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The Honourable Jackie Jacobson, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Wednesday, June 5, 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 1:31 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Jackie Jacobson): Good afternoon, colleagues. Before we get started, I'd just like to wish all my Inuvialuit beneficiaries back home, happy Inuvialuit Day. It's Inuvialuit Day.

---Applause

Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 67-17(4):
EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT
FRAMEWORK RENEWAL

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, this Assembly's vision of healthy, educated people contributing to a strong and prosperous northern society starts in early childhood, from prenatal to five years. The departments of Education, Culture and Employment and Health and Social Services have worked collaboratively to craft a renewed Early Childhood Development Framework based on best practices and national and international research. We will be tabling this document later today.

From the comprehensive engagement process at the start of the year, the framework includes input from nearly 500 completed surveys, webinars with child and health care practitioners, community focus groups, regional meetings, home visits, and an Elders' Sharing Circle. A roundtable with more than 100 early childhood experts, leaders, child care and education professionals, health and social services professionals, and policy-makers helped to round out our comprehensive engagement process.

Feedback identified the need for emphasising support to the whole family, improving and expanding existing services, communication and awareness of available services, qualified and dedicated staff, cultural infusion and, in some cases, increased funding. Program availability, affordability and accessibility were main concerns.

Feedback also identified several successful programs, including Healthy Children Initiatives.

Mr. Speaker, we have taken all of this valuable information and built it into the renewed framework. In order to provide the quality supports and services that children and their families need, our front-line professionals must also have access to information, opportunity and training. Our infrastructure options are being explored across the territory.

The Right from the Start awareness campaign that is currently running also received positive feedback. The campaign targets two-parent households and single parents, as well as community members, caregivers, grandparents and other family members. It includes multimedia advertising through print, radio, social media, parental tool kits, distribution of baby bags, and a website with resources and information. A second phase of the campaign will focus on how the government is providing service and support for early childhood development.

Mr. Speaker, we are moving forward to provide our young children with a strong foundation on which to learn and grow, and supporting our families and communities with information, resources and services. Healthy, educated people sustained by a clean environment and enjoying the benefits of a thriving economy are essential to the future of the Northwest Territories. Our renewed framework is one of several strategies this government is working on to support our people, develop our economy and protect our environment. This includes work like the Anti-Poverty Strategy, Community Safety Strategy, Land Use and Sustainability Framework, the Economic Opportunities Strategy, Mineral Development Strategy and Energy Strategy. We look forward to keeping the House informed on the progress of the Early Childhood Development Initiative. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 68-17(4):
EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT
FRAMEWORK

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be joining my colleague, the Minister of

Education, Culture and Employment, in tabling Right from the Start: A Framework for Early Childhood Development in the NWT later today. This framework not only responds to the priorities of this Legislative Assembly, it also answers concerns that are top of mind for the people of the Northwest Territories.

Research informs us about the importance of the first years of a child's life, and the wisdom of our elders and our communities has confirmed this. The return on early childhood investments has been well documented.

The Early Childhood Development Framework will guide our actions in this area over the next decade. It contains commitments to action in seven key areas. Starting during pregnancy, we need to ensure that expectant mothers have the support they need, whether it's help to stop drinking, eating a healthy diet, being protected from an abusive relationship, or getting the best prenatal care possible. We can do a better job of providing early childhood assessment services to all families, and we will improve our range of programming to respond to identified needs.

We have heard that we need to help families by providing better outreach and public education initiatives, and this will be part of our commitment to action. We also need to make sure that families have access to quality, affordable early learning and child care programs.

Finally, the Framework includes a commitment to monitoring, reporting and ongoing evaluation of our efforts in these areas.

Over the summer we will finalize an action plan to support the commitments in this Framework. It will outline our priorities for action over the next three years, and will be supported by a monitoring and evaluation framework so that we report on progress and adjust our work in response.

Mr. Speaker, this Assembly has a vision of a strong, prosperous Northwest Territories where our people can thrive and reach their full potential. Achieving that vision takes a balanced agenda that makes progress on not just our social priorities but also our economic and environmental ones. Right from the Start is an investment in our people and it is also an investment in our economy and our environment. Along with the other strategies this Government is putting into place, it will help us ensure our people are able to share in the benefits and responsibilities of a unified, environmentally sustainable and prosperous Northwest Territories. I look forward to updating Members on the success of this strategy in future Sessions. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 69-17(4):
ABORIGINAL CULTURAL AWARENESS
TRAINING

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce a new initiative that aims to promote the Government of the Northwest Territories as an inclusive workplace, a key commitment of 20/20: A Brilliant North, the NWT Public Service Strategic Plan.

The Northwest Territories is proud to be the only jurisdiction in Canada that recognizes National Aboriginal Day as a statutory holiday, and we celebrate on June 21st of each year. To coincide with Aboriginal Day 2013, I am pleased to confirm that the Government of the Northwest Territories will be launching Aboriginal cultural awareness training for employees of the GNWT public service.

Participants will gain increased understanding about Aboriginal culture; enhanced awareness, recognition and respect in the workplace; and a renewed spirit of inclusion among GNWT employees. New staff will learn about the communities and regions they live in and the residents they serve. They will learn that the land is our life and the source of our wealth and well-being. Healthy people depend on a healthy environment, and our natural resources have the potential to transform our economy, creating jobs and opportunities for all.

Cultural awareness helps to build a shared sense of community and culture among people with diverse backgrounds. Diversity and inclusion are crucial aspects of a strong and stable public service. Ultimately, this training reaffirms that Aboriginal values and partnerships are a key foundation piece for the GNWT, and guide program design and implementation in the spirit of recognition, respect and responsibility.

