I think that will improve the environment for our successors in the 16th Assembly.

Some of the amendments, as Ms. Lee has noted, will adjust for some of the variances and the discrepancies that our out-of-town or out-of-Yellowknife colleagues have experienced. I know that their voices were heard, and, I think, to a very large extent, supported by the more sort of urban, if you will, Members from the larger centres. In that context, Mr. Chair, I would like to extend my appreciation to the commission -- really, this was headed by Mr. Jake Oates, a former Member of this Assembly -- and thank them for taking this task to the people of the NWT and for bringing us back a report that we are able to deal with.

Mr. Chair, one other thing in this that has caused me some concern over my sort of term-and-a-half here has been our ability to be able to police ourselves, if you will, or monitor ourselves at least in terms of our attendance and involvement during our regular business. This is something that was reflected in a former or, with the recommendation on the books now, where certain types of unexcused absences could be fined. We have never been able to bring this to bear for a number of reasons. I am not going to go into it other than to speculate that this is a very political environment we are in and some things are done with a certain degree of confidence and comfort and others aren't. What this bill brings in, though, Mr. Chair, is not a situation where we have to sort of be policemen amongst each other or seem to be punishing each other. It is a difficult thing to do in our environment. Rather, we are going to serve the interests of the people of the NWT in a much more transparent manner by asking our Speaker to table on a sessional basis, which would be at least three times a year then, the attendance record of every Member at duly called committee meetings and processes. That is where I think at least that aspect of our performance and our service as MLAs can be seen and then, of course, measured by anyone who cares to take an interest.

Mr. Chair, I guess I did have one question, and I am wondering if I may pose it to our witnesses now, where I believe, Mr. Chair, the types of increments or increases that are proposed in the bill are quite reasonable and perhaps even prudent and modest. There are some areas where we have found it appropriate, especially in the interest of Members from outside of Yellowknife, to increase their allowances. I am wondering if the Minister or his witnesses could give the Assembly some idea, perhaps on an annual basis, what the anticipated extra increase in costs is to running the Assembly under these new criteria, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Minister.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Chair, thank you. Just some clarification of the question. Are we talking about the annual increases for Members' indemnities tied to CPI and what that will approximately be per year, or are you talking about the total package of enhancements and changes here? I think we can give you some estimates of numbers. We don't know the CPI going forward, so there are some unknowns here.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Minister Bell. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess I am looking for some ballpark figures here where we do know that there are at least based on the three percent increment that I believe was allowed Members. This is taken from the Collective Agreement with the Union of Northern Workers. What is the CPI now; two and a half percent? Mr. Chair, my objective here is to be able to say to the public, okay, we think that increasing the costs for the Legislative Assembly under these criteria will result in a certain percentage of increase. What is that percentage of increase?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Minister.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't have a forecast of CPI going forward, but maybe what I could say is that, in the last number of years, the last number of contracts, I believe the UNW has always negotiated a higher increase than the CPI. In my recent memory anyway, that has been the case, so I would think that this is probably going to amount to lower increases going forward than the UNW will negotiate. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Maybe I am looking for too fine a layer of detail here. There are also increments that the bill proposes to increase some allowances, the cost of doing business for Members at least outside of Yellowknife. Do we have some estimate of what the increment is there, Mr. Chair?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Minister.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We do. The provisions contained in the bill we think are about approximately \$20,000 per year more. The policy and regulation changes that we are proposing, and those are the things Ms. Lee mentioned, some of the high points, more Pages, going from travel for two Pages for each MLA to full costs for four Pages per year. We are improving the orientation programs for Members and we are also going to provide for five constituency tours every year. That will ensure that we don't see what we are seeing now in some instances where Members have to make a choice about doing constituency tours as compared to writing newsletters or doing other things in their constituency. We think that is quite an improvement. But those policy changes, regulation changes, we think are about \$200,000 per year. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Minister Bell. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you very much. I appreciate the information. That is all the questions and comments I had, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Next I have Mrs. Jane Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: That is okay, Mr. Chair. I think I will pass. Some of my questions were already

addressed by the Member, so there is no sense in being repetitive. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Next I have Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Same.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you. General comments? Details. Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, clause 1.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 2.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 3.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 4.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 5.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 6.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 7.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 8.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 9.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 10.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 11.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 12.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 13.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 14.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Bill as a whole.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Does committee agree that Bill 3 is ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Bill 3 is now ready for third reading. Thank you. Now let's move on to Bill 4. The Minister has already provided his opening remarks on Bill 3 and Bill 4. The witnesses are the same for this bill. Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Let's proceed with general comments on Bill 4. General comments? Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act. Is committee ready to go clause by clause?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act, clause 1.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 2.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 3.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Mr. Bell.

