



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

4th Session

Day 1

17th Assembly

HANSARD

Wednesday, February 6, 2013

Pages 1661 - 1682

The Honourable Jackie Jacobson, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

Speaker

Hon. Jackie Jacobson

(Nunakput)

Hon. Glen Abernethy

(Great Slave)

Minister of Justice

Minister of Human Resources

Minister of Public Works and Services

Minister responsible for the

Public Utilities Board

Hon. Tom Beaulieu

(Tu Nedhe)

Minister of Health and Social Services

Minister responsible for

Persons with Disabilities

Minister responsible for Seniors

Ms. Wendy Bisaro

(Frame Lake)

Mr. Frederick Blake

(Mackenzie Delta)

Mr. Robert Bouchard

(Hay River North)

Mr. Bob Bromley

(Weledeh)

Mr. Daryl Dolynny

(Range Lake)

Mrs. Jane Groenewegen

(Hay River South)

Mr. Robert Hawkins

(Yellowknife Centre)

Hon. Jackson Lafferty

(Monfwi)

Deputy Premier

Minister of Education, Culture and

Employment

Minister responsible for the Workers'

Safety and Compensation

Commission

Hon. Bob McLeod

(Yellowknife South)

Premier

Minister of Executive

Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and

Intergovernmental Relations

Minister responsible for the

Status of Women

Hon. Robert C. McLeod

(Inuvik Twin Lakes)

Minister of Municipal and

Community Affairs

Minister responsible for the

NWT Housing Corporation

Minister responsible for Youth

Mr. Kevin Menicoche

(Nahendeh)

Hon. J. Michael Miltenberger

(Thebacha)

Government House Leader

Minister of Finance

Minister of Environment and Natural

Resources

Minister responsible for the

NWT Power Corporation

Mr. Alfred Moses

(Inuvik Boot Lake)

Mr. Michael Nadli

(Deh Cho)

Hon. David Ramsay

(Kam Lake)

Minister of Industry, Tourism

and Investment

Minister of Transportation

Mr. Norman Yakeleya

(Sahtu)

Officers

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Mr. Tim Mercer

Deputy Clerk

Mr. Doug Schauerte

**Principal Clerk
of Committees**

Ms. Jennifer Knowlan

**Principal Clerk,
Operations**

Ms. Gail Bennett

Law Clerks

Ms. Sheila MacPherson

Ms. Malinda Kellett

Box 1320

Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

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

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRAYER	1661
OPENING ADDRESS	1661
MINISTERS' STATEMENTS	1665
1-17(4) – Notice of Budget Address (Miltenberger)	1665
MEMBERS' STATEMENTS	1665
Hand Games Tournament (Blake).....	1665
Condolences to Families in the Sahtu for Lost Loved Ones (Yakeleya)	1665
Achievements of Speed Skater Michael Gilday (Bromley).....	1666
NWT Youth Ambassador Program (Moses).....	1666
Constituency Issues in Nahendeh (Menicoche).....	1666
Petroleum Price Regulations (Hawkins).....	1667
Good Governance (Nadli).....	1667
World Snow Day 2013 (Bisaro).....	1668
Secondary Diamond Industry Strategy (Dolynny)	1668
Medical Evacuation Charters (Groenewegen)	1669
Passing of Henry Fabien of Deninu Kue (Beaulieu).....	1669
RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY	1670
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	1671
ORAL QUESTIONS	1671
WRITTEN QUESTIONS	1681
TABLING OF DOCUMENTS	1681
NOTICES OF MOTION	1682
1-17(4) – Setting of Sitting Hours by the Speaker (Menicoche)	1682
ORDERS OF THE DAY	1682

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Wednesday, February 6, 2013****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

---Singing of O Canada

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Jackie Jacobson): Mr. Clerk, would you ascertain if the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, the Honourable George Tuccaro, is prepared to enter the Chamber to open the Fourth Session of the 17th Legislative Assembly.

Opening Address

COMMISSIONER OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (Hon. George Tuccaro): Good afternoon. Please be seated. Speaker Jacobson, Premier McLeod, Members of the Legislative Assembly, ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure to be here today.

The 17th Legislative Assembly has a vision of a strong, self-sufficient and prosperous territory where all our communities and regions have opportunities. It sees a territory where people are healthy, educated and employed. It wants residents to share the benefits of a strong, diversified economy, live in safe and sustainable communities, and have the programs and supports they need to achieve personal success for themselves and their families.

Ours is a territory of great opportunity, ladies and gentlemen. We have a wealth of natural resources that could create prosperity not just for our residents but for Canada as a whole. We have gold, diamonds and rare earth metals. We are a potential energy powerhouse with world-class oil and gas resources in the central Mackenzie and the Beaufort-Delta, and hydro potential to rival Quebec's James Bay Project.

Responsible, sustainable development of these resources will help to create a strong and thriving economy here in the Northwest Territories, and we need a strong economy if we want to be able to look after our people and our environment. A strong economy will create jobs and opportunities, giving our people new choices for employment where choices are limited today. Increased jobs in our

communities and regions will let people support themselves and their families. Businesses will benefit from expanding opportunities, new investment and increased consumer spending. Governments will benefit from growing revenues that will help fund investments in our people, infrastructure and economy, and support critical social programs to ensure our residents can participate in and enjoy the benefits of a prosperous NWT.

Yet, opportunity is only a beginning. It takes hard work, planning and determination to turn opportunities into success. In the 15 months since your government took office, it has been working to create the conditions for success. We cannot have healthy, educated people without a strong, diversified economy, and it has been investing in infrastructure that will support economic development and the delivery of government services. It has been working on plans and programs to help people overcome social and personal challenges that keep them from realizing their goals and aspirations. And it has been making the difficult decisions about how to manage its limited resources while ensuring Northerners still have access to the programs and services they need.

The year 2012 saw your government deliver on some major plans and initiatives that will have long-term benefits for the territory, including the completion of East Three School in Inuvik ahead of schedule and under budget. The state-of-the-art school will play a critical role in helping children and youth acquire the training and skills they need to take advantage of new opportunities and jobs for years to come.

We also saw the opening of the Deh Cho Bridge. This major piece of public infrastructure will – like the planned Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk highway – help to improve our transportation system, lower the cost of living and contribute to the territory's economic development.

Your government continued to move ahead with plans to begin construction on the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk portion of the Mackenzie Valley Highway, taking part in regulatory hearings held by the Environmental Impact Review Board. The board released its report last week supporting the construction of the highway, with conditions. The

Government of the Northwest Territories looks forward to taking the next steps toward beginning construction on this highway, which will support economic activity in the region now and in the future, and help us realize the national dream of a country connected from sea to sea to sea.

In today's world, communications infrastructure can be as important to economic development as physical infrastructure. That is why the Government of the Northwest Territories will continue to pursue the construction of the Mackenzie Valley fibre line. This project will provide high-speed Internet to communities along the valley, creating new business opportunities, supporting development of the Inuvik Satellite Facility and improving service delivery options.

The Sahtu region will be the site of much economic activity this year. The Government of the Northwest Territories continues to invest in this region so its people – and all the people of the NWT – can realize the full benefits of this activity. Your government is working with industry, business and residents of the region to support development this year.

We cannot have a strong, diversified economy without healthy, educated people, and your government continues to invest in the health and wellness of our residents. This past year it launched a new residential school curriculum, the first of its kind in the country, in cooperation with the Government of Nunavut. Your government also launched the Ministers' Forum on Addictions and Community Wellness to look at new community-based treatment operations to better address the challenges that our people face. And it is engaged in the renewal of the Early Childhood Development Framework, working with Members of this Assembly, experts, communities, stakeholders and the public so we can give our children the best start possible.

Understanding that poverty holds back many members of our society, your government has also been working on an Anti-Poverty Strategy, in partnership with the federal and Aboriginal governments, business, industry, non-profit and non-governmental organizations. Poverty is a complicated issue and it will take the efforts of all sectors of NWT society to address it. An initial draft of the developing Anti-Poverty Strategy was released late last year and will be finalized this year.

The Government of the Northwest Territories understands that a healthy society and healthy economy depend upon a healthy environment. Your government continues to work to protect the land, air, water and wildlife that sustain all of us. This past year it has made progress on negotiating a Transboundary Water Management Agreement with Alberta that will help protect the waters of the

Mackenzie River Basin. A deal is very close now. The government has also made progress on a new Wildlife Act that it expects to introduce in this House in the near future.

Your government also continues to pursue alternative energy projects that will help to both reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support increased economic development. Developing our hydro resources and extending transmission lines will provide clean, renewable energy to support industry and help communities and individuals get off diesel. Solar is an increasingly viable option, and last year saw the opening of the biggest solar energy installation north of 60, in Fort Simpson. Your government will continue to pursue solar energy initiatives as part of its Solar Energy Strategy.

Expanding and supporting the use of biomass is another way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and create new business opportunities. Your government will continue to lead by example and convert public buildings to biomass heat systems, including the first projects outside the North and South Slave regions. Creating a market will help to create a domestic biomass industry, and your government looks forward to the pending opening of a northern wood pellet manufacturing facility later this year.

In 2012, the Government of the Northwest Territories was pleased to have the Gwich'in Tribal Council and the Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated join it and the Inuvialuit Regional Council and NWT Metis Nation as signatories to the Devolution Agreement-in-Principle along with the Government of Canada.

Two thousand twelve also saw your government enter into formal government-to-government agreements with the Gwich'in Tribal Council, NWT Metis Nation and Tlicho Government. At a time when Aboriginal issues are much in the news as governments in the South try to address the desires of Aboriginal people to be more involved in decision-making and the economy, your government is leading the way.