The four modules cover the importance of culture and cultural awareness – Aboriginal People of the Northwest Territories, History of the Northwest Territories from an Aboriginal Perspective – and present and future issues for Aboriginal people in the Northwest Territories.

The modules are made up of videos, photographs, artwork, stories, audio recordings and interactive activities designed to generate discussion. The training material is relevant, comprehensive and informative, and will promote an inclusive work environment through broadened cultural understanding. Businesses and community groups are welcome to use it if it meets their needs. The modules will be available starting on June 20th on the Department of Human Resources website. Facilitated training sessions for GNWT employees in regional centres and Yellowknife are scheduled to start this fall.

Mr. Speaker, strengthening relationships with Aboriginal Governments is a priority of the 17th Legislative Assembly. Our recognition, respect and commitment for Aboriginal culture and values are strong. Successful initiatives such as the launch of Aboriginal language apps, that were developed by Education, Culture and Employment in partnership with Yamozha Kue Society and the Dene Aboriginal language communities, to preserve and promote language use; the recent Traditional Games Championships highlighting Inuit and Dene traditional games; and the respected Take a Kid Trapping program introducing youth to traditional harvesting practices help all residents gain knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal values and practices. This understanding helps strengthen our communities and governments as we work together to serve the interests of all NWT residents.

Mr. Speaker, the training was developed with the support and involvement of the Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated, Deninu K'ue First Nation, Smith's Landing First Nation, Salt River First Nation, Yellowknives Dene First Nation in both Detah and Ndilo, and Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation. These Aboriginal organizations and governments, along with the Prince of Wales Heritage Museum, provided a significant amount of the audio and video material.

As well, members of the GNWT Aboriginal Employee Advisory Committee and employees from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations provided valuable input and feedback throughout development.

Mr. Speaker, the GNWT is committed to promoting an inclusive work environment, increasing communication and improving working and personal relationships through broadened cultural understanding. As a government, we are also committed to ensuring that programs and services acknowledge and are inspired by NWT Aboriginal values and traditions, and that public servants can carry out their work guided by this philosophy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON GWICH'IN AND INUVIALUIT SUPPORT FOR DRAFT DEVOLUTION FINAL AGREEMENT

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to say a few words on behalf of the Gwich'in and Inuvialuit support of the draft Devolution Final Agreement. The Gwich'in and Inuvialuit people have called the land in the Northwest Territories

home. As a Gwich'in participant, I am proud to stand in this Legislature and say that the Gwich'in and Inuvialuit have a long history of living on the land. It is this history that proves that the Gwich'in and Inuvialuit have a rightful seat at the table when it comes time to decide how the Northwest Territories lands are used.

The Gwich'in did the right thing when they chose to support the negotiations back in September 2012. I would like to emphasize the importance of Gwich'in and Inuvialuit participation in the implementation of the Devolution Agreement. The Government of the Northwest Territories and the Government of Canada have to transfer all of the information linked to land management in the Northwest Territories and the GNWT has a responsibility, through the Intergovernmental Council created under the Devolution Agreement, to find effective ways to work with Aboriginal governments.

Devolution should not just bring more power to the Government of the Northwest Territories but it should empower the Aboriginal governments of the Northwest Territories.

In closing, I would like to commend our Premier, Mr. McLeod, and our team here for strengthening the working relationship with all Aboriginal governments in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NAHANNI BUTTE FLOOD DAMAGE

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Given the importance of the day here today, I still wish to fight on behalf of my communities and constituents.

I will be doing a statement on Nahanni Butte. It has been one year since the flood in Nahanni Butte but many services have not been restored, such as the store, public radio or the community dump. The main access road that was flooded last year, reconstructed this January, is no longer passable. Sides of the road are collapsing, and the sand fill that was used to repair the road is getting people's vehicles stuck.

You may recall last October, when people were driving their trucks through the water and ice that was forming all over the sunken road. Once again, travelling is risky and it's unreasonable to expect community members to take that risk. They cannot get to the river to travel to the other side. It is unsafe and unreliable as so many people are getting stuck. The road to the community dump was inaccessible again this spring due to a wet road that was never properly reconstructed. Now, as things dry out, the fine silt deposited by the flood produces

dust that is easily inhaled and can be a health hazard.

The government must move forward on plans to continue to reconstruct both the access road and the road to the dump. The longer we allow these issues to go unresolved, the more it will cost to fix the situation in the future. Solid waste disposal is a challenge in all of our remote communities and if the dump is inaccessible, it only makes matters worse.

With the access road in such poor condition, it is difficult for the community to rebuild, provide for itself and properly accommodate visitors. Last year the community was evacuated and people returned to the soggy remains of the place they were proud to call home. The community needs adequate resources to continue to support and rebuild. Nahanni Butte does not want to be forgotten again.

The community's needs are important, especially a transportation link they are so proud of. The first priority is a reliable access road. From there they will be able to restock the store, repair the buildings, use the dump, tune into their radios, and make great progress on rebuilding this summer. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NWT TRACK AND FIELD CHAMPIONSHIPS IN HAY RIVER

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we sit in here today, over 1,000 youth throughout the Northwest Territories are converging on Hay River at the 23rd Annual Track and Field.

There are 33 teams representing 16 communities. Obviously, Hay River, Yellowknife, Fort Simpson, Fort Smith, Nahanni Butte, Wrigley, Fort Good Hope, Rae-Edzo, Colville Lake, Fort Providence, Fort Res, Fort Liard, Jean Marie, Inuvik, Kakisa and Ndilo.

