



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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The Honourable Jackie Jacobson, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Friday, February 8, 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, Mr. Moses, Mr. Nadli, Hon. David Ramsay, Mr. Yakeleya

The House met at 10:03 a.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Jackie Jacobson): Good morning, colleagues. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Premier, Mr. McLeod.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 2-17(4):
NWT DAYS IN OTTAWA

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, last week I was honoured to represent the people and the potential of the Northwest Territories on the national stage at NWT Days. Since becoming Premier I have often said wouldn't it be great if we could all go to Ottawa together and, Mr. Speaker, I can say with complete confidence, it was great.

---Applause

The Government of the Northwest Territories strengthened our presence in the nation's capital and provided an opportunity to focus Canada's attention on our priorities, potential and vision for the future.

The Government of the Northwest Territories Cabinet, eight Members of the Legislative Assembly, Aboriginal government leaders, and representatives of industry in the Northwest Territories made up the NWT Days delegation. This group of Northerners helped us communicate the Northwest Territories priorities and challenges to the federal government and key stakeholders.

Meetings with the federal government on priority files were essential to the success of NWT Days. I had a very productive meeting with the Prime Minister to discuss the importance of concluding a Devolution Agreement with Canada within the agreed to time frames, the commitment of the Government of the Northwest Territories to the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk highway, and the economic potential of the Mackenzie Valley Fibre Optic Link Project. I was also able to discuss these matters with Minister Aglukkaq, along with the Government of the Northwest Territories active interest in the Arctic Council file. I had the opportunity to meet with Minister Duncan, who reiterated his

commitment to the completion of devolution negotiations between our two governments.

Government of the Northwest Territories Cabinet Ministers met with senior federal Ministers to discuss a number of key priorities of this Assembly related to infrastructure, hydro and economic development. As a Cabinet it was critical that our Ministers had the opportunity to meet with their federal counterparts on these key priorities. We were able to have productive discussions with Ministers Aglukkaq, Kent, Ashfield, Lebel, Toews, Finley, Nicholson and Menzies, who reiterated their commitment to working with the Government of the Northwest Territories on our shared priorities.

Members of Cabinet, along with Members of the Legislative Assembly, Aboriginal government leaders and industry representatives also met with key committees of both the House of Commons and the Senate, as well as some of our nation's foremost public policy think tanks.

The delegation visited the House of Commons during question period, where we were recognized by the Speaker, and where Northwest Territories issues such as devolution, and our leadership role in biomass, solar and water stewardship were raised on the floor.

Mr. Speaker, whether it was meetings with senior federal Ministers being recognized in the House of Commons or hosting two filled-to-capacity receptions for influential decision-makers in Ottawa, NWT Days was a resounding success.

We also took the opportunity to highlight the Northwest Territories culture and tourism potential during Winterlude. It is estimated that 8,000 people visited the Winterlude pavilion where the Northwest Territories had a display throughout the weekend. Interactive display screens gave people the opportunity to access images and information about all regions of the Northwest Territories. This interactive technology is a legacy investment that Government of the Northwest Territories departments will be able to use in a variety of places, including airports, visitors centres and schools, for many years to come.

To ensure our message had maximum impact, we reached out to the news media conducting several interviews with national network flagship programs, as well as national and international print media.

We went to Ottawa with the intention of creating a buzz and raising the profile of the Northwest Territories and the interests of its residents, and I believe we accomplished this.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank all the members of the Northwest Territories delegation. In particular, I would like to thank the Members of the Legislative Assembly, Aboriginal government leaders and industry representatives. One of the things we heard when we were in Ottawa is how unique it is for a government to bring a delegation with participants from a variety of organizations.

Much of the positive impact of NWT Days came from the members of the delegation, who fulfill a wide range of roles in the Northwest Territories and who have similar priorities and concerns and shared these with the federal government and opinion leaders to help see the Northwest Territories fulfill its potential. Of course, none of this would have been possible without the hard work and dedication of departmental officials with Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, and Industry, Tourism and Investment. As well, we appreciate the hard work of NWT Tourism and NWT youth ambassadors in assisting with the Spectacular NWT portion of NWT Days.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories knows the value of good relationships, and we have made it a priority to reach out across governments and across sectors. The key to unleashing our potential lies in the power of partnerships, and I believe NWT Days in Ottawa has done much to move us towards this goal. I am proud to have led such a prestigious group with representation from across the territory, who worked together to advance the interests of all of the people of the Northwest Territories. I look forward to continuing to develop the goodwill built during NWT Days, further strengthening our presence in the nation's capital, advancing our key priorities, and building on the relationships developed among the NWT Days delegation to create a future where the Northwest Territories and our people are an essential part of Canada's economy and Canada's future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 3-17(4):
MINISTER ABSENT FROM THE HOUSE

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise Members that the Honourable Michael Miltenberger will be absent from the House today to attend to a personal matter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 3, Members' Statements. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Moses.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SUPPORT FOR NORTHERN CONTRACTORS

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to make some more references to yesterday's budget address. It's very great to see that we have big projects that are committed to from the 17th Legislative Assembly, and that's the Inuvik-Tuk highway as well as the Mackenzie Valley Fibre Optic Link and working forward into those two big projects. It's something that I've strongly supported and continue to support throughout this government and to see this process through.

However, one thing that I want to take caution with is that when these projects, should they get approved and go through the process, that this government actually looks at working with our Aboriginal and northern companies to ensure the work gets done, and that the economy and dollars do stay in the North, and provide jobs to our northern contractors and northern sub-contractors.

Since I've been in this position, about 15 months now, I've written letters of support for some of our Aboriginal northern companies. We have lost some contracts that were not negotiated. I would not like to see with big infrastructure projects like this, even though it's a great thing for my region and the territory as a whole – and Canada as a whole connecting sea-to-sea-to-sea sovereignty, all the off-shore drilling – that when the dollars are brought forth, they stay in the North, they provide jobs for our northern workers, our northern companies, and that they do not go south to southern contractors.

Like I said, since I've been here, I've written letters for three Aboriginal northern companies who have all been overlooked, and I don't want to see that happen for a fourth time, especially with big projects like this. I think that the Ministers that are appropriate for the departments that I've written letters for, need to be held accountable and need to work with Members on this side so that when we bring a letter forward to government asking for our northern companies to work that they do get the jobs and contracts.

I will have some questions later for the Minister of ITI on the Business Incentive Policy. I commend the work of this government and the 17th Legislative Assembly for these two big projects, the Inuvik fibre optic link and the Inuvik-Tuk highway.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A single organ donor can save up to eight lives and their tissue can help up to 50 people. This is why today I wish to talk about organ donation in the NWT.

With more than 4,800 Canadians on the wait list for organ transplants, supply cannot meet current demand. It is with this in mind that my remaining time as Member of the 17th Assembly will be dedicated to the modernization of our outdated Human Tissue Act.

It goes without saying that this journey does not start with me but will be the continuance of many Members before me, such as MLA Tony Whitford, who in 1994 tried to persuade Transportation Minister John Todd, who replied, "It is impractical." Then it was my colleague MLA Jane Groenewegen in 1998 with Minister Kelvin Ng with the response of, "We're looking into the possibility of including an organ donation on the back of NWT health cards." Of course, this never happened. In 2001 MLA Charles Dent raised the issue again with then Health Minister Michael Miltenberger, who announced a task force on organ and tissue donation. It was to be reported back in the House in August 2002. Unfortunately, there is no copy of this press release, nor is the Department of Health and Social Services able to provide a copy of this task force report or action plan. Finally, in 2009 my other colleague MLA Robert Hawkins raised the issue with Health Minister Sandy Lee with a waiver reply of, "Our organ donors or transplants are done in southern jurisdictions." My sincere thanks and admiration goes out to these former and current legislative Members for shining a light on organ and tissue donation in the NWT.