As the government for all people in the Northwest Territories, your government has long seen and understood the benefit of working in partnership with the Aboriginal governments of the Northwest Territories. Aboriginal governments are more than just stakeholders to be consulted. They are governments in their own right, with their own jurisdictions and constituencies. They are major land owners with an interest in managing and protecting our land, air, water and wildlife.

Aboriginal government partnership is critical to our success as a territory, and the Government of the Northwest Territories actively seeks to involve them in its decisions, initiatives and activities, in a spirit of recognition, respect and responsibility. The

government is pleased to sit beside Aboriginal governments in devolution negotiations and to have them work as partners in initiatives like the development of project description reports for the Mackenzie Valley Highway. It seeks to ensure that Aboriginal people share in the benefits of development in the NWT, by calling for the negotiation of socio-economic agreements and impact benefit agreements as part of development approvals. And the Government of the NWT supports Aboriginal people's aspirations for self-sufficiency and self-determination through the ongoing negotiation and implementation of lands, resources and self-government agreements.

The territory is stronger when we work together, and our people all will benefit from continuing goodwill and cooperation between all the governments that serve and represent them. As we work together for the benefit of all our people, we can be an example to the rest of Canada of what can be accomplished when Aboriginal people are an integral part of decision-making and full participants in the political, economic and social life of a jurisdiction.

Creating economic and mineral development strategies were identified as priorities of this Assembly at its outset. In late 2012, the Government of the Northwest Territories, in partnership with the Northern Aboriginal Business Association, the NWT Chamber of Commerce, the NWT Association of Communities and the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency began work on an Economic Opportunities Strategy. Making the most of the economic potential of the Northwest Territories requires a strategic, managed approach. A completed Economic Opportunities Strategy will identify opportunities for developing a strong, diversified economy in all regions of the Northwest Territories, based on extensive public engagement, input from experts, and study of best practices.

Just last week your government announced the beginning of work on a Mineral Development Strategy in partnership with the NWT and Nunavut Chamber of Mines. Mining is the backbone of the NWT's economy, and we need to be sure it is managed in a way that creates long-term benefits for the people of the territory. A completed strategy will help us continue to develop our mineral resources responsibly and sustainably.

Making sure that people throughout the NWT benefit from a growing economy will be another priority this year. Your government is looking at ways to decentralize positions both in the near term and following devolution. We are also putting a renewed focus on affirmative action this year so we can create a more representative public service. Both of these initiatives will help ensure that more Northerners in more communities have

opportunities to participate in and prosper from a strong, diversified economy.

Finally, ladies and gentlemen, after more than a decade, the Government of the Northwest Territories and its partners, the Inuvialuit Regional Council, Gwich'in Tribal Council, Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated and NWT Metis Nation, are nearing the conclusion of devolution negotiations with Canada. Your government expects to have an agreement in the very near future that will finally see our shared vision of Northerners managing NWT public lands and resources for the benefit of all our residents a reality.

This agreement holds the promise of significant economic, environmental and political benefits for all residents, businesses, investors and governments in the territory. Devolution will provide significant authority to the Legislative Assembly, with approximately 24 acts and regulations governing public land, water and resources in the NWT becoming territorial legislation on the transfer date. These are substantive pieces of legislation that will provide your government with the authority to manage and regulate public lands and development in the Northwest Territories in a way that meets northern needs and reflects northern priorities.

The Government of the Northwest Territories is committed to finalizing an agreement that is good for our territory and our people, and negotiations are expected to conclude in the very near future. The government has considered the financial terms of the agreement very carefully and is confident it will be able to manage transferred responsibilities without drawing on resource revenues. While final details still remain to be worked out about the specific legislative authorities being transferred, including those in the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act, we must remember that significant authority and responsibility is being returned to the people of the North.

Now is the North's time. I was pleased to take part in NWT Days in Ottawa last week, and it was clear to me from the response there that there is great interest in our territory, in southern Canada. Our delegation was welcomed warmly everywhere it went, and the receptions and events were well attended by many, including federal Ministers and MPs, members of the diplomatic corps, senior civil servants, media and stakeholders.

People recognize that the North will be a critical part of Canada's future. We have the people and resources to fuel economic growth at home and across Canada. We also know how to build consensus and create effective working partnerships, a fact that was obvious from the makeup of the NWT delegation, which included the Premier and Cabinet, MLAs, Aboriginal leaders and business leaders. With Aboriginal issues in the

forefront these days among Canada's political leaders, our show of northern solidarity made an impression. Learning how to work cooperatively with Aboriginal communities and governments is something we know how to do here and something we can share with the rest of the country. There can be no doubt that the Northwest Territories has something to contribute to the national discussion, can offer solutions to national challenges, and will be central to this country's future.

At this time I would like to acknowledge the hard work of the 17th Legislative Assembly and encourage you all to carry the momentum into the budget session you are about to embark on.

During this session the Government of the Northwest Territories will be introducing the following bills for consideration by the House:

- Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), 2013-2014
- Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 4, 2011-2012
- Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2011-2012
- Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2012-2013
- Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2012-2013

The government considers these bills essential to the good conduct of government business, and as such, I recommend their passage.

As Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, I now declare open the Fourth Session of the 17th Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories.

Thank you, merci beaucoup, mahsi cho, quanani, koana.

---Applause

Speaker's Opening Comments

MR. SPEAKER: Good afternoon, colleagues. On behalf of all Members, I would like to thank Commissioner Tuccaro for opening the Fourth Session of the 17th Legislative Assembly. Also on behalf of all Members, thank you to Kimberly Galbaransingh for a beautiful version of O Canada, and to pastor Ryan Peters from the Yellowknife Vineyard Church for leading us in prayer.

This House extends its welcome to everyone who has joined us today. I would like to take this opportunity to belatedly, but most sincerely, wish my colleagues, our guests in the Chamber today, and all Northwest Territories residents a peaceful and healthy New Year.

We have some special guests in the gallery I would like to acknowledge, a group of young men and women participating in the Ontario Legislature Internship Program. Members will be seeing them

in the Assembly this week as they learn about the North and consensus government. A warm welcome to you all. Please rise.

---Applause

I would like to welcome former Member, Minister, and former Speaker Mr. David Krutko to the House today.

---Applause

And His Worship, Mayor of Tuktoyaktuk, Mr. Mervin Gruben. Welcome.

---Applause

I'd never forget my presiding table officer, captain, former Speaker, Sergeant-at-Arms, Mr. Tony Whitford.

---Applause

I would like to take this opportunity to publicly extend the condolences of the House on the passing of Mr. Gordon Robertson, Commissioner of the Northwest Territories from 1953 to 1963. It was under the hand of Mr. Robertson that the seeds were sown that eventually led to the establishment of Nunavut in 1999. I echo the words of many others in highlighting Mr. Robertson's dedication and love of Canada, particularly as it relates to the North.

Many of our communities have also lost loved ones since we last met, and when we lose loved ones in our communities, we all feel the loss. My thoughts and prayers go out to the families of Dusty Carothers, who lived in Tuk for years. He was a mechanic and helped so many people. He'll be missed by the staff of EGT. He was a good friend.

Charlie Ruben of Paulatuk passed away. Condolences to his family and his daughters.

For my aunt, Emily Taylor, who passed away two weeks ago, to Linda, William, Bertha, Darrel, Ronnie, Mary Anne, my thoughts and prayers are with you.

Ten days ago we lost a good friend, Bob Heath from Inuvik, who passed away in Antarctica. I will be making remarks and condolences to his family here in the House tomorrow.

To all the families who lost loved ones, may you find strength and comfort in one another, and our thoughts and prayers are with you.

And finally, colleagues, I would like to remind you all of the decision made by this Assembly last November regarding the use of tablet computers in the Chamber during formal session.

The motion adopted by this House permitted the use of tablet computers during all proceedings in the Chamber, with some limited exceptions. Tablets may not be used during the prayer, at any time when the Commissioner is in the Chamber, during the Speaker's opening or closing remarks or

rulings, during votes, or at any other time as designated by the Speaker.

This motion expanded the use of tablet computers in the 17th Assembly as a standard tool for all Members. Members may now refer to a tablet in place of paper speaking notes.

As noted in the report of the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures, tablet use has resulted in a reduction in the amount of paper used in this Assembly and has made retrieving information more convenient for all Members. Documents equal to several binders of paper can now be stored on one device.

Of course, colleagues, I cannot stress enough that all electronic devices in the Chamber must be on silent mode and must not disrupt the proceedings of this Assembly.

In November the House also agreed that the use of tablet computers is subject to the overriding discretion of the Speaker, to ensure order and decorum in the Chamber.

Please be assured that I take this direction very seriously and will continue to safeguard the dignity and decorum of this Chamber. I do this so that all Members can carry out their work in the most respectful and efficient manner possible.

I will close here, colleagues, since I know you are eager to begin your work. But first, to mark the opening of the Fourth Session of the 17th Legislative Assembly, I invite everyone to join the Commissioner and Members for a short reception in the Great Hall.

We will resume in 15 minutes. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

MR. SPEAKER: Item 3, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 1-17(4): NOTICE OF BUDGET ADDRESS

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I will deliver the budget address on Thursday, February 7, 2013.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Item 4, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Blake.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HAND GAMES TOURNAMENT

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to welcome everyone back to the House. I would

also like to wish everyone in the Mackenzie Delta a happy New Year and all the best for 2013.