It is with great honour that we represent the Northwest Territories and host these youth. We wish them all the best of luck.

The youth are at different levels. Some are there just to have a good time and compete. Some of them are trying to set records. So, good luck to everybody and safe travels to everybody. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON EDUCATION REFORM

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's high time we overhaul our education system in the North. I'm so glad that's finally happening today.

The Minister has done a lot of public consultation that will go on throughout the summer. It is especially important that we listen to the small communities, both parents and leaders.

I want to talk about what is at stake. We're talking about the future of our children, our future as a territory where our children have the skills and knowledge they will need to live well in this world. Will they have the tools to solve their own problems and create their own future?

Every one of us cares deeply about our residents back in our ridings at home and even here in Yellowknife. Our education needs overhauling. If left unchecked and have the attitude that it's good enough, I say no. I believe our children are better than good enough.

A few years ago a study was done for Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, as it was called then, to show the financial benefits of improving the education of Aboriginal people. Here is what they found out. If an Aboriginal student reaches the same level as other students, benefits and savings would be huge. Huge! Over 20 years, tax revenue in the Northwest Territories would increase by \$666 million. Savings in program spending would be about \$1.2 billion. That is a \$2 billion benefit, my friends, plus the improvement of many, many lives. That is the federal government talking, not me.

Our own government research shows that this is true. When we improve the education, we improve the people's health and the cost of health care. We increase employment, we create business and jobs, reduce the number of children in the care of child and family services, we reduce family violence and all sorts of crimes. We save a lot in the justice and correctional system and this is good.

There are reasons we need to succeed in overhauling our education system. It must work well for everyone in the Northwest Territories and that means fixing it where it's failing: in the small communities. I have said this for years and we have to do the right thing. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CREATION OF NWT FINE ARTS SCHOOL

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's time to take the next formal step in the development of our arts industry and culture through the creation of a professional fine arts school. As the Economic Opportunities Strategy report pointed out, people want increased government emphasis on the arts. The sector is broad-based, including literally thousands of producers in the NWT. It gives back huge multipliers in spending and employment, far higher than, for example, the oil and gas industry. People, and especially youth, prosper more fully in

all realms of life when they receive arts training. It makes better citizens.

Despite realization of the need to support the arts industry, our efforts to date have been piecemeal and unfocused. A fine arts school would establish the locus of artist excellence in the NWT. With major reductions in federal support for the arts, there is both a need and an opportunity to step in to fill this gap.

I'm talking about the creation of a formal, independent fine arts school, professionally run and affiliated with one of the major southern fine arts institutions such as Emily Carr School of Fine Arts or the Ontario College of Art and Design. It would need a residential capacity for students from communities attending courses and to house instructors from elsewhere. It could start as a summer school, progressively building programming and faculty.

We currently have a surge of vacant space coming forward in Yellowknife now with the Bellanca Building and the Department of Transportation and other government offices being vacated as they move to their new building downtown. Much of this space is in Weledeh, an ideal location for an institution.

We have an opportunity now to take action. Our first step would be carrying out a feasibility and marketing study. I'll be pushing for that in our next round of business planning. We need to look at this not as a new cost to pay but as a new revenue to reap.

An arts school, no less than a trades school or college, is a factory for economic production and an incubator for new taxpayers. By pulling together and focusing our efforts, untapped artists across the territory would have access to professional development support, a place of excellence and inspiration.

Our artists are ready, willing and waiting. Mr. Speaker, I'll be looking for Members' support in carrying this board and getting this done. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL
OF CANADA ON THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
INCOME SECURITY PROGRAMS

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to speak to the Auditor General of Canada's report on the Northwest Territories income security programs.

This audit identified systemic problems in the Department of Education, Culture and Employment in their delivery of core programs: Income

Assistance, Student Financial Assistance, the Senior Home Heating Subsidy, and the Child Care User Subsidy. A majority of files reviewed by the auditors did not comply with key legal and policy requirements for these four programs, 90 percent of the files in the case of income assistance. The Auditor General's staff considered the errors were significant and said so in their report.

This government spends \$30 million annually on income support programs. That's just in the Department of ECE. That figure would be much higher if we considered the cost of all 16 subsidy programs to the government. But I digress.

The Auditor General of Canada's report tells us that Education, Culture and Employment is failing to run these four programs properly. There were three key recommendations from the AG's report: The lack of monitoring of programs, the need for more and better training for staff, and the lack of assessment for programs.

Is the \$30 million we spend on these programs reaching the people who really need it? My experience with constituents suggests it is not. My experience suggests that income support staff try very hard, but they are not able to meet their clients' needs.

Mr. Speaker, behind the numbers and statistics are real people who need help and who deserve respect. I'm talking about the Income Security Program staff and the Income Security clients. It's very telling that the Department of ECE has a 50 percent annual turnover rate for client service officers. It indicates a work environment that is much less than optimum. It indicates a work environment where staff are not supported or assisted.

The Auditor General's report points out that many client service officers struggle with vague program guidelines, a lack of monitoring and supervision, and inadequate training.

The report also called attention to client service officers' caseloads which, in some cases, are more than 100 per month; overworked managers; and employees' safety concerns. Such a staff cannot effectively serve their clients' needs.

Thankfully, the department has accepted all of the Auditor General's recommendations. In our meetings with them, ECE officials listened closely to the Members' concerns, and they've told us they have started to act and will continue to act until the system is reformed. I certainly hope that is true. Only time will tell and Regular Members will be watching carefully. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
SATELLITE HEALTH INSURANCE OFFICE
IN HAY RIVER

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am going to follow up on something that was alluded to in my colleague from Hay River North, Mr. Bouchard's, Member's statement when he was talking about the renewal of health care cards and the length of time it's taking. I'm going to talk a little bit more about something he referred to at the end of his statement, and that is a satellite health insurance office for Hay River.