Committee Motion 17-15(5): To Amend Clause 3 Of Bill 4, Carried

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Chairman, I move that Bill 4 be amended by

(a) renumbering clause 3 as clause 4, and

(b) adding the following after clause 2:

3. Section 5.31 is amended by striking out "elections filed by Members under subsection 5.2(2) and 5.3(2)" and substituting "elections filed by Members under subsections 5.2(2), 5.21(1), and 5.3(2)."

This motion will require the Speaker to table before the House an election made by a Member under proposed subsection 5.21(1). Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Clause 3, as amended.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Bill as a whole?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 3, as amended.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 4, as amended.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Bill as a whole.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Does committee agree that Bill 4 is ready for third reading, as amended?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Bill 4 is ready for third reading, as amended.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you. I would like to thank the Minister and his witnesses. I would like to ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to escort the witnesses out.

Thank you, Members. We are now going to deal with Committee Report 3-15(5), Report on the Review of the 2004-2005 Annual Report of the Languages Commissioner. At this time, I would like to recognize Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You are correct; I will be reading the report of the Review of the 2004-2005 Annual Report of the Languages Commissioner.

Effective July 1, 2004, the mandate to preserve and promote official languages was transferred from the Languages Commissioner to two new languages boards under the authority of the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. The Commissioner's role is now focused on ombudsman-like functions: monitoring compliance with the act; reviewing complaints; responding to requests for information; and initiating investigations where appropriate.

Members are concerned that we have heard little about the activities of the Aboriginal Languages Advisory Board and Official Languages Advisory Board. Since it is no longer the Commissioner's role to champion the promotion and preservation of official languages, it is essential that those boards be vigorous and action-oriented in taking up that mandate. We have not seen any evidence that this is happening. The Standing Committee on Social Programs will be pursuing this discussion, however, all Regular Members will be monitoring it with interest.

The Commissioner advised us that she is currently preparing a report on interpreter services in health centres. The committee shares the Commissioner's concern about the lack of interpreters trained in medical terminology in health centres and looks forward to her report. Although health centres often have well-intentioned staff that can assist with interpreting for patients, most of these people do not have training in medical terminology, much of which is very difficult to translate into aboriginal languages. This creates a safety issue as well as frustration for both patients and the people trying to help them.

We also share the Commissioner's more general concern about the overall availability of interpreters in the aboriginal languages. The committee believes it may be time for the GNWT to consider re-establishing in-house interpreter and translation services, which could be located in the appropriate regional centres. We also see a clear need for the GNWT to work with Aurora College to reinstate interpreter/translator training programs for aboriginal languages, including specialized training in medical terminology.

Committee Motion 18-15(5): Recommendation To Examine Feasibility Of Re-establishing In-House Interpreter And Translation Services, Carried

I move that this committee recommends that the GNWT examine the feasibility of re-establishing in-house interpreter and translation services and report back on its findings in its response to this report. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Hawkins.

Committee Motion 19-15(5): Recommendation To Deliver Interpreter/Translator Training Program And Specialized Training In Medical Terminology, Carried

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that this committee recommends that the GNWT work with Aurora College to deliver a basic interpreter/translator training program for aboriginal languages, as well as specialized training in medical terminology. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The committee noted, with concern, that the Commissioner received only one complaint in 2004-2005 and believes this is likely the result of a lack of awareness about the Official Languages Act and the Commissioner, especially in smaller communities. We, therefore, encourage the Commissioner to step up her efforts to publicize her office. In particular, we encourage her to undertake community visits to meet with stakeholders and to raise public awareness about her office and to also ensure that printed information about the complaints process is made available in aboriginal languages.