I would also like to congratulate six youth from Tsiigehtchic who won the Youth Hand Games Tournament in Tulita over the weekend. Starting with the captain, Jared Blake, Dale Blake Jr., Aiden Andre, Darius Andre, Thomas Norbert, and Davey Lennie Jr. Congratulations again on a job well done. These youth are learning a tradition that has lasted for many years.

Also, a thank you to Joey McCarthy who was the chaperone. Keep up the good work. Also, a job well done to the community of Tsiigehtchic for their support in sending the youth to Tulita for the hand games tournament.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CONDOLENCES TO FAMILIES IN THE SAHTU FOR LOST LOVED ONES

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to welcome all my colleagues back to session here. Throughout the years as a Member, we as MLAs get invited to functions and celebrations. We also get invited to other events that are sometimes not so celebratory, such as funerals and wakes.

I want to rise today to talk about the specific losses that we've had in the Sahtu. I've heard from our other colleagues of some of the people they lost in their ridings. For example, up in the Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Frank Firth, a good friend of mine that passed away in Fort McPherson, or the pilot for whom we just had a memorial in Inuvik.

Throughout the years as an MLA, from time to time we're caught in either sitting in Assembly here or at one of the committee meetings or we get called to go to our communities to pay respects for the elder or young person. Sometimes there's a conflict for us to either go or stay here and do business on behalf of the people or show our support for the people back in our communities. We deal with that from time to time. Death has no appointment. That is one of the hardest parts in our small communities. We look, and they have their own customs; people have their own customs and traditions how to handle death.

I just want to pay our condolences to the people in the Sahtu for the passing of the elders. I want to name off Marie Boniface, an elder from Fort Good Hope who passed away recently; Mr. Antoine Kochon from Colville Lake; Marie Therese Kenny from Deline; Elizabeth Kodakin from Deline. Of course, we lost some younger people: Mark Collier from Norman Wells; my cousin Johnny Lennie from Norman Wells last summer; Nicole Horassi; and a young lady from Fort Good Hope, Faith Kochon.

We offer our prayers to the families, and we're thinking about them even as we're working.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
ACHIEVEMENTS OF SPEED SKATER
MICHAEL GILDAY

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I open this winter session very happily by reporting on the tremendous achievement of Weledeh speed skating marvel Michael Gilday, Canadian National Men's Short-track Speed Skating Champion.

On January 20th Michael edged out the reigning Canadian champion to take the championship title. With that win, he qualifies to compete in his third World Championships competition later this year.

Given time constraints, I will mention just some of the spectacular accomplishments racked up by Michael since his first Gold ulu as a juvenile at the Arctic Winter Games in 1998. He is the present Canadian world record holder in the 1,500 metres, held the 1,000 metre world record from 2007 to 2009, and was the 500 metre Canadian record holder from 2009 to 2011. He was a member of the World Championship Canadian Men's Relay Team in 2011 and the world record-setting men's relay team in 2012.

Since his first World Cup event in 2006-2007, he has competed in 23 World Cup events, with a record of one Gold, four Silver and two Bronze medals. He has been a member of the Canadian National Speed Skating Team since 2008.

This past weekend Michael competed at this year's fifth World Cup event in Sochi, Russia, and is now preparing for the last World Cup races of the season this weekend in Dresden, Germany. He returns to Europe for the World Championships in Debrecen, Hungary, in early March.

Michael will begin preparations in August for the Canadian Olympic trials. We look forward to him carrying his record-breaking streak forward to next year's Winter Olympics in Sochi.

What a record! Michael Gilday shows how an individual can take on the world and win. Michael has the gift of talent, yes, but he also has the guts and determination, the advantages of excellent coaching and program support, the perseverance to overcome broken bones and get back at it, and the blessings of a supportive and inspiring family and community that have made him a world-class champion. He has written the name Northwest Territories in the rolls of international achievement and continues to make us all proud.

I ask you to join me in saluting this latest fabulous achievement and wishing Michael all the best. On to the Olympics!

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
NWT YOUTH AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I begin, I would like to welcome all Members, Cabinet, staff and yourself back to what is going to be a very exciting six weeks of session here in our Fourth Session.

Last week I had a great opportunity to attend the very successful NWT Days in Ottawa. While we had many great ambassadors and excellent staff throughout the event, there is one particular group I would like to recognize, and that's the youth ambassadors.

The Youth Ambassadors Program has been going on for a few years now and has been very successful. I have had the opportunity to see this program grow, develop and flourish into what is one of the best performances that I have witnessed with this group during the Spectacular NWT Gala event. They did a great job and made the NWT very proud, and their communities, families, friends and staff that put so much hard work and hours to get them to where they are. Whether youth ambassadors were guiding invited guests into the gala, handing out gifts, or just demonstrating Arctic sports and traditional games, they did a great job and they should be very proud of themselves.

Youth from all over the NWT who participate in this program have the opportunity to develop life skills and confidence that will help them be successful in the years to come, and become leaders of tomorrow.

At this time I would like all Members to please join me in recognizing and acknowledging the hardworking youth ambassadors and the great work that they do, and the hardworking staff that see this very successful program continue to flourish and develop leaders of tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Moses. The honourable Member for Nahende, Mr. Menicoche.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
CONSTITUENCY ISSUES IN NAHENDEH

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Indeed, we have returned after our holiday break, and since that last break I have travelled in my constituency and will be following up on many important issues that affect my riding. I am the MLA with the most communities and there are many specific and general issues that I will raise. While territorial issues such as devolution, wildlife, and even the new Boundaries Commission are important, I always like to put my communities first.

It is hoped that, in our upcoming budget, resources will be available to address the concerns such as community wellness plans, training for our young adults, and even the completion of our capital projects in my riding such as the Trout Lake airport and the water treatment plant in Wrigley.

I can also say that this winter the oil and gas development in the Sahtu has affected my communities, and I will be addressing some of these issues over the course of this session. I see this as a huge opportunity to support the Sahtu's needs while identifying a means of expansion of the Mackenzie Highway north of Fort Wrigley.

Be assured I will continue with my focus on mine and our two favourite words: Highway No. 7. Chipsealing from Fort Simpson to the Providence junction and a new stand-alone school for Trout Lake and even Nahanni Butte are high on my agenda.

I offer well wishes to my constituents and their families as we do our best to address their issues and the issues of our communities. Mahsi cho.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PETROLEUM PRICE REGULATIONS

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Prices at the pumps, Mr. Speaker. Who is protecting the public's interests? The government can no longer stand idly by on this particular issue, so let me finally say, government, welcome to the file.

While prices continue to ratchet up, they move down like molasses in the winter, and as we all know, most of them tend to be frozen like our winter. The cost of living is a burden on everyday Northerners. It's well beyond the tipping point, as we're all well aware. So where is the McLeod government when it comes to monitoring and protecting the public's interest on this problem?

If you ask anyone out there, they will all agree a 50 percent margin is a huge disparity between the fuel prices in Edmonton and in Yellowknife. It's well beyond fair. We all know for a fact it costs a lot less than that to bring that fuel to the northern pumps. We also further know that everybody understands that a profit is okay, but it's about a fair profit, and who's protecting the public's interest.

At the same time, there is recognition for higher costs, but at what cost? It really comes down to this: What is fair, is the consumer being held hostage, and is the government on the side of big oil or the NWT residents?

But all is not lost. There's always opportunity in every single problem. This McLeod government could do something today besides the status quo on this file. Like other provinces who have taken the

lead, like New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, they mitigate the impacts and certainly the fluctuation between gas prices, and they regulate and control and protect their citizens in their jurisdictions. New Brunswick does not set a minimum price, so they allow competition to flourish, and they don't discourage that. But they also keep in mind and they moderate a top price to ensure that their citizens are not taken advantage of.

To a certain extent, the Government of the Northwest Territories already does this through the petroleum products division. They already know how to regulate and protect consumers. Why is it such a challenge to watch our northern citizens be taken advantage of? The formula they use establishes and promotes fairness, consumer protection and stability within that province. It might not be perfect, but it's better than doing nothing.

Information is easy to understand and the consumers are happy. Northerners work hard for their paycheques. Again, the other question that remains is: Will this government do something or stand idly by? Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON GOOD GOVERNANCE

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome my colleagues back to the House, and extend my best wishes for 2013 to the people of the Deh Cho and the Northwest Territories.

My focus today is getting back to the basics of governance. Government is working, on many fronts, to provide programs and services that contribute to the quality of life of all Northerners. There is much work that needs to be done to ensure that we use our resources efficiently and effectively.

Consensus government will be put to the test, especially in the 17th Assembly. Major issues hinge on fundamental matters such as jurisdiction, treaty rights and Aboriginal title that have to be respected. We face many challenges. The cost of goods is increasing due to global market pressures in addition to the transportation costs associated with the remote locations of our communities, disparities in wage and job opportunities among our people, the high cost of living and diminishing funds for public housing.

Addiction tortures the lives of many people and compounds the pressures on our government, particularly in the areas of health and social services.

As the Northwest Territories moves closer to a final Devolution Agreement, the need to settle land

claims becomes even more apparent. The governments of the Northwest Territories and Canada, First Nations and local government must continue to work together to resolve issues and establish greater certainty for the future. I urge all parties to continue to work with fairness and integrity. Reaching agreements may involve some compromise in the short term, but self-government will bring greater authority and autonomy to our people, certainly to other governments and industry, and prosperity in the future.

With devolution, a large number of staff, programs and services will be transferred to the GNWT. What we have seen thus far with the transfer of responsibilities is concentrated in headquarters and regional centres. Members of this Assembly continue to insist that positions be moved into the regions. We must carefully consider the impact that this will have on our communities with both municipal and territorial resources.