The division of health care services located in Inuvik is called health services administration and has 22 positions that deal with health care card registrations, renewals, vital statistics, births, deaths, marriages, and ensured service benefits administration – for example, medical travel, extended health benefits for specific diseases, seniors benefits, Metis benefits, non-insured health benefits – and some of these benefits are partially administered by Alberta Blue Cross and are non-insured health benefits.

There are parties in Hay River, persons in Hay River that would like to see a satellite office for health care services located in Hay River. There are a large number of patients that come in from the Deh Cho and South Slave regions to attend medical appointments in Hay River, have testing done, blood work done, ultrasounds, mammograms, et cetera, and these patients would then have an opportunity to visit a health care office, health insurance office in Hay River rather than trying to contact the Inuvik office to file a claim or obtain assistance.

Inuvik is a very busy office, and it takes too long to respond to the claims and inquiries, and there have been numerous complaints about the time involved for waiting for claims to be processed and reimbursed. An office in Hay River could relieve that backlog and take the pressure off the Inuvik office. This would alleviate some of the waiting time and reduce the frustration of communicating long distance, as well as provide on-site communication with patients. Health insurance workers could meet face to face with patients, providing more effective and efficient services to clients.

The delays in receiving claims causes emotional and financial hardship on some people, especially seniors and small business who cannot afford to carry the cost in the interim. An office in Hay River could work directly with the people involved and provide efficiencies in the system.

Hay River is a large enough community that experienced and skilled staff could easily be recruited to such a satellite office. Opening an office in Hay River would also provide an economic benefit of the jobs that it would create. There are local businesses and much community support for

an office such as this to be opened in Hay River, and I want to say that I do believe in decentralization. I'm glad that the current office is in Inuvik, but we would like a small piece of that in Hay River.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
29TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
INUVALUIT FINAL AGREEMENT

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today is a very important day for the Inuvialuit people of Inuvik and the Beaufort-Delta region; in fact, throughout all of Canada. On this day 29 years ago, June 5, 1984, in the hamlet of Tuktoyaktuk, the Government of Canada and the Inuvialuit gathered on the shores of the Beaufort to sign the Inuvialuit Final Agreement.

The Inuvialuit Final Agreement was built in the hopes and hard work of the many involved, and its continued success is attributed to the ongoing dedication of the Inuvialuit. The IFA was the first comprehensive land claim agreement signed north of the 60th parallel, and only the second in Canada at that time. Approved by the Canadian Parliament as the Western Arctic Claims Settlement Act, it took precedence over the acts inconsistent with it. The act was also protected under the Canadian Constitution, in that it cannot be changed by the Parliament without the approval of the Inuvialuit.

Today marks the 29th anniversary of the Inuvialuit Final Agreement. I would like to take this time to wish the Inuvialuit people of Inuvik and throughout the Beaufort-Delta region, the NWT and Canada, a great day of celebrations and a happy Inuvialuit Day. I would also like to thank the Inuvialuit regional leadership for their ongoing commitment and the support to the development of the Beaufort-Delta region.

The Inuvialuit are a very integral part of what makes Inuvik Inuvik and the Beaufort-Delta what it is. They have a world-renowned dance group, world-renowned arctic sports demonstrators, and strong ambassadors that continue to meet at the international level. They have a culture that is thriving as we see both the youth and elders continue to practice traditional ways of life. They have a strong language program, and that is proven with the launching of the book "Taimani" in February of 2012, which illustrates the timeline of the history of the Inuvialuit, and actually goes to support the development of the Inuvialuit as a culture and society.

I am very proud and very honoured to stand in the House today to wish the Inuvialuit of the community of Inuvik and the Beaufort-Delta a very happy Inuvialuit Day and I wish them all the best in the

future. I wish them all successes that they are pursuing in the future, as well as greater achievements and successes in their future endeavours. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Moses. Before we continue on, colleagues, I'd like to welcome back former Member Sam Gargan, former MLA for Deh Cho; and Leon Lafferty, former Member for Monfwi. Welcome back to the House.

---Applause

Also, I'd like to welcome Yellowknives Dene First Nation Chief Eddie Sangris – welcome to the House, Eddie – Chief Clifford Daniels from Behchoko, our Grand Chief Eddie Erasmus, welcome. From the Tlicho, grand chief, and the Gwich'in Tribal Council vice-president Mr. Norman Snowshoe. Welcome to the House.

---Applause

The honourable Member for Range Lake, Mr. Dolynny.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ACCESS TO CONTRACTS INFORMATION

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Back in mid-March, during the review of the Public Works and Services 2013-2014 Main Estimates, I asked many questions about the new downtown Yellowknife office building. The reason for these questions is that this \$30 million project was being built over a number of business plans and it is important to understand the different costing schedules that taxpayers would be on the hook for. In fact, MLA Robert Hawkins also asked a number of questions regarding the terms and conditions and holdbacks of the project as well.

Following that session, there was a series of e-mails from my office of Range Lake to Minister Abernethy's office asking for the right to review the construction contract for the building, the building schedules, amendments and, of course, the costs. What my office received from the Minister's office was the following statement: "The Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act creates a mandatory exception to the public's right to access information that could possibly harm the business interests of the contractors/businesses. This mandatory exception does not allow public bodies the discretion to disclose such information, such as "completed copy" of a contract without undertaking a required third-party consultation with a contractor or business, as required by the act. As such, completed copies of contracts will not be distributed. If you are interested in an individual contract, please let me know and we will seek third-party consultation to release the contract as required under the act."