We also encourage the Commissioner to exercise her powers and make full use of her mandate, which, as

outlined in section 20 of the Official Languages Act, includes ensuring recognition of the rights, status and privileges of each of the official languages and compliance with the spirit and intent of the act in the administration of the affairs of government institutions, and conducting investigations on her own initiative.

Committee Motion 20-15(5): Recommendation To Table Response To Report Within 120 Days, Carried

I move that this committee recommends that, pursuant to Rule 93(5), the GNWT table a comprehensive response to this report within 120 calendar days. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

MR. HAWKINS: That will be all for now. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Does committee agree that Committee Report 3-15(5) is concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Committee Report 3-15(5) is concluded. Thank you. We will now deal with Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Territorial Parks Act. I would like to ask Minister Bell for his opening remarks. Thank you.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, colleagues, I am pleased to speak before you to speak to the proposed amendment to the Territorial Parks Act. A recent review of parks issues identified the urgent needs for this amendment to the act that would be beneficial to both park guests and staff and make visits to the parks this summer safer and more secure.

This amendment addresses a problem identified by parks staff, the public, the media and indeed Members of this House, that of disruptive and destructive behaviour of individuals in territorial parks, particularly those in and around municipalities.

This amendment will make it an offence under the act for a person to comply with an order of a parks officer. This will provide parks officers with another tool to ensure the safety and enjoyment of parks users. Currently, Mr. Chairman, parks officers can request that disruptive activity be discontinued or order someone to stop such activity, but if that activity continues they have no recourse other than to contact the RCMP for assistance. It's our intention to give the parks officers authority to charge persons who do not comply with an order. This ability to restrain disruptive behaviour will contribute to the enjoyment of guest stays.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Members for their prompt consideration of this bill and look forward to hearing their views on this small but important amendment to the Territorial Parks Act. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. At this time I'd like to ask the Minister if he'd like to bring in any witnesses.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: I would. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you. Can the Sergeant-at-Arms please escort the witness in, please?

Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Minister. Can you introduce your witnesses, please? Thank you.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Chairman, thank you. With me is Peter Vician, deputy minister of ITI; and Mark Aitken, legislative counsel.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you. General comments. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I'm obviously in support of the amendment to the Territorial Parks Act, but I just wanted to ask of the Minister, this has been an issue in the former Department of RWED and now ITI for the past almost 15 years. I'm just wondering why it has taken so long to get this amendment brought forward. What explanation on the delays has his department got? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Minister.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We're continually looking for ways to improve park safety and enjoyment for park guests. This has been something that's been discussed in the department for some time. The Member is correct; we decided, with some of the recent concerns we've had in parks closest to our municipalities, some of this has been escalating over the years, that we needed to give this legislation more teeth, we needed to give our parks officers more of an ability to clamp down on unruly behaviour and that's what we've done.

In 2004 we initiated a review of enforcement practices in our parks. Residents, property owners at Prelude Lake Territorial Park were contacted to discuss and document their concerns and suggestions, because that had been a focal point. In addition, consultations with the RCMP were initiated. We've done a number of things to improve safety in addition to this, Mr. Chairman. I don't want to give the impression that this is the only thing we've been doing.

RWED at the time entered into a service contract with the RCMP to allow off-duty RCMP officers to patrol the parks on the Ingraham Trail on long weekends. We're still continuing with that initiative and that activity. In addition, new radios compatible with those of the RCMP were purchased and an agreement reached to provide direct access to their dispatch centre. This was to alleviate the concern that it was difficult to get a hold of somebody, one of our officers or somebody who could help if you had concerns in the park in the middle of the night.

Also, the departments of ITI and ENR have established a protocol in compliance that outlines how the two

departments will cooperate and how they will share expertise and resources in delivering programs that involve compliance activities.

So there are a number of things, Mr. Chairman, that are underway. We've been working, as I say, to improve safety over the last number of years and this is just an additional tool that we think will help us do that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Minister Bell. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, like I mentioned earlier, it's long overdue and I think it will be much of a benefit to the park staff that's out there that this amendment is in place and I'd much prefer amendments like this that give our employees some more things to work with in the field rather than us building, you know, big fences and things like that to try to corral people and go at it that way. I think this is much more useful.