By getting back to the basics of governance and what we really came here to do, we'll be able to make fundamental changes and move beyond perceptions on both sides. The development of governance in the Northwest Territories is ongoing involvement. Now more than ever, we must get back to the basics to create the future of the Northwest Territories. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON WORLD SNOW DAY 2013

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Happy New Year. Welcome back, and welcome back to all my colleagues. It's good to be back.

My statement today celebrates the one resource that all Northerners have in abundance: snow.

World Snow Day was established by the International Ski Federation as part of an international campaign called Bring Children to the Snow. The second annual World Snow Day took place just last month, on January 20th, the same day that Mr. Gilday achieved his excellence, so it's fairly fitting.

Four hundred thirty-five organizers in 39 countries staged events this year that brought children and their families into a friendly, fun environment to celebrate all things snow. Yellowknife joined this year's World Snow Day with a series of snow-related events, all free of charge. From what I witnessed and from what I read, the day was a tremendous success. Many Yellowknifers were able to try out a winter sport for the very first time, and were able to do that in a supportive, friendly, but chilly environment. It was 30 degrees that day; minus, of course.

In spite of the cold, it was a community celebration involving many volunteers and partners. Our local schools donated ski equipment to the Yellowknife Ski Club for the day. The Yellowknife Ski Club had many experienced skiers and volunteers on hand to help with 127 people who came to try out snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. The NWT Board Sport Association donated equipment, time and volunteers at the Bristol Pit with approximately 10 snowboarders there. The Great Slave Snowmobile Association offered a day of free riding, and the ice rink on Frame Lake at Somba K'e Park was open. At least three local businesses, the Smokehouse Cafe, Overlander Sports and Kavanaugh Brothers Ltd., donated their time and services for the day, and Yellowknife author Jamie Bastedo gave a talk about snow.

Other NWT communities had impromptu events as well, and for a second year, Fort Smith had the Muffaloose Stomp and Glide, a ski and snowshoe event along the Slave River.

The Yellowknife World Snow Day Committee is already planning for the third annual Snow Day in January of 2014. Hopefully, more NWT communities will join in next year's celebrations. After all, winter is one of our best resources. No matter what the temperature, people should get out there and enjoy it. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The Member for Range Lake, Mr. Dolyunny.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SECONDARY DIAMOND INDUSTRY STRATEGY

MR. DOLYUNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Welcome back, and welcome back to my colleagues.

After a long period of inactivity in the diamond polishing and cutting industry, I'm very pleased to see that the production start-up of Deepak International (DIL) has finally arrived in the Range Lake riding. This revitalization comes at a critical time in our territory's future growth and the global diamond industry, and we look forward to working with DIL to put the NWT back on the international diamond stage.

However, many Members of this Assembly are concerned on the long process that DIL had to endure to get to this point in manufacturing, and coupled with little to no information from the ITI department, nor the Minister on this recent announcement begs to ask why so much secrecy.

Now, I realize the concern that many in the department may have had due to past manufacturer failings. However, this production start-up company was self-financed with little to no risk to the public purse. So, again, why the delays and why the non-collaboration with standing committee or the riding representative?

I want to stress that these are very exciting times for the territory and for DIL, but the lack of information leading up to this announcement puzzles many Legislative Members.

It is further concerning that the department and the Minister appear to be operating in the cover of darkness when it comes to our revitalization of the secondary diamond industry, and as a Member of consensus government, and as a home to diamond manufacturing, we do have to ask, again, that question why.

Recently, with no agenda given or a current secondary diamond policy, our Minister undertook a world tour to places like London, England; Antwerp, Belgium; and Gaborone, Botswana, all under the guise of drumming up business with future diamond producers. With the taxpayer laying down this blanket of money for such expensive travel, one has to ask what was the Minister's strategy to revitalize this industry, and was this new mysterious diamond framework discussed in consensus and a collaborative matter with Members of this Assembly prior to such travels. We all know the answers to those questions.

We have the unique opportunity at a second chance in this diamond industry, and we are being scrutinized by the industry itself. It is important that we support hardworking upstart operators like Deepak International Limited, and place caution in moving forward into this industry with no compass or roadmap. We cannot repeat the scars of our past.

I will have further questions for the Minister of ITI later today to help answer some of these concerning questions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MEDICAL EVACUATION CHARTERS

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Lots of things about the North and how we deliver programs and services to our constituents is very unique to the North. Many rural and remote communities and, in fact, all of our communities have to occasionally rely on an employee, the use of medical evacuation charters. It is nothing like being in a large urban centre with a hospital where family and friends can support a family member through a medical emergency. It's not even a given that a family member can fly later in a timely manner or travel by road if it is an off-road community, or can necessarily afford a flight or a road trip to accompany a loved one that has had to be taken out for medical assistance in emergency situations.

These times of medical emergency are often emotionally charged, or added to the stress of the threat to health and well-being, the separation from the moral support and calming support of loved ones. The patient is placed in a strange environment, not knowing what their future holds.

I'm not talking about medical escorts; I am talking about a plane that is transporting a patient in which there may be room for someone to accompany that patient. These charters are extremely expensive, and of course, we are thankful that our government freely provides this service to our constituents when a medical evacuation is necessary.

Today I am going to have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services as to what this government's policy is about family members accompanying, or one person accompanying a family member that's on a medical evacuation. If this is not the policy of this government and if this cannot be accommodated, I'd like to know why. We need to do things that make common sense. I can understand that if there is medical equipment or other medical personnel on that plane and there was no room, then certainly the safety and well-being of the patient takes priority. But if there is room for a family member to accompany a patient to a regional or territorial centre or to Edmonton or from Edmonton on a medical evacuation charter, I think that common sense should prevail.

I will have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services about this. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PASSING OF HENRY FABIEN OF DENINU KUE

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. [English translation not provided.]

Today I would like to speak about the passing of a good friend of mine, Henry Fabien of Fort Resolution. Henry was born September 23, 1948, and passed away on December 3, 2012. Henry was the third son of Albert and Rose Fabien.

Henry was a loving son, brother, uncle, nephew, cousin and friend. He had the utmost respect for anyone who had the pleasure of knowing him. Henry loved going out on the land. He enjoyed hunting and trapping during his lifetime. He took many hunting trips, trapping trips with his friends and relatives.

Henry sincerely loved his siblings and family. His times spent with them were his happiest times. He always loved teasing and spending time with his nieces and nephews. His jokes made light of any situation bad or good. That was his nature.

Henry enjoyed gardening, and every year he planted a garden in Fort Resolution. When his family came to visit, he would always cook up some wild food and fish, and have his fresh potatoes from the garden to serve with it.

Henry was predeceased by his father, Albert; his mother, Rose; brothers John, Louis, Lawrence; and his younger sister Georgina.

Henry is survived by his brothers and sisters, Eddy, Donald, Rita, Kaye, Angelina, Helen, Lorraine and his brother Robert Sayine Sr. Henry will be sadly missed by all of his friends and family, and my condolences go out to his loved ones. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Miltenberger.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to be able to introduce a constituent and friend from Fort Smith, Mr. Keith Hartery, visiting and contemplating becoming a nursing student to add further to his service in the North. Welcome. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: The success of a lot of the programs that we offer as a government is dependent on the people on the front lines that implement them. We have three gentlemen up here that work with the youth that are part of the Youth Ambassador Program. Mr. Peter Daniels from Fort Smith, Mr. Shane Thompson from Hay River, and Mr. Donald Kuptana Jr. from Inuvik, a constituent of mine. Welcome to the Assembly, gentlemen, and a job well done. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. I would like to clarify that Donald Kuptana is from Tuktoyaktuk. He lives in Inuvik right now, working.

---Laughter

Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to verify that Shane Thompson lives in Fort Simpson.

---Laughter

I would like to welcome Shane Thompson, as well as Colinda Blondin, to the House. She is the newest constituent of Fort Simpson as well. Welcome. Mahsi.

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

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to welcome a constituent today, Mr. Jeff Corradetti. I would also like to recognize my former

colleague, Mr. David Krutko, former MLA for Mackenzie Delta; and Lydia Bardak, the executive director of the Dene Ko Day Shelter. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Further to my Member's statement earlier, I'd like to recognize the hardworking and dedicated staff for the sport, recreation and youth division within MACA. I'd like to recognize Shane Thompson; a fellow colleague, Donald Kuptana; Peter Daniels; and new staff within the division Colinda Blondin, who I am sure she is going to do a great job with the Youth Ambassador Program and youth and volunteer sector. Welcome to the Assembly. Thank you.

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

MR. BROMLEY: I would also like to recognize a former colleague, David Krutko, and the work that he is doing in the biomass industry. I think he is bringing that back home to us and sharing that with us. Very exciting stuff. Mahsi.

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

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize former veteran MLA for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. David Krutko.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Bouchard.

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize Shane Thompson. For the record, he is originally from Hay River. Thank you very much.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My colleague beat me to it. I was going to recognize Mr. Shane Thompson, a former resident of Hay River and it sounds like soon to be resident of Hay River again. Bring it on home. Thank you. You've heard it here first.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize David Krutko also, a former Member of the House.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the gallery, I would like to recognize Ms. Lydia Bardak. She is always a stalwart attendee here at the Assembly, so I want to thank her for her interest; as well as Mr. Krutko, a good friend and former colleague; and finally, last but not least, I would like to recognize the great Anthony W.J. Whitford, a constituent of Weledeh but a constituent who belongs to everyone. Thank you, sir.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. I would like to again welcome Mr. Krutko, a former colleague; and my cousin Wanda Norwegian; and my mayor from Tuk and a good friend, Mr. Mervin Gruben. Welcome to the House. I would like to welcome all visitors here in the public gallery for taking an interest in our proceedings here today, the first day of session. Thank you for coming.