Sorry, I thought I was an elected official of this government, and the people of Range Lake have

elected me to be a steward of the public purse and watch out for accountability and our government spending.

The plot thickens. My office received another statement from the Minister's office and it said, "We have reviewed the act, and there is no exception that allows a public body to provide this information to an MLA without proceeding through the formal ATIPP application. As such, we are unable to provide copies of contracts without there being a formal ATIPP application on a specific contract. Should you have concerns about a specific contract, you can file an ATIPP application with the Department of Public Works and Services."

Of course, I complied to the Minister's request, and I had my office pay the fee for an ATIPP application with the Department of Public Works.

Well, on May 29, 2013, my office received a reply from the office of Public Works and Services and I was shocked to find the department wanted to charge me \$1,477.75 to photocopy a whopping 1,992 pages of documents. All I can say is this is nothing more than a document dump and a ridiculous...

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Dolynny, your time for your Member's statement is concluded.

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

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. DOLYNNY: ...charge to ward off a Member of this government the right to get answers to simple questions and to protect the public purse.

Strangely enough, this is a recurrent theme that I as a Member see all too often when I assist constituents who want to gain access to information from this government. It almost appears that this government has a history of document dumping and fee shock to scare off would-be inquiries. This now appears to be the tactics used on an elected Member of this House.

I will be tabling, later today, my bill from the Department of Public Works and Services. Yes, I will have a few questions for the Minister later today. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY 2013

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today is World Environment Day. It is the biggest and most widely celebrated day for positive environmental action. It is perhaps fitting that this day we chose to vote on a motion to support devolution on the management of public lands and resources from Canada to this government. I hope that this is a

sign of our strong determination to respect our land and environment.

We Dene people are part of the land, the land is part of us, it is integral to our lives. We thank the moose or caribou, it gives us life to feed us, to keep us strong and healthy. We thank the land for feeding the animals and for our safe travels on it. This is what the elders teach. The elders have also prophesized that the land would change, that the deer will come back, that water will be valuable, that the sun will get hotter. We have seen all of this happening.

In our lifetimes, the weather has turned much warmer, there is more rain, the pattern of caribou migrations have changed, and permafrost is melting. I guess it's not permanent. We must be aware of all of these things as responsible stewards of the land. The elders teach us to be observant when we are out on the land. It is key to our survival and to the health of the land.

There are many pressures on our land today. We're building roads to new mines; we have oil and gas development and pipelines; we've been called upon to allow fracking to spur the flow of oil and gas to the surface. We have to balance consultation and resource development. We have to make some hard decisions. We have to base them on good scientific knowledge and traditional knowledge. It is the only way we will succeed.

In the Deh Cho this has always been the goal of our land use plan. Twelve years ago and \$6 million later, we should have more results. It is not easy to balance the wishes of industry and the elders' advice for a sound, effective management system. If governments were more serious about it, we'd soon be able to implement a land use plan we could all be proud of.

On this World Environment Day, we should celebrate the good work we have done, but also recognize that we have much more to do. Our world's environment depends on what we do every day. That is what the elders teach. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nadli. I recognize Mr. Abernethy.

POINT OF ORDER

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to rise on a point of order based on rules of debate 23, subsections (h) and (i) with respect to the statement made by Mr. Dolynny.

Mr. Dolynny made reference to the fact that the department has encouraged him to submit an ATIPP request and has then filed or suggested that he'd have to pay some fees to get the information that he has.

Mr. Speaker, as MLAs and as Ministers we have to balance the rights to privacy versus the release of

information. In this particular case, the Member has been seeking, through the House and during debate in Committee of the Whole, a copy of a contract. We have an obligation to protect the rights of third-party interests in all situations, but in this particular situation, before information on a contract can be released, we would need to go to a third party to seek that additional information. We've encouraged the Member to do that. To date, we actually do not have a letter or an application from the MLA requesting this information.

MR. SPEAKER: Do you have a point of order?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: We do. The point of order is that the Member for Range Lake has suggested that we are impeding his ability to get detailed information to do his job. The fact is, we have encouraged the Member to submit an ATIPP request. The Member has not submitted an ATIPP request. We only have one ATIPP request on this information and it's from a third party, from an individual who hasn't identified himself to be working in any capacity with the MLA, and it has been from a home address, not a government address.

I'm concerned, Mr. Speaker, that the Member is suggesting that we are intentionally trying to keep information from him, which is not the case. We have rules, we have procedures, and I've encouraged the Member to follow them. I am waiting for the Member to follow them, and when the Member follows them, we will deal with them accordingly.

As far as fines as according to ATIPP, any person can ask to have the fees waived, and in this case nobody has asked for any fees to be waived. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. At this time I'm going to allow a little bit of debate on this point of order. Mr. Dolynny, would you like to respond to that point of order? Mr. Dolynny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today in defence of this point of order. The allegation that this request, this ATIPP request did not come from the office of Range Lake is absolutely absurd. Mr. Grant Pryznyk is a constituency assistant of mine and I think everyone in this House knows he is a constituency assistant of mine. He is the one who submitted the ATIPP request.

So the fact remains that this came from the office of Range Lake and the Minister is clearly aware of this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. I will allow a little bit of discussion on the point of order. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in defence along the lines of Mr. Dolynny's request.

As we all know, two truths or two perspectives can lie before the House and both can be equally correct. They may not necessarily share the same view.