Where do we go from here? For starters, I believe we need to review the options for starting an organ donor registry in the Northwest Territories. We need to define ways for NWT residents to become actively involved in organ and tissue donation, and develop a long-term plan to improve NWT participation in the donation process. Admittedly, we need to make sure all Northerners, no matter where they live, have the ability to participate in helping others who are in need. Furthermore, we need to consider ways for NWT residents to use space on their NWT health care cards or driver's licence to allow for the facilitative organ donation. Finally, we need a firm commitment from every Member of the 17th Legislative Assembly to support this initiative.

Therefore, I stand before you today as a humble servant of this House, as an elected representative for the riding of Range Lake, and I ask my colleagues here today: Will you support me on this quest?

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
HONOURING THE ICE BRIDGE WORKERS
IN FORT PROVIDENCE

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to rise just to honour the original ice bridge workers from Fort Providence. For over 50 years, generations of workers braved extreme cold and deathly cold conditions to build and maintain the ice bridge across the Mackenzie River at Fort Providence. They did this for the last time in the winter of 2011-2012. With the opening of the Deh Cho Bridge, there will no longer be an ice crossing at Fort Providence.

Building ice roads is hard and dangerous work. It involves long days and nights in all kinds of weather, and the risks of being the first and the last to test the strength of the ice. There is a lot of pressure to get the roads open and to keep them open as long as possible. It takes dedication and determination to make that happen. Today I would like to honour all of those who, over the years, made sure that there was a safe crossing for the rest of us.

According to Mr. Richard Lafferty, he states that early ice bridge workers first began in 1963, and the crew included Mr. Max Sanderson, Mr. Archie Landry, Mr. John McLeod and the late John Bonnetrouge. Think of all the travellers who drove over the ice bridge on their way north or south. Think of all the equipment, groceries and other goods and materials, even entire manufactured homes and buildings, that came across the ice to supply Fort Providence, Behchoko, Yellowknife and all the mines north of Great Slave Lake. It's amazing to imagine how much traffic used the crossing over the decades. The ice bridge workers might not have thought of it this way at the time, but through their efforts they made a tremendous contribution to the quality of life for residents, the success of local businesses and the NWT economy as a whole.

I hope that this House will join me in thanking all the Fort Providence ice bridge workers for their service to the Northwest Territories, and also all those workers who continue to build other ice roads elsewhere in the NWT. Mahsi cho.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
NORTHERN HOCKEY CHALLENGE

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This evening I have the opportunity of returning home again to take part in a great event. My colleague

Mrs. Groenewegen and myself drop the puck for the Northern Hockey Challenge. The YK Flyers are going to play the Hay River Huskies tonight. I'd just like to talk about the Northern Hockey Challenge and the activities that are going on.

The Western Arctic and Nunavut are having two different competitions where the two will meet the winners of... The two divisions will play each other later.

Back in the early '90s, senior hockey was taken out of the Arctic Winter Games, and since then the numbers of senior hockey has kind of dwindled. A couple strong individuals believed that it was time to rejuvenate the senior men's hockey and they created the Northern Hockey Challenge. It's taken on a great interest throughout the North. I'd like to thank the major sponsor, First Air, for getting people around, but also there are several other sponsors. I'd like to thank them.

Currently in the standings, the YK Flyers have two wins. The Hay River Huskies have one win, one loss, and Inuvik has one win and three losses. We're in the middle of the competition and I have challenged Mr. Dolyunny from Yellowknife, and Mr. Moses from Inuvik, and I'm looking forward to seeing them, hopefully, wearing Husky colors for a photo opportunity.

Once again, I'd like to thank all those organizers, those people who have tried to rejuvenate the senior men's hockey throughout the North, and I look forward to tonight's competition. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON REFLECTIONS ON THE BUDGET ADDRESS

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. While we had an exceptional day yesterday with our much touted hold-the-line budget, it is still not faring well for my constituency. We continue to focus on huge projects that take away our financial resources and ability to take care of our other regions and communities. We must ensure a balance.

I have stood up here time and time again to let government know we need to replace schools in our small communities like Trout Lake, and fix our Highway No. 7, which will only help our North with tourism and industry. Our budgets are often painted as a great thing, but we need to ensure budgeted programming money gets spent in the communities. It does no good to have a program only to create a job, often in Yellowknife, which reduces programming dollars.

I am concerned, as well, about our passive restraint policy, which means departments are pressed not to expend funds if they don't have to. Often this means that departments are commended for being

under budget, which is not a good thing for small communities that desperately need programming because of the cost of delivering programs.

Finally, the Mackenzie Valley Highway north of Wrigley has to become a priority of our government. I and several colleagues see the value of this. We have to start our strategy and our planning in this fiscal year. Mahsi cho.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NWT DAYS IN OTTAWA

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In a way never before, the NWT took Ottawa by storm, led by our Premier, Bob McLeod. Mr. McLeod's vision and leadership brought together many politicians, Aboriginal leaders, and certainly business leaders in a way never before seen, united in a front to support the North. Our campaign without his leadership wouldn't have gone as far as it did. It was a great success. Our campaign was to raise northern issues, and it all came down to the leadership of Bob McLeod. He deserves our thanks for that, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

In a way never before, to his credit, he brought the NWT issues all the way down to Ottawa. They talked about the NWT for a whole week. Never before have our issues become their issues.

Over the four days in Ottawa, our story was told all about the NWT. We made those leaders understand our agenda and what's important in the North. They learned about the potential of the North and what the North can do for Canada. They learned about our potential. Our Premier, with his ambitious hunger and focus, made sure, in a seriously focused attitude, that the NWT delegation was out there pounding the streets, and we knocked on doors and we got that attention.

Our Premier led our vision with seven priorities. Without that focus, they wouldn't understand about the sustainable needs our territory needs and the investment. This Premier brought this to our House. He brought the attention and credibility to the northern issues and I thank him for that.

Our vision was finely tuned, and it was to dovetail with the issues led by our federal government so we can improve Canada's North. We talked about building infrastructure, we talked about supporting housing, we talked about increased training, all important pillars for success in the North. These priorities are designed to thrust the northern economy forward, because we can be, and will be, a net contributor to Canada.

Now that Ottawa has had a formal education on NWT issues about what type of economic

powerhouse we can be, I am going to tell you, they were keen to hear our message and we were keen to tell it.

In short, and to bring it to a close, I want to say we couldn't have done it without the leadership of Premier McLeod, the Aboriginal leaders, our business leaders, and certainly the fine staff and support people we have in our GNWT. It would never have happened without them, and their fantastic work made us all look good. Thanks to Premier McLeod.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
REALISTIC ENERGY INITIATIVES
AND PLANNING

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not used to being upstaged, but here I go.

---Laughter

This year's budget includes a total of \$5.15 million for energy initiatives. According to this Cabinet, 7 percent of this budget will go to energy planning. The Government of the Northwest Territories has a consistent track record of spending millions on energy studies, surveys, strategies and public consultation; yet, for all the energy that has gone into energy planning, we only pay more for heat and power every year. For all the planning, two of our communities are in dire need of reliable energy sources. The town of Norman Wells was one hour away from evacuation recently when it lost its natural gas connection during one of the coldest weeks in January.