In the Minister's opening remarks he doesn't really get down to saying that parks officers will actually be able to issue tickets under the Parks Act and I just wanted the Minister to clarify that for me, that actual park officers will be allowed to issue tickets to people in the parks that are contravening the Parks Act. That's for a variety of different reasons, but maybe the Minister could explain why that's not in his opening remarks. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Chairman, it's a bit of a two-parter here. We're going to make the changes to this bill, but then the next step is to change the regs of the Summary Conviction Procedures Act, and that's the act that the tickets will be written under, under the authority of that act. So not actually under this Territorial Parks Act. Those regs have already been drafted, we're just waiting for this bill to be passed and the assent of this bill, and then we can move forward with those. So, yes, parks officers will be able to issue tickets. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Minister Bell. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So they will be able to issue tickets. Will those regulations be changed in time for this season, or is it something we're going to have to wait for until next year? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Minister Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. They'll be ready for this season and of course we appreciate the willingness of Members to expedite this legislation. That is what has allowed us to do this. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Minister Bell. Next I have Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A few general comments and some questions, Mr. Chairman. Obviously it's not too difficult to support the intent and the content of what this bill is trying to achieve. I think that I don't know exactly what incident or incidents may have given a rise to

this amendment in a way that it had to be done in a very expeditious manner. I wasn't purview to the GED committee who probably got some more detailed information, but I can think of situations that have happened in Yellowknife at the Fred Henne Park last summer that could probably speak to the merits of such a bill.

I just want to state that this bill is going through somewhat of an irregular process in that we're passing this bill through three stages without the benefit of a public hearing process and I don't mean to sound too conventional or conservative, but I take very seriously the convention and protocol of our legislative process. There are good reasons why we have a public hearing process, obviously. Every one of these bills that we pass through this House has implications for the public. We are passing laws and discussing laws that would impact members of the public in one way or another, and hopefully all of them are for the public interest and public benefit, but I think it's important to note that this is going through a irregular process and it could be...I think it does speak to the importance that the Members are placing on this bill, but also it may speak to a lack of preparation on the part of the department somewhat.

This is the third year into our Legislature and I have to tell you that the Members on this side have been just waiting, dying for some legislative food to chew on. So I could assure you that had any bills like this have come in time, you know, we would have been happy to take it on the road. But to be fair to the department, I could turn that into a question and see if the Minister could state for the record here, are there some specific incidents that may have prompted this action at this time. The Member from Kam Lake stated that this is something that is very long overdue. So I don't know exactly what the picture is that prompted this. I think from the general point of view I'm actually surprised that the park officers did not until now, through this bill, that they didn't have the power to ticket people for some of the misbehaviours or wrongdoings or something more serious. So that's my first question.

The second question I would like to ask is, would the park officers need to get training or any additional equipment? Would this need extra resources or would there be need for more officers to do their job, all of which I am prepared to entertain but about which I know very little.

I know there were situations in Fred Henne Park last summer where someone was attacked by quite a vicious dog. It could be that with the rise of crime in the city, there might be more activities going on in the park that might require more resources and more training by the parks officers. I don't know. The Minister could tell me that everything is fine the way things are, but I just want to give the Minister an opportunity to explain the state of affairs for the work of parks officers in these changing times. Things do change and it's important that our public servants and the people who uphold our laws and enforce our laws are properly equipped and properly trained and given the resources necessary.

My next question and my last has to do with what the extent of fines or any tickets would consist of. The Minister mentioned earlier that part of this bill will be dealt with by way of regulation, but he's also stated that those are written already. I would just like to get an idea of what the members of the public would be looking at in terms of tickets they can get for different levels of misbehaviour, if

the Minister could itemize for me the activities that will come under the purview of this legislation and the sorts of things that will be subject to fines and enforcement by the park officers.

I think those are my four questions that I would like the Minister to answer. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Minister Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A few questions there. There was no one specific incident that led to us deciding that it made sense to come forward and provide this tool for our parks officers, but with increased activity levels around our major centres, there has been an escalation of unruly behaviour at some of our parks that has been troubling. There is a trend here over the past couple of years, as I mentioned in my response from Mr. Ramsay. There have been a number of things that we have been doing to try to alleviate this. This is simply one more tool that we are providing our parks officers. Could this have happened earlier and come forward sooner? It probably could have. I do appreciate Members willing to be cooperative and expedite this so we had it in time for this season, which I think was important.