In order for Mr. Dolynny to discharge the duties and functions of his job, as highlighted under privilege under Beauchesne's on page 11, this is part of the essence of getting to the facts and the details necessary for dialogue and discussion.

No documentation of this nature should be hidden from Members without confidential reasons. That alone should stand on its own merit and use at the most finest opportunity ever to defend why we don't release things because of that.

So, Mr. Speaker, in short, I think there is no point of order on this one. Mr. Dolynny is executing his job, as I certainly understand he is. He's reaching out under privilege in his ability to do his job. I think Beauchesne's stands clearly on the record and says he has to execute that duty, and by asking for information denied by the Department of Public Works, even fettered by Public Works or delayed by Public Works, whatever the circumstances are, it's stopping him from fulfilling that.

So I say Mr. Abernethy doesn't have a point of order. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Menicoche, to the point of order.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In speaking with Mr. Dolynny this morning and yesterday, he did show me documentation that actually was a response to his request, in fact asking him for money to get that information that we as MLAs are privileged to get. I don't know what's going on with our Legislature, but we should not be paying to get information from the Cabinet side. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Miltenberger, to the point of order. Mr. Miltenberger has the floor.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, the issue is the Minister has risen on a point of order where he's said the Member opposite was imputing motive contrary to our rules of order. We're engaging in a debate over material not before the House, so the Speaker is going to be required to use all his skill to sort through what has transpired. The information we've seen was that the documents filed were by private individuals that didn't identify themselves.

It's a busy day today. Today is important for other things. I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that we do our normal good work and carry on with the business of the House. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. At this time, I will close on this point of order and take

it under advisement and report back to the House tomorrow. Mr. Hawkins.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES ACT

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since 2008, that was the last time we saw any significant amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act. Five years later, so many more problems come forward, and we need, once again, to take a look at this serious issue.

I've stood on a few occasions to talk about my concerns about affordable rent protection and even enforcement from the rentals office and implement an order that they provide. As we all know, there are no rent controls in the Northwest Territories. To be clear, I'm not in favour of supporting the idea of rent controls per se, but I have spoken at length and continue to support reasonable rent accommodations, and I'd also say tenants need protection.

There's a necessity to go back and look at this particular problem as well as several other issues under the Residential Tenancies Act. Living somewhere is not a luxury; it is a necessity. If the everyday working family is priced out of the market, something is wrong.

I think there's an occasion here before us to open up and have some good discussion both with landlords and tenants to find out what's working. I've spoken previously about setting up a framework where we set limits of what they can continue to raise, and if they need more money – the landlord that is – then they come back and have a dialogue. It could work something like the PUB right now.

Other issues I've raised, and I continue to see problems here, is some landlords have bad tenants and they cannot evict them, and the process seems to stall while these tenants don't pay rent and cause further problems. Again, that's only one side. That's not the whole picture, but I think reviewing the Residential Tenancies Act is a chance to get both sides into the issue, create fairness and ensure that we are listening.

The last issue I want to raise about problems under the Residential Tenancies Act that need to be looked at is the fact that, look, we had problems with the rental office. They can issue an order but it has no teeth. We saw that last year, and we have a situation, is the big guy, or the landlord, may be fully funded to be able to go fight these with lawyers, but the little guy who's trying to defend what they perceive as an injustice, it's almost like mounting a hopeless cause some day. Then when you do get an order issued by the rentals and tenancies office, nothing happens because the big guy can ignore it.

In short, I think the Residential Tenancies Act needs to be reviewed, and I will be asking the Minister of Justice to look at this very matter in detail later today.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
29TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
INUVIALUIT FINAL AGREEMENT

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Along with my colleague from Inuvik Boot Lake, I want to stand today to recognize the 29th anniversary of the Inuvialuit land claim. The signing of the land claim was a historic moment back in 1984, and I think we owe our gratitude to the people that negotiated, the Committee of Original Peoples Entitlement, or COPE as it was called back in the day. They did a lot of good work in leading up to this.

Since the signing of the agreement, the Inuvialuit have worked hard to play a very important role in the economy, and I think there's no better example than when you go through the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation office in Inuvik and you see all the folks that are employed along with many of the subsidiary companies that many, many of the people there are employed. It was a good first step to self-sufficiency and it gave us a better ability to control what goes on in the Inuvialuit land.

The Inuvialuit land claim covers thousands of square kilometres. I don't know what people realize, but what I just learned lately is that much of this, a good portion of this is put aside for conservation, and if there's any industry or any work to be done on the land, then the Inuvialuit have the deciding factor in whether work is going to happen on there or not, which I think is huge. It's not going to be decided for us.

They're also in the process of negotiating a self-government agreement. I was just texted some pictures from up in Inuvik, and it's wet and it's snowing up there, but they're still having a great celebration out on the main road. Nothing dampens the spirits of the people of Inuvik and the Inuvialuit. They'll dance through any kind of weather.

I would like to pass on my personal congratulations to the Inuvialuit. Like many of the people up in the Beau-Del that are both Inuvialuit and Gwich'in, I think we're all very proud of our heritage, and we look forward to the good work that these folks are going to be doing in the future, and we look forward to being the beneficiaries of that good work. I think we owe a great deal of gratitude to all the people that came before us, paved the way for much of the Inuvialuit-Gwich'in leadership today.

With that, I want to pass along my personal congratulations. [English translation not provided.]