The 14th Assembly's Energy Secretariat spent its \$2 million budget on public consultation and related discussion papers about energy in the Northwest Territories. The 15th Assembly spent upwards of \$4 million on energy planning. The 16th Assembly spent close to \$4.5 million on energy planning and policy exercises alone. For that amount we could have purchased at least 3,500 wood stoves, 1,000 wood pellet stoves or small pellet boilers, 5,000 diesel-fired hot water heaters, 2,500 Energy Star doors that people could put on their houses to keep the warm air they pay for in and the cold air out. It might have given taxpayers real, tangible results and obvious cost savings.

For example, if we replaced electric hot water heaters for diesel-fired hot water heaters in some of our small communities that are the most reliant on diesel and where the cost of electricity and government subsidies are the highest, we could hope to see a return on our money within the life of this Assembly. We could make some headway if we continue to offer successful programs, and focus on realistic energy goals, instead of burning our resources to subsidize the ever increasing fuel

costs and letting opportunities to really make a difference pass us by.

We have talked, we have plotted, we have planned. It's time to get real energy savings to residents and businesses to make the Northwest Territories a more affordable place to live and work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
GOVERNMENT CUSTOMER SERVICE

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to talk about one of my pet peeves with GNWT programs and services: the lack of customer service that we provide to our users.

GNWT employees are all members of a public service. That should mean that they ensure that the public, NWT residents, receive service; the same kind of service that we expect from the retail and the food sector. But at times when designing programs, we – and I mean both the government and workers – forget that. We forget to consider customer service in our planning for the provision of services and in the delivery of those services.

An example of this came to my attention recently. The Yellowknife motor vehicles office is a busy place. Staff are pleasant and hard working. It's an office that provides many things to the public, many different kinds of vehicle registrations, driver licensing for all type of vehicles, provides information, certifies records and so on. In person, service seems to be pretty good; but once you have to use the phone to deal with the motor vehicles staff, things are not so good. There are three potential staff available for inquiries; at least there are three people and phone numbers listed for that. It should be possible to call and get one of the three to actually answer the phone and speak to the callers, but that seems not to be the case.

A Frame Lake constituent who recently called all three numbers in a very short period of time had all calls go right to voice mail. No possibility to actually speak to a live human being, and the voice mail messages all promised a response to the message within 48 hours. Forty-eight hours. I think that's unacceptable. A minimum standard of customer service demands a callback the same day that the voice message was left. Is this a case of not enough staff? Is it just a case of poor callback policy? What standard of customer service does the Minister expect from Transportation employees who provide services to the public?

The GNWT employs some 5,000 people. Surely we can analyze our staffing complement and program needs and find another area or another office who can give up a person to motor vehicles so we can actually have the phones answered. Residents do

often have an urgent need for information and cannot attend the office in person. They can't, nor should they have to, wait two days to get the info required.

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

---Unanimous consent granted

MS. BISARO: The Finance Minister said yesterday that the GNWT is striving for efficient and effective government. If that's a sincere statement, we should seriously examine employee productivity and adjust our staff accordingly. At the very least, Mr. Speaker, we must add a staffer by transfer, at the motor vehicles office to improve the level of service that we should provide. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION PUBLIC CONSULTATION

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Every second term this Legislative Assembly reviews its electoral boundaries to see whether the distribution of seats is fair and appropriate. The interim report from the Electoral Boundaries Commission has been released, and the opportunity for all citizens to have their voice is here.

This Assembly set the rules for the review, and will ultimately decide whether to adopt or reject and replace final recommendations. MLAs will have their final say, but for now I am keen for citizens to have theirs, and I would like to stress today the vital importance of citizen participation in these consultations for the health of our democracy and truly representative government.

The principle is as old as the Magna Carta: if you're going to govern me, you must consult me. In our democracy, we fulfill that obligation by electing representatives to speak on behalf of citizens living in a specific area. Therefore, it's important that the distribution of seats be equitable and balanced.

The Electoral Boundaries Commission has been given direction on factors to take into account in suggesting the population and location of ridings, including the Canadian guideline to strive to maintain populations within 25 percent above or below the average population of all ridings.

For the first time, the direction of the commission has included consideration of at least three alternatives, including featuring 18, 19 and 21 ridings. This should assist citizens to provide more focused input in response to concrete proposals.

Public consultation began in Fort Providence on Wednesday, and opens in Yellowknife this February 11th at Northern United Place and February 12th at Range Lake North School from

7:00 to 9:00 p.m. There will be further meetings in Yellowknife and Detah in mid-March.

Personal political freedom is one of the greatest gifts of our society. Just look around the world to see how precious it really is. Our right to vote is the basis of our democratic election process. The commission needs your input to produce wise recommendations on how those votes are accumulated to elect Members to the seats of this Assembly.

As citizens we have a right and a duty to make sure our democracy works in our best individual and common interests. That opportunity is here now and I urge all citizens to claim that right, exercise the privilege of self-government and free expression, and contribute to maintaining a strong democracy. Be involved.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON KEY ISSUES IN THE SAHTU

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have my Member's statement on the update of the key issues in the Sahtu that I want to talk about in the next five weeks. We just heard the budget and we're certainly asking questions regarding the needs in the Sahtu.

I want to talk about some of the things that are happening in my region. I'm asking questions on why. Why wait? Why can't we do things differently in the Sahtu region? For example, in the Sahtu there is a real high interest of oil and gas. Oil is booming in the Sahtu. Why are we waiting to put in an all-weather road in the Sahtu? What else do we have to say to the government to say there's high interest?

There's over \$600 million committed over the next five to 10 years in the Sahtu, possibly more. Why continue to wait to see if these resources are proven? I'm asking these types of questions. Why have the log jam? Why are our winter roads closed for 24 hours? Why is this government not prepared to put a package together to bring to the federal government for funding?

I also want to ask about the housing needs. Housing is crowded in the Sahtu. The people are living in warehouses and shacks. I've been to Deline. I've talked to the Minister about this, why people are looking at what is happening. We have three empty houses in Deline and some people are still living in shacks. I want to ask the Minister what is happening that we're not doing something, or the people are not rising to the level of taking some responsibility to get into these houses.

Another important issue is alcohol in my region. That is causing a lot of concern for my people. We have the Minister's forum going out to listen to the

people in the North and they're going to the Sahtu next week. Why are half of our young people using a lot of alcohol? Our jails are full because of crimes related to alcohol. People are dying in this day and age.

The last issue I want to talk about is why isn't the energy issue such as the Norman Wells lights out being looked at further. Why is this still happening today?

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON LUTSELK'E COMMUNITY GARDEN

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today it gives me great pleasure to acknowledge and share with you the history of the Lutselk'e Community Garden.

Years ago, elder Alizette Lockhart of Lutselk'e had a vision of a community garden. She often spoke of her vision and succeeded only as far as planting a seed in people's minds. Although she did foresee a community garden, there was not enough community support back then to make her vision a reality. However, over the years, Alizette and other community members finally decided to visit the idea of planting a garden, the seed that Alizette planted.

In 2007, Industry, Tourism and Investment introduced a Small Scale Food Program. They offered the community of Lutselk'e help to start a community garden. Stephanie Poole, Gene Hache and Nicole Redvers were the ones who initially started the community garden.