Item 6, acknowledgements. Mr. Bromley.

Acknowledgements

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 1-17(4):

MICHAEL GILDAY –

SPEED SKATING NATIONAL CHAMPION

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to acknowledge and congratulate my constituent Michael Gilday on his January 20th first place victory at the Canadian Open Short-track Speed Skating Championships in Montreal. Advancing steadily from his 2011 fifth place and 2012 third place finishes in this event, Michael Gilday is now the national champion in this world-class competition. Michael edged out defending champion Charles Hamelin and also placed fourth in both the 1,000 and 3,000 metre races.

I invite all Members to join me once again in offering hearty congratulations to Michael, and wish him great success throughout the remainder of this 2012-13 World Cup season. Michael, you make us proud. Mahsi.

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

Oral Questions

QUESTION 1-17(4):

PROPOSED LONG-TERM CARE FACILITY
IN THE SAHTU

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement I talked about some of the elders that have passed away in the Sahtu. Even more sadly, these elders that passed away, passed away outside of their communities, in Yellowknife, and it was very hard in the last days of their lives for family to come and receive any last messages from these elders.

I want to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services for a status update as to the proposed long-term care facility in the Sahtu. People in the Sahtu would like to see that facility up and running so we do not have to send our elders outside of the Sahtu to have their last dying days outside of their home communities.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The long-term facility in Norman Wells, as the Members know, is well underway. All of the planning is complete. It's a matter of doing the construction phase. I think the land has also been decided upon. That was a little bit of an issue. Also, the plan is to have, at the time the health centre/long-term care facility is open, everyone that is going to be working there trained. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Minister, for the update for the people in the Sahtu. I want to ask about the staffing and the positions of the Sahtu long-term care facility.

Are there plans underway to work with his colleagues to look at some of these positions that would be in this facility, and what type of training opportunities will be there for the people of the Northwest Territories to take advantage of once this facility is open?

When is that facility scheduled to be opened and operational for the people of the North and for the people of the Sahtu?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: All of the requirements that are in for a home, a long-term care facility, will be met. Individuals that are working there will be trained. The exact timeline, the schedule is that there will be some construction this summer, and then continuing on probably, if the unit is closed, in that there will be further construction until finished the following season.

I do believe the facility is scheduled to be finished at the end of the 2014-15 fiscal year. So through this coming fiscal year and being finished over the next fiscal year, with a full staff complement that's needed to provide the service to the 18 long-term care patients that will be in there. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: Can the Minister inform me as to the training plan, training requirements that would be needed for this long-term care facility, and if he's working with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment as to the possibility of formalizing a training plan that would allow the people in the Sahtu to take advantage and maybe require some of our students to upgrade to enter into a specific type of training for this facility? Can the Minister inform me that he's working with his colleague to then work with the Sahtu leadership on a training plan for this facility?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: I can assure the Member that, yes, there will be training. Right now the facility in Behchoko is under construction, and we need to train staff there, as well, as we'll be expanding from an eight bed facility to an 18 bed facility also in Behchoko. So the nursing and the home care, and all of the workers that are needed to operate the

facility in both places will be trained, and I can assure the Member that the staff will be up and ready to go by the time the facility opens. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to let this government know we appreciate the health centre and the long-term care facility. It's been in my books for a long, long time, and I'd like to say to them that the people in the Sahtu appreciate this.

Can I ask the Minister if there's an outline or a time frame that he could provide to me in regard to a training plan, so I can inform and work with this Cabinet to let the people in the Sahtu know when these training opportunities will be available so that our young students who are graduating and finishing school can take further courses to upgrade and enter into this training program once it's up and running in the Sahtu?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: The Department of Health and Social Services and the Sahtu Health and Social Services Authority are currently discussing training requirements and working with Aurora College for that required training. So I can provide the Member with the plan and schedule as to what type of positions will be needed, and at what time the training will be required to be able to operate that facility. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 2-17(4):
FAMILY ACCOMPANIMENT ON
MEDICAL EVACUATION CHARTERS

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Health and Social Services. It is in reference to my Member's statement.

I would like to ask the Minister what is the policy of this government and of his department with respect to a family member accompanying a patient on a medical evacuation charter. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. The policy is essentially the safety of the individual that's being transported as a first priority. So usually when there is room on a medevac, an individual, depending on the nature of the injury or the sickness of the patient, generally if there's an opportunity or a vacancy within the plane, it's usually filled by a health practitioner. That's generally the policy, that if there's an escort required or someone that needs to be with the

patient, that person gets flown in on the next available flight. Thank you.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: So am I to understand that even if there is room on the plane that is being used for the medevac for an additional passenger, it would be the policy of this government that that passenger or family member would not be allowed on that medical charter? Is that what the Minister is saying? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Like I said, the first priority is the health and well-being of the patient. Now, it is still a medical decision. So it would be the medical practitioners that are making the decision whether or not they think it's safe for the patient if the individual would take the escort with them, whether it be a family member or somebody's spouse and so on. But generally, usually when we use medevac it's because it's urgent, and under urgent situations we generally try to use the spaces in the facility for somebody that would be able to assist the patient if they were to become distressed during the medevac flight. Thank you.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: I'm not completely familiar with what type of planes are used for medical evacuations, and certainly I understand that if a person is having a medical emergency, they do need to have a trained medical professional accompany them on that medevac if required.

My question is: Does the medical practitioner at the originating end of the medevac have the discretionary ability, if there's room over and above medical staff on that charter, to allow a family member to accompany the patient on that charter?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Decisions made by medical practitioners, I suppose they would have that discretion.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So I could go to a policy of the Department of Health and Social Services somewhere and find this discretionary authority of a medical practitioner to allow a family member on a medevac? I could find that policy in writing somewhere?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Likely you would find a policy that indicates the decision for who goes on the medevac is made by a medical practitioner. I'm sure that it would describe any sort of discretionary decisions inside the policy, but I'm assuming that if it says that individual will make that medical call, then it's not a political decision or an administrative decision. It would be a medical decision.

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

QUESTION 3-17(4):
SUPPORT FOR FOSTER FAMILIES

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today my questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services, and they are in regard to foster parenting and foster families.

We have a lot of compassionate families out there who are willing to take kids in and give them a good upbringing, a good lifestyle. Sometimes in these cases, some of the youth and children that are taken in to foster may have some type of behavioural challenge or attitude challenge that does really affect the home and the support in the home, and the home structure and the family structure.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services what specific programs are in place right now in the Northwest Territories that can assist these foster families, whether it's counselling or some type of program to create that family structure and home structure that is right now kind of being affected by some of these children that might be taken into foster care.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Moses. The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The department has a program called PRIDE. It's the Parent Resources for Information Development and Education. That is a program that the foster parents are under in order to be trained as foster parents.

MR. MOSES: Just to clarify, I'm not asking for what programs to train these parents to become foster parents. I'm asking what programs are in place to help the foster families whose homes are being affected by the youth that they're taking in, whether it's because they're being overburdened, a lot of stress, and it's affecting their home life and their work. I want to know what programs are in place right now in the Northwest Territories for these families to get help and build that foundation in the home.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: The Department of Health and Social Services provides funding to the NWT Foster Families Coalition. The Foster Families Coalition supports the foster children or foster parents across the Northwest Territories. They are sort of like a network organization that provides the foster care assistance to everyone that is a foster parent across the Northwest Territories. I think that is really the key way that we assist foster parents as the support is necessary for them to continue to be foster parents.

MR. MOSES: In terms of this program, do all communities in the Northwest Territories have access to this program and how often does this coalition go out to the communities that really need

the support? I've been working with a family most recently who had to leave their community and head out of territory for a lot of work, and I'd like to ask the Minister if this coalition goes into the communities to do some outreach work or do foster parents have to go to the coalition to seek that help.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: I don't have any indication here that the Foster Parents Coalition travels; however, they do work with the various authorities at the regional levels to provide support, proper ways to retain foster children, and they provide some training. They also advocate for the foster parents. This is a group that does support foster parents right across the entire territory.

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

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As many of us know, there is a shortage of foster parents and foster families in the Northwest Territories. When we have a challenge where a family needs help, and they're travelling out of territory where services need to be provided, I find that very discouraging. We need to get more work and more programs to help these families out and look into it further.

I'd just like to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services specifically what his strategy is to increase and recruit more foster families in the Northwest Territories.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: The top recruiters for foster parents are other foster parents. Through this coalition and just the foster parents within the communities, some of the communities have groups that are head of the various foster parent organizations in the larger communities. They are helping the social workers and the child protection workers in the communities to recruit. Generally our recruiting is through foster parents and through child protection staff.

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

QUESTION 4-17(4):
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION IN
DEVOLUTION NEGOTIATIONS

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask questions about the recent report of the Commissioner of Environment and Sustainable Development on Financial Insurances for Environmental Concerns. The commissioner reviewed Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Development Canada, Natural Resources Canada, Fisheries and Oceans, and others, and reviewed their protection of public finances. Unfortunately, they found major shortcomings. Costs have now accelerated to over \$8 billion of public liability. That's taxpayer dollars.

The number one factor was intra-northern resource development projects. We're standing to inherit this

very soon. The NWT alone likely has almost a billion dollars in liabilities right now that the federal government is working on.