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
CONGRATULATIONS TO TU NEDHE
RECIPIENTS OF 2013
PREMIER'S AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to congratulate a few people on the Premier's Awards that were given out this morning in the Great Hall, people that originate from Tu Nedhe: Danny Beaulieu – my brother, actually – and Heather Beck for their work in the anthrax breakout; Felix Lockhart for his work in the residential school impacts; and also Justin Bailey and Everett McQueen for their work with young people.

I also want to take this opportunity to congratulate Jonas and Violet Beaulieu of Fort Resolution who celebrated their 60th anniversary on May 19th in Fort Resolution.

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

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are a number of very important visitors that I want to recognize. From the Tlicho: Grand Chief Eddie Erasmus and his wife, Frances Erasmus; Chief Clifford Daniels; Bertha Rabesca-Zoe, legal counsel with the Tlicho; former chief, Leon Lafferty. From the Gwich'in: vice-president Norman Snowshoe and Jozef Carnogursky. From the Akaitcho: Chief Edward Sangris, Roy Erasmus, former chief Peter Liske. Also, I want to recognize former Lapointe Hall student Sam Gargan. From the Northwest Territories Chamber of Commerce: president Kathy Gray and executive director Mike Bradshaw. I also want to recognize the Government of the Northwest Territories devolution team that were the recipients of the Premier's Award this morning: Martin Goldney, chief negotiator; Mark Salvor, Tara Naugler, James Fulford, Ian Blackstock, Dr. Hal Gereine, Hugh Richardson, Peter Bannon and Penny Ballantyne. As well, I want to recognize Rick Edjericon, the chair of the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board, and Willard Hagen, the chair of the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board. Of course, I have to recognize two very important ladies in my life, my wife, Melody McLeod, and partner for over 40 years, and Darlene Mandeville, my constituency assistant for Yellowknife South. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, it gives me also great pleasure to recognize my constituents from the Monfwi region. First and foremost is Grand Chief Eddie Erasmus and also Chief Clifford Daniels that are here with us, leaders of the region. Clifford Rabesca-Zoe, Frances Erasmus, aka Goolie, and former chief Leon Lafferty is here with us as well and also Mike Wetrade. I would like to welcome them to the Assembly. Mahsi.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize some residents of Inuvik. Norm Snowshoe has been recognized as vice-president of the Gwich'in Tribal Council; Mr. Jozef Carnogursky from Inuvik. Welcome to the Assembly. Mavis Jacobson still from Inuvik and is here in Yellowknife temporarily, and Mr. Willard Hagen, a constituent of Inuvik Twin Lakes and just in Yellowknife temporarily, I hope. I would also like to recognize Mrs. McLeod. Thank you.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a constituent of the Great Slave riding, Mr. Parker Kennedy. Parker is a valued member of the Department of Justice team including the community of justice and policing division and currently a special advisor to the assistant deputy minister/solicitor general. He is retiring at the end of the month. He is a commissioned officer at the RCMP with more than 30 years of service including inspector of the northern region. He has devoted his life to the service for his country and was recently recognized with a Diamond Jubilee medal. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize, in the visitors gallery today, a resident of Hay River South, Mr. Jack Rowe, a businessman in Hay River and the president of the Rowe's Group of Companies, who employs not only in Hay River where they are based but also a large number of people in the South Slave. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. DOLYNNY: Mr. Speaker, I rise today and I would like to welcome all the distinguished guests here in the gallery and also to our signatories of the Devolution Agreement. I would also like to welcome two residents from the riding of Range Lake. I have Mr. David Wasylcin here and I have Mr. Kim Poulter. Thank you for joining us.

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

MR. BOUCHARD: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Ralph Sanquez, one of my constituents. I would also like to recognize Jack Rowe, resident of Hay River, and also Nicole Latour, former resident of Hay River and her mom is a constituent. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BROMLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am still spotting residents of Weledeh here, but one that really caught my eye was, in fact, my wife, Marianne.

---Laughter

It is great to see you in the House. I would also like to recognize Chief Eddie Sangris and past chief Peter Liske, who are in the House today from Weledeh. Also Rick Edjericon has been mentioned. Welcome, Rick. Mike Byrne is here today. I think I saw Greg Loftus up there, Baptiste Foisey, Andrew Robinson and I would like to especially recognize Suzette Montreuil, not from Weledeh, but I know she's a super worker on behalf of the public interest and welcome to all. It's great to see folks in the House today. Mahsi.

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

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have to recognize a couple of Frame Lake constituents, one of whom Mr. Bromley is trying to steal. Welcome to Ms. Suzette Montreuil; welcome to Mr. George Lessard. I'd like to welcome all the dignitaries who are here today in the House and if there are my constituents behind me who I can't see, I'd like to officially welcome them as well. Thank you.

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

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to welcome all the guests that are here. In particular I'd like to recognize former Speaker, MLA, chief and grand chief, Mr. Sam Gargan from Fort Providence; also, Arthur Elleze and Russell Elleze as well.

I'd like to also highlight the two Pages who have been here throughout this week. Ms. Christina Bonnetrouge is 15 years old and in Grade 9. This fall she will be in high school, Grade 10, and her favourite subjects are math, language arts and gym. During her spare time she can be found reading, writing or playing on her guitar. Her favourite sport is badminton. This summer she may take part in a badminton tournament that will be held in Saskatoon, the Canada Aboriginal Badminton Tournament. There they will have Olympic athletes that will be training them before the tournament. She's very outgoing with sports, committed to her school, working as a career goal set for herself that she wants to be a nurse or a physiologist. Also, at the same time, I'd like to recognize Mr. Anthony James Betsaka, who is also a Page from Fort

Providence. Anthony is 14 years old. He is in Grade 8 at Deh Gah Elementary and Secondary School in Fort Providence. He likes math. He's very quiet and shy, and he likes to spend a lot of his time with his family. He's into games and challenges himself with all kinds of Lego.