Upon seeing positive results, the community members started to participate and get involved in many different ways. Stephanie Poole and Tracey Williams have since taken an active leadership role in community gardens by way of doing various kinds of research on growing techniques and how to maintain a community garden. Whereas the community started a garden with one plot and now has not only two plots, but members community-wide have been growing their own gardens.

The community garden has turned out to be very positive in many ways. Many members who have started to participate eventually started to grow their own gardens. Members find it keeps them busy and productive in healthy ways. Members socialize in healthy ways by seeking assistance and advice from other members and find satisfaction in being self-sufficient, and family members find they're a lot healthier and less expensive to grow their own vegetables and potatoes.

Once community members of Lutselk'e have finally decided to plant the seed of the elder's vision and through accepting help from ITI started to reap the benefits in only a positive and healthy way.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 24-17(4): PAYDAY LOAN COMPANIES

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of MACA and are on the issue of a payday loan company with an office in Yellowknife and active in Ontario is facing a loss of its Ontario licence because of overcharging interest and fees. Despite exactly the same sorts of problems with payday loans here in Yellowknife, we hear no reports of action by our government to investigate, monitor and control what is happening here. The 16th Assembly passed law to require clarity in payday loan agreements for customers, but the best law is meaningless without enforcement. My question is: Does the department even review the forms and fee schedules of these companies?

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member is right; the 16th Assembly did pass the Cost of Disclosure Act, and it basically gives consumers an idea of what the interest rate might be with the companies that are charging. It is a situation we faced on a couple of occasions in the Northwest Territories. Down south it's a little more widely spread. They are protected under the Criminal Code, because they are not allowed to charge in excess of 60 percent.

We continue to monitor this. We work with our southern counterparts to monitor this. As of this moment, we think the Cost of Disclosure Act and educating those out there that want to borrow what they might be getting into, I think is a good first step.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks for the Minister's comments. I hope that the Minister will report to committee on the results of that monitoring.

People who rely on payday loan companies are often the most vulnerable in our society, as the Minister knows; people without bank accounts or fixed addresses. They then become trapped in a cycle of debt, paying their whole paycheques so they can borrow on the next, or borrowing to pay their loans. It's not a coincidence that loans stores are located right nearby both of our liquor stores.

When the law was introduced, what steps did the department take to meet with firms to make sure that they are aware of the law and are meeting their

legal responsibilities for transparency of fees and interest rates?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I would have to follow up on that, and with the department, to see if there was any communication with the firms. Once I get that information, I will share it with the Members across.

MR. BROMLEY: I appreciate the Minister's commitment there. Reports I have from visits to these local offices say there are no prominent postings of information on legal limits to interest rates and fees. It's all in the fine print when it comes to signing the contract.

Will the Minister ensure work with the firms to produce and publicize this information, and prominently post posters and pamphlets for display at loan offices?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I will commit to trying to get some information out there. The cost of the Credit Disclosure Act, I thought, was a good first step. If the firms are not making the consumers aware of what the potential interest rates are on these, then, to me, that would be a violation of the legislation that was passed by the 16th Assembly and we'd have to follow up on that.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Minister again. The legal limit is 60 percent, and yet sometimes the loan companies have taken their customers to court to repay loans and the courts have actually found that the companies are charging way above the legal limit. MACA says people with complaints should go to the RCMP, but that's relief from victimization, not prevention. Ontario revokes their licence while we turn a blind eye. My question is: When will this government recognize its responsibilities and set up a program of vigilance and enforcement?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Again, we would have to ensure that the firms are following the new piece of legislation that was passed by the 16th Assembly, and if there is a need to... Well, obviously there is a need in some cases to be a bit more vigilant. I will commit to Members on the other side that I will follow up with the department to see what we're doing on our part to ensure firms are following the legislation that was passed, and that consumers are aware of the potential interest rates they may be charged.

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

QUESTION 25-17(4):
CUSTOMER SERVICE AT THE
MOTOR VEHICLE OFFICE

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to follow up with my statement and ask some questions of the Minister of Transportation. I realize the situation I mentioned in my statement may have been an anomaly. It may have been just that one day. I do have some major concerns with the fact that a callback will not be made for two days.

I'd like to first ask the Minister whether or not there is a policy with regard to voicemail and callbacks and whether or not there are guidelines for employees in terms of when they should return calls for service.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. David Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Member for bringing this concern to my attention. The issue with the 48-hour waiting period for getting a callback, that's news to me. It is certainly something that I take seriously, and I'll certainly follow up with the department on whether or not that is the case each and every day. Forty-eight hours is a long period of time for somebody to wait for a callback, so we'll certainly take a look at that practice.

MS. BISARO: I want to thank the Minister for his commitment. I'm glad that he agrees with me that 48 hours is too long for a call.

In looking into it, I guess I'd like to know from the Minister – certainly this was a situation here in Yellowknife but it could apply to other offices throughout the territory – will he ensure that in looking at the situation, he doesn't just look at one office but that he looks at all offices under his jurisdiction as the Transportation Minister.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: In the last sitting of the House, other Members had concerns about wait times at the department of motor vehicles, and we are looking to migrate a lot of those services on-line. We are continuing that work and I think we are going to end up having the majority of services available on-line for residents in the Northwest Territories, which will certainly enhance the service and get people the information they want in more of a timely fashion, and transactions can take place on-line. That's what we're trying to work toward.

Certainly, we've made some major improvements already and we continue to work toward those improvements. Again, the issue the Member brings up is a good one and we will look into that.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister. I appreciate that this is going to be a fairly broad investigation into offices, but the other point that I mentioned in my statement was how difficult it is to talk to an

actual real, live body, and that's something which we struggle with, I think, as a society.

I'd like to know from the Minister, one thing is to look at the policy of a callback within two days, but the other thing is, can the Minister do something about the Yellowknife office in particular, to ensure that a phone call really does get answered as opposed to it automatically going to voicemail.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: I agree with the Member on this. Again, it's the first I've heard of it. I will ask the department about it. It's a practice that, if it is taking 48 hours, that's not acceptable. We need to be getting back to people much sooner than 48 hours. She has my commitment that I will follow this up immediately with the department.

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

QUESTION 26-17(4):
ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In reference to my Member's statement earlier today on organ donation in the NWT, I will be asking the Minister of Health and Social Services a couple questions.

First, I think it's important that we get a snapshot of the lay of the land, so to speak, in terms of our physical layout or our capacity in the organ donation department. My first question is: Are NWT hospitals currently able to receive organ or tissue donations?

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. The hospitals in the NWT are currently unable to receive harvested organs and tissue donation; however, they are working with the Hope Foundation, which is a human organ procurement exchange out of Edmonton. They work with them to try to harvest or do organ donation, if the possibility exists and the opportunity exists.

MR. DOLYNNY: I appreciate the Minister for answering that question. I think, again, in order to set the stage here in terms of statistics and how relevant tissue and organ donation is as an issue, not only in Canada but the Northwest Territories. Does the department have any statistics on the number of NWT residents who have been involved with transplants as of late?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: No statistics, like, very recently, within the last two or three years. However, up until 2010 and going back about 15 years, there has been 22 different patients that had received kidney transplants in a five-year period up until about 2000. We need more information. We are going to update the information that I have with

me. It was approximately 25 people that received other organ donations and other tissue donations.

MR. DOLYNNY: I do appreciate the Minister getting back to us maybe with some more current statistics involving transplants. The Minister mentioned in his first response to one of my questions about the Hope Foundation which is located in Edmonton. Would the Minister have any current statistics on how many NWT donors that the Hope Foundation has been referred to or used in the Edmonton hospital area?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: I don't have the statistics on the Hope Foundation, but I will ask the department, through the deputy minister, to try to get that information to determine how many donations were made from people that live in the NWT to the Hope Foundation.