Given the modest, I think it's about \$64 million for operations that have been negotiated for a land and environmental management regime, the clear shortcomings of the federal government as identified by the commissioner, and the likely unaffordability of the GNWT in light of such costs – I mean, those are 10 times what we expect to have for operations, 10 to 15 years' worth of the net fiscal benefit we're expecting – how is this being addressed in devolution negotiations?

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

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The report was just released yesterday. From the accounts that I've read, most of the references were to other provinces or territories. The commissioner referred to mines in Nunavut and Labrador.

I should point out that we're still negotiating the terms of devolution arrangements. Those considerations will be taken into account as we finalize the agreement.

The Northwest Territories is showing the way in terms of environmental protection with our mines. The three diamond mines have modern environmental agreements which had to put up the highest amount and levels of security for cleanup of the mines once they shut down. Certainly the Member is correct, as a smaller jurisdiction, when we achieve devolution, we're going to pay a lot more attention to the inspections of mines because we have to make sure that we protect our interests.

MR. BROMLEY: The Premier is actually incorrect there. In fact, the report refers to the Northwest Territories extensively. We, of course, have some of the most globally featured dire environmental disasters from our mines currently ongoing. The report says that in 2011, 70 percent of site inspections required under operating permits were not done in the Northwest Territories, in fact. This is obviously of great concern and leaves these projects that are developing disasters that we know nothing about as we stand to inherit them. Uninspected and unregulated, we have no idea if these current operations aren't contaminated sites in the making.

Will this government require that the federal government put that house in order, do its inspections, update the security amounts, and ensure security is trustworthy – all of which were identified as concerns by the commissioner – before we accept the transfer of responsibility for abandoned and operating sites?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: If the Member wants to point fingers, I'd say he's incorrect with regard to

inspections of the diamond mines in the Northwest Territories. All three of the mines have environmental monitoring agencies that are tasked specifically to make sure the mines are operated in an environmental way so that all the environment is protected. Those environmental monitoring arrangements have been in place for over 10 years.

MR. BROMLEY: The Premier again avoided the question and did not answer the question. The facts are clear that 70 percent of the inspections in the Northwest Territories, the commissioner has said, were not done in 2011 when our diamond mines were operating. All I can do is quote the commissioner.

My last question is: Additional issues were identified such as security shortfalls, lack of good and timely environmental information to our management boards and our First Nations who have responsibilities for environmental review process, concerned about impacts on fisheries and oceans offshore and so on, at the same time we're disassembling the environmental protection regime, so failure of the Government of Canada to address regulatory issues that have been identified repeatedly in reviews, including reviews that they've done. What is our strategy, and how will we protect our people financially and environmentally in taking over this faulty and diminished protection system?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: As the Prime Minister indicated, the commissioner's report is a useful piece of advice that will help guide future decision-making. That will follow through to the Northwest Territories once it's devolved. The question becomes are we better off now than we are in the future. I'm saying that, with devolution, our government will have to pay much closer attention to all of these environmental requirements because we are a smaller jurisdiction and we have to make sure that our interests are protected.

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

QUESTION 5-17(4):

STRATEGY FOR SECONDARY DIAMOND INDUSTRY

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today I spoke in this House about my concern with the Department of ITI and its Minister for not sharing a current roadmap of our outdated secondary diamond manufacturing strategy. Recently the Minister took to the world stage to drum up business for the North. Now, as noble as this may sound, the concern of many is what map or compass was he using.

The following questions for the Minister of ITI are to help understand what our course is in the diamond manufacturing area, what is its direction, have we cleaned up the mess from the first go around, and

are we ready to proceed on this international stage with this second opportunity.

My first question has to do with the apparent secrecy of the recent signing of Deepak International Ltd. as an approved diamond manufacturer. Now, we are all aware that the Minister has the authority to designate this approved status of NWT diamond producers, but why did the Minister take it upon himself not to consult the Standing Committee of EDI, nor the Member for Range Lake where the manufacturing is taking place, prior to signing this agreement?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. The Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Travelling with me on the diamond and pipeline tour we had the deputy chair of the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure. As to the Member's belief that we negotiated this in secrecy and we didn't let anybody know, on numerous occasions as I appeared before the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure, when asked about the secondary diamond industry and what we were doing, I made it very clear that we were seeking investment.

When it comes to proprietary and confidential trade agreements with companies, that is something that has to be held in the strictest of confidence until such a time as it can be announced, and I would hope that the Member would appreciate that.

MR. DOLYNNY: I do appreciate the Minister's response to that, and I do concur that sometimes things need to be negotiated behind closed doors. However, imminent signing of agreements has customarily been shared with all Members, whether it was the diamond sector or oil producing sector. We just ask that the same courtesy be done with all Members on this side of the House.

We would all agree that our first attempt at the secondary diamond industry was a costly mess for taxpayers. That said, has the Department of ITI and its Minister seen to it that all related links to previous Government Certified Retailer's Club of polar bear and polar ice diamonds be removed from public and industry stakeholders?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: This government is taking its direction from the Diamond Policy Framework, which the last government brought into place in 2010 under the Premier in his capacity as the former Minister of ITI. I remember quite clearly pushing the last government quite hard to get that policy framework in place, which would establish rules of engagement for the government going forward.

Quite clearly, that Diamond Policy Framework states that the government will seek investment in a

secondary diamond industry. Gone are the days when government would put taxpayers' dollars at risk in the development of a secondary industry. Folks that want to get into the cut and polish industry here in the Northwest Territories are doing so of their own volition, and certainly, we believe that it can happen here.

If the Member goes back in Hansard over the nine years that I've been here, my vision for what a diamond manufacturing industry here in Yellowknife would mean and what diamonds mean is quite clearly stated. I do believe that we are going to be mining diamonds here in the Northwest Territories for decades to come. I believe wholeheartedly that we can have a flourishing secondary industry here in the Northwest Territories. I think this is a very positive step that the government's taken and we're not finished there. I think there's a lot more good news that is going to come.

Again, I'm working very hard at trying to attract new investment into the secondary industry and into the exploration area so that we can find more diamonds here in the Northwest Territories and get more jobs and opportunities for people.

MR. DOLYNNY: Again, I do appreciate the Minister giving a great policy statement on how good things are, and I appreciate the fact that there are great things on the horizon. But I asked a question, which was did we clean up the mess, and I didn't quite think that the Members here nor, I think, the people of the Northwest Territories received that response.

But interestingly enough, one only has to Google key words like GNWT, Retailer's Club and polar ice diamonds and see that we have today companies like Basal Diamond out of Montreal still selling our alleged government certified polar diamonds. Can the Minister explain how is it this retailer is still linking their products to our defunct government certification program?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: I thank the Member for bringing that to our attention, and I'll certainly have the diamond policy folks at ITI act on that immediately. Thank you.

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

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Minister for saying that. I'd also recommend they do a full sweep. There were many more out there in cyberspace.

I believe that it is paramount that the GNWT have a solid secondary diamond industry strategy and policy framework from which to rebuild this international brand. When can we expect the Minister to show to the Members and to industry that we, indeed, have such a roadmap?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, I spoke earlier of the Diamond Policy Framework that the

last government brought in, one that I pushed very hard to see happen. If the Regular Members want the government to take another look at the Diamond Policy Framework, I would be more than happy to work with the chair of the EDI and the EDI committee to see that through.

Certainly, from where I stand, the previous government did a lot of work in this area. The Diamond Policy Framework is there and it states quite clearly what we need to do and how we are to go about seeking that investment, and that's exactly what we're doing. We're getting out there, seeking investment. We want a vibrant secondary industry. We want that value added. As I said, as things progress here, we'll certainly be keeping Members apprised of what is happening.

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

QUESTION 6-17(4):
FORT SIMPSON HEALTH CENTRE

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just want to ask the Minister of Health some questions on the replacement of the Fort Simpson Health Centre. I'd just like to ask exactly what is the process right now for the Fort Simpson Health Centre. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've been dealing with the infrastructure people at Health and Social Services, and I've recognized that we're, I think, at the very, very initial stages of looking at the health centre replacement in Fort Simpson. I don't think it's scheduled to be replaced within the next five years. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Maybe I'll ask the Health Minister to provide me the detail. I know that we have scheduled some planning study. I think it was for '13-14. If the Minister can confirm that, because I know that the facility did get an assessment by Public Works and Services saying that the planning study must be started soon.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Within the planning study, the department has allocated somewhere between \$250,000 and \$300,000 to complete a planning study. The planning study is scheduled to be finished by March 31st, this year.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: If I can ask the Minister to provide me as much detail as he can with regard to the planning study, because I don't want to be in a situation where we got... I heard through the grapevine that some beds might be reduced or we may not get a replacement facility but a much smaller facility. If the Minister can provide me as much detail, I'd like to see that.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: I can keep the Member in the loop. There is no issue there. I'm hoping that this is a facility that will retain at least the number of beds that are in there, whether it's the acute care or the long-term care beds, that the facility will be at least the size of the facility that is there now. Because the population of the people all across the country is not... The population is getting older and we do need that facility to be up to pace and not scheduled to go down. Thank you.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Once again, I would like to see any planning studies or anything the Minister can share with me before the March 31st completion date, I would really appreciate it, as well as hopefully have an opportunity to come visit Nahendeh during that time as well. Mahsi.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, if the planning study is on schedule, is completed by March 31st, I will provide the planning study to the Member. I can also have the people responsible for the planning study engage the Member. Yes, after March 31st and we've had an opportunity to review the planning study, I will accompany the Member to his riding. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 7-17(4):
HOUSING RENT SCALE FOR SENIORS

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recently we have had some changes in some of our policies and programs relative to seniors, some of the criteria for our programs for seniors. One of them, for instance, is that we are now charging rent for seniors. We have a rent scale for seniors in public housing.