The question about new training, really there will be some new training required but only in the area of how to appropriately issue tickets under the Summary Convictions Procedures Act. So the rest of the training that our parks officers undergo still holds. Having said that, I think we always continue to evaluate the training that we have our officers go through and continue to upgrade that and make sure it is still relevant and make sure it takes into account the kinds of situations parks officers are seeing in our territorial parks.

Maximum fines under the Summary Convictions Procedures Act is \$200 and that could be exceeded in court, but \$200 is the amount. I think that gets to most of the questions the Member has asked.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Minister Bell. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I may just squeeze in another question on that, could the Minister provide information on what in the Territorial Parks Act...I am understanding that this amendment will allow the parks officers to issue tickets, but I am understanding that they are going to do that on the basis of what's already written or are we writing regulations that would state what the offending acts are; for too much partying for all hours or going to the next camp. I don't know. Perhaps unruly or drunken behaviour, violence, either graded system of behaviours that would fall under these enforcement measures. If I could just get those details, please. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Minister.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under the current act, the powers of a parks officer currently, they can order a person to desist from an action or a conduct if in the opinion of that officer: 1) it's dangerous to life or property; 2) interferes unduly with the enjoyment of the park by others; 3) bothers or damages the natural environment in the park. So they can issue these orders, but what we are trying to do is provide an

additional tool, more teeth, a \$200 fine or hopefully just the threat of a fine. The intent here is this would be a deterrent, Mr. Chairman. So that's the difference. They already have the powers to make these orders. This would simply be a fine added for non-compliance. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Minister Bell. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a note of caution to the Minister. The provisions, as he's just read to us, are pretty broad and it really leaves a lot of room to the judgment of the parks officers. That's okay, but sometimes we may need narrow confines in the interest of the parks officers, so if anybody challenges them, they have the force of the law or regulations that they can refer to and present to the people who may object to being fined or charged because they are interfering with the natural environment. I guess this would be a whole new area for the parks officers to get into once they get into giving notices. I guess the regulations will iron that out. I just wanted to put a note of caution here, that there may be a need to put more resources for the officers to enforce these, because I think they may be subject to more challenges or more resources being spent too thin. I think the extra responsibilities they are being asked to take on, so perhaps the GED committee will receive this information later on. I just want to make sure the Minister will provide the resources necessary. It may be necessary for the Minister and officials to narrow down the...I mean put more guidelines and policy framework to assist the parks officers who will have to implement these enforcement provisions. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The orders are suitably broad to allow us to deal with the circumstances or issues that may come up. It's always up to the parks officers to exercise good judgment. I guess if somebody feels that the order has been unreasonable, the ticket issued has been unreasonable, they are well within their rights to contest that in court and to not pay it and to go to court. So in terms of additional resources, we don't believe that that is necessary at this point. Currently if an order is given and it isn't adhered to or isn't followed, we end up having our parks officers call the RCMP to have the behaviour dealt with. We feel that this is simply one additional tool. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Minister Bell. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just two questions. I was thinking about this bill here. Mr. Chairman, the Minister indicated about the safety and enjoyment. I guess we have come to this point in the Territories where we have to enforce the safety and enjoyment because people in our parks don't respect the communities or the municipalities or the park that they are supposed to enjoy. Now we have parks officers who now have to get tough on them and adhere to the rules in our parks here.

I have two questions. The first question is in terms of the training for the protection of the parks and the park officers down the Mackenzie River right from Inuvik down to Yellowknife. Is minimum training going to happen with all the park officers, or will this be part of their job or skill