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

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I do appreciate the Minister getting back to us at least with specifics.

As I mentioned in my Member's statement earlier today, in August of 2002 the then Minister of Health, Mr. Michael Miltenberger, was to report back to the House here regarding a task force on this subject. Upon my asking the Department of Health and Social Services, they were unable to provide a copy, so I'm going to ask the Minister today here if he would help commit in helping retrieve this copy or finding this copy, because I believe there is probably some great work that was done a few years ago that would probably be a value add as we move forward in this process.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: I don't have the action plan, but I do know that there has been a scan of the legislation. They have reviewed the requirements in order to develop legislation and the requirements, such as having two physicians to declare a death on harvesting organs, developing criteria around brain death, prohibiting the declaring doctors to be involved in the transplant, prohibit buying, selling or dealing with human tissue, and the whole issue of confidentiality also. Those are the things that I think the department has reviewed in order to move forward on the development of some sort of an act, and I guess that would form part of any action plan that the department may produce.

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

QUESTION 27-17(4):
BUSINESS INCENTIVE POLICY REVIEW

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today my questions are for the Minister of ITI and are in

regard to my Member's statement that I made earlier.

I've written three letters of support for three different contracts that were given out in the Inuvik region, and all three of them were awarded to southern contractors or even a contractor that has a northern address but lives in the south.

I'd like to ask the Minister of ITI if he would commit to doing a comprehensive review of the Business Incentive Policy that we currently have and base it on the fact of contracts that were awarded to southern companies in the past and how we can fix that. Would the Minister commit to doing a comprehensive review of the BIP policy so that our northern contractors are able to win these contracts that we're looking at rewarding?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Moses. The Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Member for the questions. Certainly, MLA Moses is not the first Member to stand up here and ask Ministers of this government whether or not we should be reviewing the Business Incentive Policy. That's happened a number of times over the 10 years I've been here.

Certainly, if the Regular Members feel strongly enough about the Business Incentive Policy and want us to review it again, that is something that we can work through the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure to see something like that happen. Certainly, from our standpoint at ITI, the policy is in our bailiwick. It's our responsibility, but how it gets implemented is up to the various departments when dealing with that policy and how it's implemented and decisions made, they're made by the various departments across government.

MR. MOSES: I'm glad that the Minister had mentioned that it is up to the various departments, because I have written letters to three different departments, and it feels that my letters of support do fall on deaf ears. The appropriate Ministers need to be held accountable and also work with the members in the small communities that need this work, especially in Inuvik where our local businesses are losing contracts, and my letters of support, I feel, aren't being looked at legitimately.

I'd like to ask the Minister if he would create, possibly reviewing this BIP policy, a policy for affirmative action, like we do within our Human Resources Department for northern businesses, an affirmative action policy that looks at northern businesses first before they look and review any other southern contractors that want to do business up here.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: I believe the policy does protect northern businesses. That's what it's

intended for. Unfortunately, again, there are anomalies; there are situations where things happen. Again, if we want to get into a review to strengthen the Business Incentive Policy, that's something that I want to work with the Members on the other side to see that, so they have some comfort that the policy is there to do what it is intended to do, and that is protect northern business.

We have what is called a Senior Management Preference Committee which oversees the policy and does review matters that come up that are significant. The matters that the Member raises here in the House today, I certainly will follow up with that committee, through my deputy minister, to see how the issues the Member has brought to this House have been dealt with through that senior management committee. We will get some answers for the Member. Thank you.

MR. MOSES: Mr. Speaker, I do believe that Members on this side of the House would welcome that review of the Business Incentive Policy, not only Members of this House but the northern business sector. Sit down with them and listen to what their concerns are, because they're the ones losing out on the contracts.

I would also like to ask the Minister if he would take the review of all the Business Incentive Policy, the list of all northern businesses that are listed under that policy, and do a review of how many of those businesses actually have property and actually live in the Northwest Territories, and not just have a mailing address or a property that's not even being used, giving these contracts to these businesses that live elsewhere but take money out of the Northwest Territories and don't contribute anything back into the economy. I'd like to see if the Minister would commit to doing a review of those companies and updating it so that our northern contractors actually do win these contracts. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, this has been an issue that has been brought up before. It's a serious issue and one that we take seriously. Certainly, I mentioned earlier that we want to work with Members through the Standing Committee on Economic Infrastructure if there is a need to go back and look at all the businesses that are in this Business Incentive Policy and look at areas where we can strengthen this policy.

I tend to agree with the Member; we need to ensure that economic benefits stay here in the Northwest Territories. I know he mentioned a couple of projects, the Inuvik-Tuk highway being one. We need to ensure, wherever possible, that the economic benefits of a project like that and other economic opportunities here in the NWT stay with businesses and residents here in the Northwest Territories. That's something that, as Minister, I

want to see happen. However we can arrive at that is what we should be trying to achieve. Thank you.

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

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that the Minister recognizes that we have two big projects coming up in Inuvik, the Mackenzie Valley Fibre Optic Link and the Inuvik-Tuk highway. I really don't want to see our local and northern businesses losing out on these contracts. That's why I need this review sooner than later, because we want to make sure that they get those contracts.

Would the Minister also look – in my previous question about southern contractors – would he create a policy of possibly making these southern contractors do business in the North and have a property here for maybe six months plus a day – at least half the year – so we get some kind of economic benefit from these southern contractors? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, we would have to take a look at the policy in its entirety. There are businesses on paper that would look like they are northern but they're not really northern. I've had examples brought to my attention on that. If we're going to take a look at the policy, we should do that. It should be wholesale. A lot of companies have been grandfathered into the Business Incentive Policy. If it's the will of this House to look at the Business Incentive Policy to make it stronger, to strengthen it, to ensure that you have to have property here in the Northwest Territories, you have to employ people in the Northwest Territories, you have to pay your taxes here in the Northwest Territories, those are steps that this House can take. I certainly look forward to working with Members to arrive at a policy that we can accept. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 28-17(4):
HIGHWAY NO. 7 RECONSTRUCTION

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister of Transportation some questions on Highway No. 7. I'd like to know for this coming fiscal year the investment plan and strategy for reconstructing Highway No. 7. Mahsi cho.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The Minister of Transportation, Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've started a program where we're going to see capital dollars flow into Highway No. 7. It's going to begin this year. I believe it's just over \$1 million and it's going to continue for a period of years. I believe it's 10 years.

Given the pressures on our capital budget – and I don't have to mention to Members about the pressures on our capital budget around the Northwest Territories – I've made commitments to the Member to get a long-term program for Highway No. 7 and that's what we're doing. We are getting some money into that highway on an annual basis. I certainly understand and appreciate the concerns the Member has brought to the House and look forward to continuing that investment in Highway No. 7. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to see that some investment is going into Highway No. 7 this coming fiscal year in the capital budget. Is there some of our O and M dollars, will that also be invested into Highway No. 7? Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, to my knowledge, the contracts for O and M on Highway No. 7 would be maintained, and those dollars would be there to continue to maintain and operate Highway No. 7. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, this year's plan which didn't happen, there was a plan to chipseal from the BC border 20 kilometres towards Fort Liard. Is that still being planned in the '13-14 capital season? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, I'd have to follow up with the department on exactly what the plan is for the capital dollars for Highway No. 7 for '13-14 and get that information for the Member. Thank you.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. There's an opportunity because the community of Fort Liard does want to do some chipsealing in their community to save some money should the department go out and put out a bid for chipsealing, to work with the community of Fort Liard thereby reducing costs. It would be a win-win situation. Can the Minister do that? Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, at the Department of Transportation we're looking for ways to work with communities, to work with industries. We have a track record of doing that. Certainly, if there are some economies of scale and an opportunity to work with the community of Fort Liard to get some work done, that's something that we'll certainly take under consideration. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 29-17(4):
DENE KO DAY SHELTER FUNDING

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday I spoke about my concerns about the downtown day shelter and I directed my questions

to the Minister of Health. Certainly, the issue to me is I've always been a big supporter of the downtown day shelter concept. That hasn't changed even today. I still am a believer.