I have some questions today for the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation. With the changes that have come into place, now that seniors are paying rent in our public housing, I'd like to ask the Minister how the income levels are set which determine the rent that a senior will pay in any month. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Member to repeat her question, if you don't mind.

MS. BISARO: Certainly, I am happy to. With the changes that have taken place with regard to rent scales, now that seniors are paying rent in public housing, I'd like to know from the Minister how the

income levels are set which determine the rent that a senior will pay in any one month. Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the income levels for the seniors are whatever household income that they bring in with all the different types of income that they are eligible for. As well, we have a \$1,000 exemption for the seniors. So \$1,000 is exempted from determining their rent that they pay. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister for that. Most of our seniors in the NWT are on a fixed income. If they are on a pension, then they are on a fixed income and it changes very little. But courtesy of the federal government, the Government of Canada, periodically we get pension income increases due to inflation over time and there are adjustments to people's incomes. So when a senior's income increases beyond a certain level and puts them into a second level for their assessment of rent, I'd like to know whether or not when we know that seniors' pension incomes are changing upwards, are the levels that are used to assess seniors' rent also adjusted for inflation over time. Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the income levels for seniors, especially those that are on a very fixed income, the rent assessment won't change very much. We do have a scale where they are allowed to get up to a certain amount in increases before the rent changes. With the small increases they get with pensions especially, that really doesn't affect the minimum rent or the rent that they will be paying. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister for that. Unfortunately, I have to say to the Minister that if it really doesn't affect seniors, that means that some of them are affected. I realize that we have a range of income and that most seniors fall in that range, but when they get to the top of that range and go over it and into the next bracket, it's going to create problems. So there will be some people who are affected.

I'd like to ask the Minister if the impact of increases to pension and to fixed income, if he would look into that, if he would investigate the impact that it would have on our seniors who are now paying rent, and if the Housing Corporation would develop a policy to address it. Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, we have been investigating, from the beginning of this, how it is affecting our seniors and we continue to look at it. We work with the seniors again. They do have the benefit of the \$1,000 exemption, and the bracket would take a significant increase for them to get into the next bracket.

However, the Member asked if I will investigate. I will look at it and I will provide information to the Member. Thank you very much.

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

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Minister. I appreciate that commitment. It may not affect too many, but I think if it affects one of our elders or one of our seniors, then it's important that we look at the impact.

One of the other things that I would like to ask the Minister, there have been instances relayed to me of inconsistencies in rent assessments between seniors, between different LHOs in our communities. So I'd like to know from the Minister what the Housing Corporation does to monitor rent assessments at the LHO level and between LHOs to ensure that there is fairness and consistent assessments across our territory. Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, our programs are designed to be more consistent, so all three zones are treated equally. If the Member has specific examples of inconsistencies, I would be pleased to sit down with the Member and hear from the Member any particular cases and we will investigate.

With the new rent scale program, it is very consistent across the board. If there are any inconsistencies the Member pointed out, we would like to know about them so we can address them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 8-17(4):

LAND CLAIM AND

SELF-GOVERNMENT AGREEMENTS

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier I talked about just getting back to the basics of governance here in the Northwest Territories. My question is to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations.

Here in the North, the NWT, or Denendeh, there are about 43,000 people that make this their home. We have the circumstance of where we have settled areas and unsettled regions. In negotiations there is a perception of the NWT that the NWT is almost a colonial arm or extension of the federal government.

What is the Government of the Northwest Territories doing to promote the resolution of land claims and self-government agreements in the NWT? Mahsi.

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

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Government of the Northwest Territories has been actively participating in all land claims and self-government negotiations. We recently reviewed all of our mandates under these agreements, in

order to help facilitate the negotiations. We have also been taking the approach where we have been wanting to improve our working relationships with Aboriginal governments. For those Aboriginal governments that are still negotiating land claims, we have approached them and indicated that we are interested in working with them, and also indicated to them that we would be in a much better position if we could work together and approach the Government of Canada to facilitate these negotiations. I think that we have had a number of discussions with the Dehcho First Nation, and the Akaicho, as well as the Metis Nation of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NADLI: I am glad the Minister highly puts significance on maintaining a workable relationship with First Nations that have unsettled areas, that haven't settled their land claims yet. Recently the Premier and Cabinet have openly stated that they are very close to finalizing a Devolution Agreement-in-Principle. What is this government doing to prepare communities for devolution? Mahsi.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Our devolution team, and as well as respected members of the Dene communities that have been contracted, have been to every community in the Northwest Territories to explain devolution, except for some communities in the Akaicho. I think there are maybe one or two communities in the Deh Cho that we still have to get to. But for the most part, we've been to every region and every community to explain devolution. Thank you.

MR. NADLI: Mahsi. I think what I'm seeing at this point with the recent return trip from Ottawa, I think the North has reached a point where we're looking at the NWT as an iconic north star. It's a beacon of hope and potential, especially with the GNWT working with First Nations alongside the First Nations and non-Aboriginal peoples.

I understand that the previous Assembly undertook a vision and exercise toward a common vision for the NWT. It's about basically building upon the political future of the NWT. What elements of this work have been carried forward into the current initiatives that we're seeing? Mahsi.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: I guess the practice for every Assembly is it builds on the work of the previous Assemblies, and we have done that. That report has helped inform us as we move forward in negotiating devolution. Thank you.

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

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My final question is we carry the principle of consensus highly, and that's what makes this government very unique. So as we advance toward a final resolution of the Devolution Agreement, will this government and this Cabinet ensure that the principle of

consensus guide the finalization of the Devolution Agreement? Mahsi.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you. We are a consensus government, and absolutely, we will work under that premise. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 9-17(4): REGULATING FUEL COSTS

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Dan McTeague in today's Yellowknifer says basically the price of fuel in Yellowknife should be around \$1.16. He highlights about a 22 cent difference that who knows where that money is really going. He emphasizes about a two cent difference that should exist between Yellowknife and Hay River, not 17 cents as of today or 26 cents as of yesterday.

So my question is for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, but rightly so, as the Minister who is responsible for consumer protection. So my question quite clearly is this: Would the Minister be willing to take the necessary steps to delegate his department to set a process in place that develops fuel regulations to protect Northerners? Thank you.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're well aware of the article in the paper and the fact that many residents here in Yellowknife have an issue with the price of gasoline in Yellowknife. If we were to get some concern from the general public, if they have specific questions that they might want answered, I would advise them to contact consumer affairs, and we will look at them on a case-by-case basis. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. What the Minister basically said is the public has to go and complain and complain, but the problem is quite obvious. Members can speak quite loudly and clearly.

What is stopping this Minister from taking some action to show the consumer that they actually care about the fact that they work hard for those paycheques? Because right now what I'm hearing is let's do nothing until they really complain and we have to. Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you. Make no mistake about it, Municipal and Community Affairs does care, and that's why we have the consumer affairs department. This is private enterprise, and prices are set by the operators here in the capital. If we were to have to try and regulate gas prices, it would be a long process. However, I can commit to the Member that we will do some due diligence here, do a little bit of research, and try to see what we can come up with. But the fact that if we had to

go to regulation, I mean if it's a long-drawn-out process, I'm sure it would take an amount of time. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. I'm going to acknowledge and thank the Minister for that openness to take a look at it, but I will disagree with him in the sense of the process and problem. New Brunswick, PEI, as well as several other places do this. So hence there is a model that exists. The question is: What does he actually mean he'll do when he says they'll take a look at this? Of course, he also has said he's well aware of this problem highlighted in the newspaper. So the fact is we're being disadvantaged, if not taken advantage of, by retailers. There is a public role in this, Mr. Speaker, and I expect the Minister to take that full responsibility of being aware of it. Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you. We do take the concerns of the public very seriously here. Again, I pointed out that there is a process that we have to go through, and I'm sure the governments that the Member had mentioned just didn't do it in a day. There are opportunities for us here in the Legislative Assembly to get the message out there, and by the Member asking questions is one of them. There's also an opportunity to move a motion to have us have a look at this. But regardless, we are monitoring this, and we will continue to monitor it and see what options might be available to Municipal and Community Affairs. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. PEI does this. New Brunswick does this. Why does the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs need a push or a shove from a motion or Member's statement to do the right thing? Mr. Speaker, why doesn't Municipal and Community Affairs do the right thing on their own? They know what the problem is; they could do it, so why don't they?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you. I have committed to the Member that I will have a look at this and see what options are available to us. Again, it may be a long-drawn-out, expensive process, but I have committed to having a look at this to see what options might be available to our department as to what we can do. Again, I'm expecting we'll probably run into some reluctance on the operators' part. But again, it's consumer affairs protection, and it's what we need to keep in mind here. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 10-17(4):
FUEL COSTS IN YELLOWKNIFE

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to follow up with my colleague. The information

I have is that gas prices are dropping in many parts of the Northwest Territories, and inexplicably they're not dropping in Yellowknife to parallel those drops. There's no explanation for that. This is clearly unfair to the consumer and raises questions.

Will the Minister find out and explain to us why that's happening? I don't think we should need a motion on this or anything like that. Constituents are bringing this to our attention. We're bringing it to the Minister and saying, yo, what will you do to get after this. So to start with, will you find out why the prices are not dropping here when they're dropping elsewhere? Thank you.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have committed to doing that. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: I didn't hear that commitment before. I heard that we're going to take a long time to look at this and so on. So I'd like some specifics.