training while they are in school or minimum training for park officers to get a sense of what this bill will allow them to do? It talks about territorial parks up in Inuvik and down in this region. I am not sure if it's in parks in our regions in terms of who is going to enforce this. Are the only issues around Yellowknife and Prelude Lake, as has been mentioned and parks in this area here? That is my first question. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Chairman, we do have a standard requirement for parks officers for the training that they have to take. Of course, that training is updated depending on the case. It's updated as required and often annually. We do have a compliance protocol with ENR that applies to all of our parks across the territory. So that is in effect in all of our territorial parks. I hope that answers the question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Minister Bell. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Just one more. I am looking more now at the protection of these park officers in the North here. This is more of a...I think he answered it under Ms. Lee's comment, so I don't think I will ask this question here.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will be quick. A few years ago I started advocating this problem that constituents of mine had unruly behaviour next to them in the parks and whatnot. There were fires and people cutting down trees, creating trash. While they were out in a lawful way enjoying the use of their property, people were shooting guns at them. It was noted the difficulty of having the RCMP bolt out of the city of Yellowknife to an area about 45 minutes outside of the city and getting there in a timely way. The difficulty, as I saw it, was they weren't being protected by some type of enforcement process. It seemed that the government was turning a blind eye to it because they had no mechanism in there to do anything with it.

I am glad to see that the Minister and the department truly did hear the concerns from the point of view of my constituents, which was that there was a serious problem out there going on in our parks and that something needed to be done about that type of behaviour. So the Minister, in responding to the problem, struck a discussion group and I remember being at the very first meeting where he had the RCMP, MACA, Transportation, as well as his officials and several others from other areas. I am glad to see that that discussion group had some type of observation that is turning into results.

As I see this, it is an intent to ensure public safety and put a priority on public assistance first, because the issue here is that if they are not in a safe area, that's not very fair. We have lawful constituents out there trying to enjoy the activity of what lawful citizens do while people were putting their safety in jeopardy.

If someone would say government is being swift on this and maybe not going to the fullest reach of consultation, I guess government being swift is probably normally an oxymoron. I would definitely say this is something that the

public would say why couldn't you constitute this pretty quickly. We are giving teeth, assurances and tools to our parks officers to do the jobs that they need to do, so they are out there to deal with the problems to ensure law-abiding citizens are safe.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, although this probably won't solve every problem out there, I can tell you right now that my constituents who I have talked to about this problem will be elated to see that government is certainly responding to their needs from a public safety point of view. They will certainly be very happy to see that we are finally listening to the average citizen and ensuring that we are responding to their needs and I am just glad to say that I am proud of that. So thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Member is speaking of a lot of the work that as a government with a number of stakeholder departments and the RCMP, we came together after the urging of a number of Ingraham Trail residents to deal with some of the concerns specifically on the Ingraham Trail. So we are doing a number of things and I referenced them earlier when responding to Mr. Ramsay. We do have more of a police presence; we do have more involvement and more participation, cooperation with DOT officials who are driving that road quite frequently. Essentially, we have raised this up on the radar and they are working to try to make a difference on the Ingraham Trail and we think we are having great success. I appreciate the Member's support of that initiative. The specific thing that we are proposing here today really only applies to territorial parks, but I would say that some of the concerns along the Ingraham Trail obviously have been troubling. We have been working very hard to try to correct those. This is one more tool that gives us some recourse within our own territorial parks. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Minister Bell. Further general comments? Is committee agreed to go clause by clause?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Territorial Parks Act, clause 1.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 2.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Bill as a whole.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Does committee agree that Bill 5 is ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Bill 5 is now ready for third reading. Mr. Minister, thanks a lot to you and your witnesses. Thank you very much. Please escort the witnesses out. Thank you. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Mr. Chairman, I move that we report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress. Thank you.

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

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. POKIAK: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act; Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act; Committee Report 3-15(5); and Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Territorial Parks Act, and would like to report progress with four motions being adopted, that Committee Report 3-15(5) is concluded, that Bills 3 and 5 are ready for third reading and that Bill 4 is ready for third reading, as amended. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Do we have a seconder? The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Orders of the day for Tuesday, June 6, 2006, 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. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motion
15. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions

17. First Reading of Bills

- Bill 9, Write-off of Assets Act

18. Second Reading of Bills

- Bill 6, Engineering and Geoscience Professions Act

- Bill 7, Pharmacy Act

- Bill 8, Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act

- Bill 10, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2006-2007

- Bill 11, Tourism Act

- Bill 12, Garnishment Remedies Statutes Amendment Act

19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

- Committee Report 4-15(5), Progress Report on Priorities and Objectives (2006)

- Bill 1, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2005-2006

- Bill 2, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2006-2007

20. Report of Committee of the Whole

21. Third Reading of Bills

22. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Tuesday, June 6, 2006, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 17:33 p.m.