The RFP process and fresh start is really what I'm after. Yesterday the Minister is quoted, in short, they have a few issues, and they're referring to the contractor, which are the contribution agreement, year-end report and proposal. So we need to get these things cleared up.

Is the downtown day shelter contractor meeting all of their obligations? If not, which ones have they not been meeting? Has the Department of Health been holding back money, and for how long? Thank you.

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The provider of the day shelter, I think the initial intent was exactly what they think indicates as a shelter, a place for some people to get out of the weather and go and have a warm place to go to. Within that, as they were operating the shelter, they made themselves, the John Howard Society themselves made recommendations to provide some training to staff. They thought that the operation of the shelter would require some training of their own staff on various things like First Aid and so on. Also, trying to provide some referrals. So individuals that are using the day shelter may be referred to counselling and so on. These were recommendations that the society themselves made. So I think their request is to provide some additional funding to be able to do that.

So far the money has been flowing over the three fiscal years at a consistent amount. So they felt that they were not able to provide those with the current funding, and I'm assuming, since the funding hasn't increased, that they're still not able to provide those, but they are providing what was required of them initially. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. I was listening to the Minister's answer very attentively and what I hear is an organization bid for the proposal. It sounds like they underbid it, didn't know what they were bidding on, and now they want more money to run it in a new fashion. The question was not answered in any way specific to the Minister's quote, which was he said there was contribution agreement problems, year-end report problems and proposal problems.

What are those problems? Are we holding money back because they have not fulfilled their obligations? Let's be clear on the record. What obligations have they not fulfilled and why? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you. No money is held back. So, money will continue to flow in that

way. Obligations I speak of are exactly what I said, the report so that we have an opportunity to review it. The contribution agreement, which is actually a contribution agreement between ourselves and YKHSS so that we can have the money flow through them and then they will then get a proposal from the society, which they haven't received. So there could be an idea that the society will be adding more to what they want to do and that may form the proposal. At this time we don't have that information, but we're not stopping the money because of it. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: It's critical to point out that the concerns I am raising are important, but they're not only mine; they're issues raised to me by the public and many people. Let's be very, very clear. Is the Minister going to go out to an RFP to ensure that the downtown day shelter gets a fresh start or some new leadership that is qualified to run that shelter rather than making it up in a hodgepodge way? Because the people who are really hurting are those who need it, and they need the help. Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: We do want to go to an RFP. The issue was that the request as we were dealing with the Health and Social Services Authority, the request for them to recommend that we go through an RFP process. So they would perhaps look at other providers. It was very late in the fiscal year and we didn't think we could achieve the proper requests for proposals at that late juncture. So we decided to continue with the cash flow, and then during the process, as we're continuing to operate, then go for an RFP. So in future years if it's deemed that the facility should remain open, then it will be done under the guidelines of a proposal. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to be absolutely crystal clear. My problem isn't with the employees. My problem isn't with the people who use the thing. I think they need the help and I think they deserve respect and dignity by giving them help. My issue comes down to the management style of the way that that place is running. So how can this Minister guarantee that this place will be running better and not more of the same? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you. It would be very difficult to guarantee that something like a shelter will be running better in the future. What we can do is we can guarantee that some of the things that the society indicated would be an important part of running a shelter, such as I indicated earlier, training staff on things like First Aid. There is also crisis intervention; there is also communication skills of the people working in there, how they communicate with the users of the facility. So if

we're able to achieve those, then it should run better. That will largely depend on the people that are using the facility how well the facility runs. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 30-17(4):
STATUS OF FORT PROVIDENCE
ICE BRIDGE AND FERRY WORKERS

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today I rose to at least honour the people that made it possible for us to transport goods plus drive over the Deh Cho ice bridge for a long time. So my question is to the Minister of Transportation.

I'd like to know the status of the crew that used to make the ice bridge, at the same time just the status of the crew that operated the ferry and what are the plans for them. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nadli. The Minister of Transportation, Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wouldn't know the status of the ice crew and what they were doing. I certainly would go back to the department and see if the department knows exactly what those folks are up to.

On the Merv Hardie ferry crew, there were a few employees, or most of the employees were of a casual nature. I believe others were offered employment elsewhere. To the exact status of those employees, I'd certainly be more than happy to get the Member the status of the employees that did serve us, and serve us very well, on both the ice crossing and on the Merv Hardie itself. Thank you.

MR. NADLI: I wanted to know if the Department of Transportation has any prepared plans in terms of helping the people that perhaps have been laid off, or in terms of trying to help them with making the transition to other employment opportunities. Mahsi.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you. For employees that were affected by the discontinuation of service of the Merv Hardie, I'm certain that department officials were working with those employees. But again, for the specifics on what was offered to employees, that is something and a level of information that I don't have with me today, but I'd certainly be more than happy to get that for the Member. Thank you.

MR. NADLI: Thank you. Switching to the big bridge that is in operation now, I just want to understand what are some of the immediate short-term and long-term plans for the maintenance of the bridge. For one thing, or a couple of things, I know there are concerns about eventually bison perhaps stopping the flow of traffic. Another concern is just the traffic lights. At what point do

you see perhaps the establishment of those additions to the bridge? Mahsi.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you. The Texas gates that will be installed on the north side of the bridge should be installed in the spring. Those will keep bison off of the bridge.

As to the maintenance, I believe the department continues to work with the community of Fort Providence and opportunities there to look at maintenance opportunities. As well, there are some other works that are going to be needed over the next eight to nine months, and certainly Deh Gah is going to be included in some of the work that is going to be required, remedial work on the bridge. I know they've partnered up with Ruskin to get some of this work done. So I'm happy to see that some more work will accrue to the community of Fort Providence, and some more employment opportunities as well. Thank you.

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

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps just to build upon that, is there, at some point, plans for a more festive opportunity for the communities to be involved with signalling another ceremony? I know there have been discussions in terms of another celebration this summer. Could the Minister update in terms of how the Department of Transportation might be involved with that opportunity?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Through the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, and I know the Department of Transportation will be involved, we are certainly looking forward to some nicer weather, perhaps in June, to celebrate the opening of the Deh Cho Bridge and turn it into a more proactive tourism event to draw people there. I think the bridge in and of itself is a tourist attraction. Anybody that's ever driven across the ice at Fort Providence or taken the Merv Hardie, who's lived in the Northwest Territories and has done that, they're going to want to come back and see the Deh Cho Bridge. Certainly, through the Department of ITI, working with Transportation, and with the community of Fort Providence it's very important that we continue to work and have that dialogue with the community on preparations for an event sometime this spring or into June. I think we can certainly try to maximize the exposure and the opportunity that the Deh Cho Bridge has presented us.