Will the Minister find out if there's some sort of collusion or price-fixing amongst businesses that are selling in Yellowknife that explains why the price is not adjusting with the price elsewhere in Canada and the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Those are some very serious comments, and if there is a belief out there that there is that happening, then I think we need to notify the appropriate parties.

Again, I have committed before that we would look at it, and I mentioned moving a motion. I was just pointing out some options that are available to us as a Legislative Assembly. However, I have committed that we would look at it. But as far as the Member's specific looking into that, I mean, I'm not sure where our jurisdiction is. I would have to find that out too.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks for the comments from the Minister. These are questions being raised by the public. I'm not making any accusations. I think it would be great for the Minister to do what he can to clarify the situation and get some answers to the public.

I guess I would ask what consumer affairs, the Minister's department, can do to help people answer this question and make sure they're getting fair treatment from the gas distributors in Yellowknife compared to elsewhere in the Northwest Territories.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I will have a discussion with our folks over at Consumer Affairs in our department to see what options are available to us. The Member pointed out some of the concerns that were raised in the public and we've heard those complaints. I will have a discussion with the folks

over at the department to see what our options are and I will communicate that to the Members.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Final supplementary, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

QUESTION 11-17(4):
FUEL COSTS IN YELLOWKNIFE

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be quick. I do want to return to the fuel question and build upon what Mr. Bromley had said. I want to stress, earlier I did appreciate the answer by the MACA Minister and I think credit is deserved where credit is due. He did agree to do this. He's now listening closer to my question because I gave him credit.

The issue is, yes, in regulation those considerations take time, but one of the problems is today. Does the Minister have powers within his scope as Minister, who does do consumer protection, to be able to look at this situation? Because if you read the Yellowknifer today, it's like everybody's pointing fingers at each other and that tells me it's very suspect. What type of powers under his authority as the MACA Minister can he do today to help the consumer?

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've heard some of the comments over there about the operators here in Yellowknife and there was a comment of price fixing, but actually with the issue being raised in the House here it may bring attention to it and I think they may have a look at how the prices are set, because I did read the article and I heard one of the comments from one of the gentlemen that was interviewed on how if one did it then the rest of them would lower their prices. I think the fact that we're raising it here in a public forum might go a long way and have them look at how their prices are set and go from there and see if anything changes again.

I've committed a couple of times that we will have a look at it. I would have to do a bit of research to see what authority we have, because this is a private market that's not regulated by the government. I would have to do a bit of research. I will communicate my findings to the Members.

MR. HAWKINS: Although I realize there's House protection, I still will take great skill in pointing this out not to draw unfair attention, but under the context of price fixing and anti-corruptive activities they certainly are illegal under the federal Competition Act. That is a reality. The way you read the paper is one is waiting for the other. It doesn't sound like they're colluding in the same way or whispering what are you going to set this week, but

it does seem to point out the fact that there is some weirdness how they're working together and one's not doing anything without the other.

Back to the other question which was what powers under your authority do you have today to influence change?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I would have to find out to see if I have any powers to make a decision today, because as the Minister responsible for Consumer Affairs, if I were to say we want the price on par with the rest of the NWT, do I have that power? I need to find that out before I make statements like that. I have a bit of research to do here. I've committed to a couple of Members that I intend on doing that and that I will return to the Members with any information that I may have gathered.

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

QUESTION 12-17(4):
GAS PRICES

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Minister of PWS, the Minister responsible for petroleum products. In the last session I asked the Minister if he would look at some way that would help out the hunters and trappers with the pricing of fuel in our small communities. I want to ask the Minister if he had done some research as to if that's possible to give a break to the trappers and hunters in the small communities on the pricing of their fuel.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister responsible for Public Works and Services, Mr. Glen Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated previously, the way the gas prices are determined in communities where Public Works and Services is responsible for the fuel, is we buy the fuel, we ship the fuel, then we add a little bit of profit on top of that for the people that are distributing it in the communities, and then there are, obviously, taxes.

I did take the Member's question and I did share the comments in my... I did have a conversation with ITI. I haven't got an answer on that. What I will do is commit to having another discussion with the Minister of ITI to see what there is. Given the gas prices that we have in the small communities, the only place to move is taxes, which is an area that we can't move on, or the profit for the local vendors, which I don't think anybody wants us to move on in the small communities. We will certainly have that conversation.

MR. YAKELEYA: I appreciate the Minister's flexibility to look at ways that we could look at and that there's no guarantee. I want to ask the Minister, there are two pricings in our small

community: one with government, and non-government. I'm asking that because the government rate is lower than the non-government, I believe, that the hunters and trappers can use that system. I'm just asking if that's a possibility with Cabinet if they can go that route, specifically for trappers and hunters in our communities.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The difference in prices between government and non-government users of the fuel in the small communities is basically the GST. The Government of the Northwest Territories does not pay GST but everybody else is going to be required to pay GST. We'll have that discussion, but at this point I'm not sure that we're going to be able to reduce or eliminate GST for our non-government customers.

MR. YAKELEYA: If the Minister could look at that with his colleague and find ways that it's possible for our hunters and trappers to be covered under that structure of pricing, then it would be greatly appreciated by hunters and trappers that they would buy their fuel at a reduced cost. It costs quite a bit to operate a trapline in our communities. If the Minister could look at that once again, I would appreciate it.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Absolutely I'll have those discussions with the Minister of ITI, but I don't want to set any false expectations. Not paying GST is not likely going to be a possibility.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like the Minister to look at another word we should scrap, if possible, out of our dictionary and look at the possibilities. Possibly look at all the different types of avenues as to how to help our trappers and hunters in our communities where the price is extraordinarily high for them. We encourage traditional economies. I'd ask the Minister if he would possibly look at the possibilities that this government can do to help our hunters and trappers.

MR. SPEAKER: Before you answer that, Mr. Abernethy, when I say short supplementary, it's a short supplementary. Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated, we will look at it and I'm fond of looking outside of the box and trying to find solutions where possible, but we have to be realistic about some of the challenges that we're facing, so absolutely, we'll look at this. I'll talk with my colleague and we'll think outside the box to see if there are any possibilities, but I won't guarantee any at this point in time.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Item 8, written questions. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

Written Questions

WRITTEN QUESTION 1-17(4): K-12 SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment are related to the department's future plans for school infrastructure for K to 12 schooling. Would the Minister please provide the following:

1. a copy of the department's five-year capital plan for renovations, replacement and/or new construction for all NWT schools (primary, elementary and secondary);
2. a copy of the department's 10-year capital plan for renovations, replacement and/or new construction for all NWT schools (primary, elementary and secondary); and
3. a copy of the department's 20-year capital plan for renovations, replacement and/or new construction for all NWT schools (primary, elementary and secondary).

Thank you.

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

WRITTEN QUESTION 2-17(4): ITINERARY FOR 2013 DIAMOND TOUR

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

Would the Minister table in this House the complete itinerary for the January 2013 diamond tour to London, England; Antwerp, Belgium; and Gaborone, Botswana? Please include the names of all members in the delegation, the names of the companies and executives with which the delegation met, and a summary of the expenses incurred. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dolyunny. Item 9, petitions. Item 10, reports of standing and special committees. Item 11, tabling of documents. Mr. Clerk.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 1-17(4): RESPONSE TO PETITION 3-17(3), MIDWIFERY SERVICES

TABLED DOCUMENT 2-17(4): RESPONSE TO PETITION 2-17(3), CELL PHONE SERVICE IN FORT PROVIDENCE

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a response to a petition provided by the Honourable Tom Beaulieu, Minister of Health and Social Services, in response

to a petition tabled by Mr. Bromley on November 6, 2012.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a response to a petition provided by the Honourable Robert C. McLeod, Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, in response to a petition tabled by Mr. Michael Nadli on October 25, 2012. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 3-17(4):
INFORMATION ON GOVERNMENT CERTIFIED
CANADIAN DIAMONDS

MR. DOLYNNY: Mr. Speaker, I have a number of documents involving government certified Canadian diamonds, the polar ice diamond here in respect to the inappropriate use of government certification process with the company Basal Jewellery.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 4-17(4):
REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER OF THE
ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT – FALL 2012, CHAPTER 2

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table excerpts from the fall 2012 Report of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development to the Office of the Auditor General of Canada, Chapter 2, Financial Assurances for Environmental Risks, Sections 2.23 to 2.31. Mahsi.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 5-17(4):
ARTICLE ON ALLEGED MISSPENDING
FOR TRAVEL

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table a page from the Yellowknifer, Friday, February 1, 2013. The article is quoted, "MLA Alleges Misspending for Travel."

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Item 12, notices of motion.

Notices of Motion

MOTION 1-17(4):
SETTING OF SITTING HOURS
BY THE SPEAKER

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Friday, February 8, 2013, I will move the following motion: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that the Speaker be authorized to set such sitting days and

hours as the Speaker, after consultation, deems fit to assist with the business before the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Item 13, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 14, motions. Item 15, first reading of bills. Item 16, second reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

HONOURARY TABLE OFFICER (Mr. Tony Whitford): Mr. Speaker, orders of the day for Thursday, February 7, 2013:

1. Prayer
2. Budget Address
3. Ministers' Statements
4. Members' Statements
5. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
6. Returns to Oral Questions
7. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
8. Acknowledgements
9. Oral Questions
10. Written Questions
11. Returns to Written Questions
12. Replies to Opening Address
13. Petitions
14. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
15. Tabling of Documents
16. Notices of Motion
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. Motions
19. First Reading of Bills
20. Second Reading of Bills
21. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
22. Report of Committee of the Whole
23. Third Reading of Bills
24. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Thursday, February 7th, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 4:22 p.m.