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

QUESTION 31-17(4):
SUPPORTING LOCAL AGRICULTURAL
INITIATIVES

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I spoke about the issues that are important to the Sahtu. I want to ask the Minister of ITI regarding the bottled water issue we have in our communities.

We have bottled water that is flown from outside of Canada and within Canada. We have some wonderful, great lakes here, some big lakes here. Has the Minister, through his tenure as Minister of ITI, looked at how the Northwest Territories could capture this market to have bottled water in the Northwest Territories to sell in each community and each store in the North?

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

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That sounds like a proposition for the Dragon's Den or something. If the Member has entrepreneurs in the Sahtu – and I know there's a number of very good entrepreneurs in the Sahtu and the communities the Member represents – that sounds like a very interesting proposition. Certainly, the Northwest Territories has a bounty of fresh water. Maybe there is an opportunity there to market that as bottled water. I appreciate the Member bringing that up.

MR. YAKELEYA: Sometimes being in the south feels like a dragon's den. It gets pretty hot in here.

I want to ask the Minister, other than the bottled water concept, I know that the community of Deline really wants to move on this issue; however, there were a number of barriers for them to hook up this new water plant system to look at a bottled water system and they just didn't get the support they thought they could get from this government. I want to ask the Minister, if other initiatives in the North can have such as the eggs in Hay River, those eggs should be in each of our stores in our communities. That's the type of initiative I'm looking for. Has the Minister embarked on a strong policy to get northern products in our stores and in our homes right across the valley?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: I think issues like the Member raises are going to be front and centre through the development of our Economic Opportunities Strategy and again look forward to seeing the end result of that. Getting products that are local into local businesses and homes, I think, is very important. I have not seen a proposal about bottling water here in the Northwest Territories for local consumption and perhaps for export, but it's certainly something I think has some promise, and if the Member wants to share that proposal with me, I would be more than happy to have a look at it.

MR. YAKELEYA: Some time ago the community of Deline asked for this bottled water concept and they were told to come up with \$200,000 or \$300,000. Small communities like that just don't have that kind of extra change in their pockets. I'm hoping the Minister would again look at that and see if that's a possibility.

Another thing I want to ask the Minister, in terms of the potato spud captain of Norman Wells, how he's helping small entrepreneurial people look at commercial ventures such as having some of those potatoes in some of our communities. I'm looking for the Minister to come forward to our committees and the House and say, we have a strong northern policy that will support the farmers in the North and people who want to do bottled water issues. Will the Minister bring something forward to us?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: I thank the Member for raising the issue of agriculture here in the House and how important it is to many of our communities here in the NWT. The government continues to support agriculture in the NWT through the Territorial Farmers Association and other programs that we provide.

I know we have this Growing Forward 2 Fund that we've signed off with the federal government. It is going to provide about \$6 million here in the Northwest Territories for other programs related to agriculture and the development of our agricultural centre. I believe we are looking for a type of signature project through this new funding arrangement with the federal government and it's something that is going to be important as we move forward. I'm not quite sure if the development of a bottled water plant in Deline would fit in that, but it's certainly something I think... It hasn't come up since I've been Minister of ITI. It may have been brought forward previous to that, but I think it's something like that is going to provide the possibility of jobs in a small community like Deline. Certainly it's a very interesting thing.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the Minister come forward with the openness to supporting our northern people in the products that we have, such as, you know, Great Slave Lake is one of the best places to get fish. Bring that forward to our discussion that we can support the fishermen around Great Slave Lake to bring their product into our homes and institutions. Have a government policy stating that's the way we want to do business from here on in.

Can the Minister look at some type of creative policy that would support our people?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: We have an abundance of fish in the Northwest Territories, and we've mentioned many times about the commercial

fishing on Great Slave Lake and how we need to improve upon that.

It's my goal over the next two and a half years to try to resurrect the commercial fishing industry on Great Slave Lake. I think we can do it. We're going to be working with the folks in Hay River and the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation to see how we can make things better.

Obviously, with Great Bear Lake, I mean, that's some of the best trout in this world, in Great Bear Lake. If there is an opportunity to get that fish out of Great Bear Lake in a commercial manner, again for local consumption and perhaps for export, that's something that, again, we need to be taking a look at. It's an opportunity for the community and it could provide a number of jobs as well in a small community.

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

QUESTION 32-17(4):
DECENTRALIZATION

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. After the budget address yesterday and the line in there about the 18 GNWT positions being decentralized out of Yellowknife to regional centres and to the communities, of course there has been a lot of buzz. There was a lot of buzz leading up to this announcement because there were rumours to rely on, but now we've heard an actual number. We're getting questions, and e-mails, and texts from our members in our communities, saying where are these positions going. I have some idea of how many of them are coming to Hay River and where they're going, but I would like to ask the Premier if he could bring some clarity to that, where those 18 positions are going, how many are coming to Hay River, most importantly.

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

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we indicated many times in this House, decentralization is a priority for this government. We're approaching it in three phases. We're just very close to completing the first phase, which was to review all our programs and services to see what programs could be developed. We also undertook an inventory of available housing and available office space and made the commitment that we would start decentralization right away as part of a 2013-2014 business plan.

Of the 18 positions, 14 are new positions that have been created through reallocations and those will be going to the regions. We also have four that are existing positions that will be moved out. I just have to make sure that we have to take care of the human resources side of it, so I have to make sure

those people that will be affected have been notified. It also has to be approved yet in this House and it is in the main estimates, so you will be able to discuss it in the review of the appropriate departments.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: I thank the Premier for that. Those are good and valid concerns. We don't want to get ahead of ourselves here. Could we get a general approximation? Would it be safe to say that of those 14 new positions and four relocated positions – and I realize that this is not the Premier's, it is the Finance Minister's role to answer this question – would it be safe to say that eight or 10 of those are coming to Hay River?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: I will be able to confirm that hopefully in the next few days, but it's less than what the Member has raised.

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

QUESTION 33-17(4):
MACKENZIE VALLEY HIGHWAY

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday my colleague Mr. Menicoche and I talked about the Mackenzie Valley proposed highway up from Wrigley to Norman Wells. We did talk about the exploration that is happening in the Sahtu. There is not only tens of millions but hundreds of millions of dollars being invested into that area. We talked about the infrastructure such as the Mackenzie Valley winter road.

I want to ask the Minister, because of all the recent reports and community concerns in light of all the investment going into the Sahtu region, and going through the Nahendeh region, is the Minister willing to come with me to the Sahtu communities and talk about a better plan on how we look at upgrading the Mackenzie Valley winter road to a stage where we can look at an all-weather road going into that region.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. David Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I intend to drive the winter road as soon as session is over, weather permitting. Maybe the Member could accompany me on that journey. Any opportunity that I get to get into the Member's riding and the Sahtu to talk about opportunities there, I would certainly be more than happy to take him up on his offer.

Just this morning we continued the dialogue with industry. I met with MGM this morning in regard to concerns about the winter road, and the regulatory environment and a number of other issues. We all need to be continuing that dialogue and working to develop those resources. We have to get more wells drilled in the Sahtu so we get a better

understanding of what is actually in the ground there.

MR. YAKELEYA: I certainly am up for the challenge. If the Minister wants to go for a ride, let's go for a ride.

I want to ask the Minister, I appreciate your response and want to ask, the oil companies in the next five or six years are spending hundreds of millions of dollars in the Sahtu. I'm not too sure what else we need to prove that, hey, let's start building a road here. I mean, we have some other projects, but this is where we're spending the money in the Northwest Territories, which can come into billions of dollars.

I want to ask the Minister, part of our trip to the Sahtu, that we sit down with the communities, with the chief and say, there are hundreds of trucks coming through on this period of time, this is what we need to do. Cut down the hill, widen it, even look at presenting a paper to the federal government and say let's start working on the Mackenzie Valley road from Wrigley north. Is the Minister willing to look at that?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: We continue to work on the planning activities for the Mackenzie Valley Highway. As I mentioned yesterday in the House, we have got some further funding from CanNor to allow us to continue the work on the environmental assessment process, and other studies and consultations that will be required in advance of a Mackenzie Valley Highway being constructed. Certainly, again, an opportunity to get into the region. I certainly enjoy spending time in the Sahtu and if there are opportunities there to get into to talk to stakeholders in the region, I certainly will take the Member up on his offer.

MR. YAKELEYA: Would the Minister also look at preventative measures next year for the Department of Transportation as advising these hotshot rookie drivers of semi-trucks that you need to listen to the people in the North, maybe put on chains and then the tires on some of them? I'm not too familiar with the Sahtu hills and driving through this region here. Can the Minister put together a policy that all drivers would know when they come into the Sahtu, driver beware?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: In talking to industry and to the department, we certainly understand that communication is key to the operation of the winter road in the Mackenzie Valley. I think there were a number of lessons learned this winter and this season. This season isn't quite over but as we get into next season, I think a meeting, a readiness session on the use of the Mackenzie Valley winter road is certainly something we can look forward to helping undertake. Also, again, I think we need to continue that work with industry. I think there's going to be even more activity taking place next

winter, so the more preparation and communication we can do up front, the better the end product.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Also part of the planning is the safety of the roads. I want to ask the Minister if he would seriously consider looking at some routes in the Sahtu where there would only be a one lane section, because these roads are really, some of the areas are real goat trails and we need to really put some strong safety issues into those areas. I ask the Minister if he would consider looking at the route also for safety measures.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Yes, we are looking at that. Again, given what's happened here this winter with the weather and the traffic, I think we need to be looking at all of that. Certainly, from our perspective, safety of that road and the safety of the travelling public is the number one priority.

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

QUESTION 34-17(4): DECENTRALIZATION

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Premier if he could confirm that the 18 positions that are referred to in the budget address yesterday, is that the total extent of the decentralization being looked at for this fiscal year? Thank you.

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

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The 18 are the ones that have been identified as decentralization. There are other positions that will be identified through devolution. But for the 18, I can confirm it looks like there are five positions that will be decentralized to Hay River. Thank you.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Again, not wanting to pre-empt any kind of process or notification to employees or anything, but is the Premier able to be any more specific about those positions?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: There is one position with liquor licensing and enforcement and four would be the Business Incentive Policy office. Thank you.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: I thank the Premier for that. I think there's actually a lot more but it's probably not easy with where we are in the business plans to identify all of those, so we will stay tuned and get updates as they become available.

MR. SPEAKER: No question. A comment. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

QUESTION 35-17(4):
DENE KO DAY SHELTER FUNDING

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In reply to my last question, I heard the Minister of Health and Social Services, in some manner or form it sounded like he blamed the people who attend the day shelter for the, I'll say, tone and atmosphere.

Maybe the Minister can elaborate further as to the running of the day shelter. Is it blamed on the people who run it there or the people who manage it? Let's get this on the record and get some clarity. Thank you.

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Nobody's really to blame. I'm just saying that this service is needed, and in the facility and how well it runs is largely dependent upon on who's using the service. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: To be clear, what role does the management play in the operation and running of a day shelter, if the Minister is blaming the problems on the clientele?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: The role of the provider, as I laid out earlier, is to provide a warm place for the individuals to attend, and then they recommended a couple of additional things that they would like to do. Those things were like referrals, and training of staff and so on, and various aspects of the staff.

I'm not really sure where the Member is indicating that there has been blame issued to anybody on the running of the facility. It is what it is. How we provide a service is dependent upon our clientele.

MR. HAWKINS: Let's summarize it this way: If we have deviant behaviour going on at the day shelter, wouldn't you expect the management to provide a safe and controlled environment that allows people to be there in a warm place in winter that doesn't have substance abuse of any kind or even violence? Wouldn't that be sort of a management issue, not necessarily a client-driven issue?

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Hawkins, that is really a fine line where we're attacking the media; not the media but the people in management in those positions and they're not here to protect themselves. They're not here to say anything. But I'd like to redirect your question to the Minister. I'll give you that opportunity. Thank you. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate your guidance on that issue. The ultimate problem here is we have well-known deviant behaviour happening there. The Minister has even highlighted it in our discussions. Is the management responsible to provide a safe environment that is free of violence and substance abuse? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: I think the management's responsibility is to provide a place for individuals to attend. I think they indicate that if there are other issues, other behaviours of the clientele that they're looking for some training to deal with it, but I suppose that if you want to indicate that the responsibility of a warm, safe place for individuals to attend the day shelter, then I guess that would be the responsibility of the people operating the shelter.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Short, final supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, the Minister has spoken about how the management has changed the contract there by changing services or even offering services. Maybe you could elaborate what they are doing outside of the original proposal that we have not agreed to. I am trying to understand what is happening there and I think the public deserves that. Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: I think I indicated that they had requested some training in certain areas, and that they have requested that they be allowed to deal with some of the other organizations in the community in which they can refer their clientele. I think the original concept of its shelter was to provide a warm, safe place for individuals to go during the day. These are people that don't have anywhere else to attend. But the opportunity of getting the people together, the provider thought that these things had been added and had requested that, and had not actually changed the agreement in any way or the contract in any way. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to opening address. Item 11, replies to budget address, day two of seven. Item 12, petitions. Item 13, reports of standing and special committees. Item 14, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 15, tabling of documents. Mr. Hawkins.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 11-17(4): ARTICLES ON DAY SHELTERS

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table three documents. I will table them as a compendium package here. What I will do is I will name what they are. They are three individual stories that are printed off from the Internet. One is called the New Orderly Daytime Home Shelter Looks a Lot Different this Year. The second one is Part I, The City and the County Takes on Madison Day Shelter, and third, Drop-in Homelessness Linked to New Shelter. They are very interesting stories that I think are good for the public to see.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Item 16, notices of motion. Item 17, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Mr. McLeod.

Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

BILL 1:

TLICHO STATUTES AMENDMENT ACT

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, February 11, 2013, I will move that Bill 1, Tlicho Statutes Amendment Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 18, motions. Item 19, first reading of bills. Item 20, second reading of bills. Item 21, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Tabled Document 9-17(4), NWT Main Estimates, 2013-2014, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I would like to call Committee of the Whole to order. Tabled Document 9-17(4), NWT Main Estimates, 2013-2014, is the only matter before the committee today. What is the wish of committee? Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that we report progress.

---Carried

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

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. SPEAKER: Report of Committee of the Whole, Madam Chair.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Tabled Document 9-17(4), NWT Main Estimates, 2013-2014, and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Do I have a seconder? Mr. Yakeleya.

---Carried

Item 23, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, orders of the day for Monday, February 11, 2013, 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Opening Address
11. Replies to Budget Address
12. Petitions
13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
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
 - Motion 1-17(4), Setting of Session Hours by Speaker
19. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 1, Tlicho Statutes Amendment Act
20. Second Reading of Bills
21. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Tabled Document 9-17(4), NWT Main Estimates, 2013-2014
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 Monday, February 11th, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 11:49 a.m.