I'd also like to recognize, this morning, the Premier's Award for Excellence, the team category. Congratulations to all recipients of the Premier's Awards that occurred this morning, particularly the Anthrax Emergency Response Team from the Deh Cho, Fort Providence: Danny Beaulieu, renewable resource officer III, Edward Landry, renewable resource officer II and also Tommy Matto, regional fire technician with ENR. Mahsi.

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

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to welcome and recognize Norman Snowshoe, who is the vice-president of the Gwich'in Tribal Council; Jozef Carnogursky, the president of the Nihtat Gwich'in Council; Willard Hagen, who has worn many hats over the years and has been very influential in how our government's informed, and with the Gwich'in Tribal Council as well; constituent Mavis Jacobson. I'd also like to welcome the devolution team who's done a lot of excellent work, and especially during consultations up in Inuvik, and any of the other leaders that are joining us today. Welcome, and I hope you enjoy the proceedings.

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

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to recognize vice-president Norm Snowshoe, also Jozef Carnogursky, president of the Nihtat Gwich'in Council. Also, former president Willard Hagen and all the other Aboriginal governments here today. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to also recognize Rick Edjericon and Willard Hagen. I'd also like to recognize Nicole Latour, Chief Electoral Officer. I'd like to recognize the other governments who are here. Grand Chief Eddie Erasmus and Grand Chief Gargan, all the other chiefs, Chief Sangris, Chief Clifford Daniels, and I'd also like to recognize Mrs. Bertha Rabesca, former MLA Leon Lafferty, and I'd like to recognize vice-president Norman Snowshoe and Jozef Carnogursky, Mavis Jacobson, and also a good friend of the people in the Sahtu, Parker Kennedy. I'd also like to recognize an old hockey player, Peter Liske. He was a pretty good hockey player in those days. Thank you.

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

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to recognize all the distinguished guests, the chiefs and others that we have in the gallery today. I wanted to specifically recognize Ms. Kathy Gray, president of the Northwest Territories Chamber of Commerce, and executive director Mr. Mike Bradshaw for all the work that they helped in contributing to the Economic Opportunities Strategy

As well, I wanted to thank the devolution team, Martin Goldney, Penny Ballantyne and the rest of the staff that have put in such a great effort in getting us the deal that we've got. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. I also would like to welcome here today my son Mitchell, my daughter Kirstin, and my oldest daughter, Chelsey, who's back from Texas.

I would also like to welcome my sister Mavis Jacobson, Ms. Melody McLeod, the Premier's wife, and Mrs. Bromley. It's always good to see our other halves, our Members' wives here in the House supporting their husbands. Their better halves.

Item 6, acknowledgements. The Member for Hay River North, Mr. Bouchard.

Acknowledgements

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 5-17(4):

2013 PREMIER'S AWARD - RALPH SANQUEZ

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to acknowledge Ralph Sanguiez, who received the 2013 Premier's Individual Award. He's a hardworking employee for MACA, a strong representative of our local fire department, and soon to be a proud father. I'd like to wish him and Shannon good luck with the birth of their child.

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

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 6-17(4):

2013 PREMIER'S AWARD - COLVILLE LAKE TOMMY KOCHON AIRPORT TEAM

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to congratulate the Colville Lake Tommy Kochon Airport Team for the 2013 Premier's Award of Excellence today. The Tommy Kochon Airport was officially opened on October 9, 2012, and was a significant gain for the people in Colville Lake. I applaud the people of Colville Lake and their leaders in their hard work and dedication towards their community. This award is well deserved.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Item 7, oral questions. Mr. Bromley.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 308-17(4):

CONOCOPHILLIPS APPLICATION CONCERNING HYDRAULIC FRACTURING (FRACKING)

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Minister of ENR, the Minister of Environment. I'd like to follow up on questions I had the other day about fracking.

In the unedited Hansard of June 3rd, on page 24, Minister Miltenberger said we are of the opinion that if, in fact, ConocoPhillips complies with everything that they've promised plus the extensive list of mitigating factors put forward by GNWT, this project could proceed, other than meeting those commitments by ConocoPhillips and addressing the concerns raised that we have supplied to the Sahtu Land and Water Board.

Conoco did not, in fact, agree to address many of the options raised by the GNWT. In fact, in the areas of technology, options for burning waste, gases, air emissions, assessment and screening level modeling, groundwater and surface water protection are very key areas for environmental protection, and as I know, dear to the Minister's heart. Accordingly, the Minister's faith in Conoco was unwarranted. So will the Minister adjust his opinion based on the facts clearly on record?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is a process underway. The Member has raised some concerns. He has a different point of view than we do as a government, so we'll have to agree to disagree on that particular issue.

MR. BROMLEY: I'm not sure if the Minister is saying that this is, in fact, incorrect. I'm sure, in fact, that these are facts. They are contrary to what the Minister has said, and that's my point.

The Minister also claimed that the Sahtu Land and Water Board would adopt these, and in fact, the Sahtu Land and Water Board also rejected the terms and conditions that the GNWT put forward in these areas, so this is further evidence that there is a need for an environmental review here.

Could I get clarity on what the Minister is saying here? Clearly, his statements were wrong, as per the record, as this is on record to be available at the touch of a button here. Is the Minister saying he's not willing to adjust his opinion in the face of contrary facts?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: We have submitted the position of the territorial government. We have reviewed the application from

ConocoPhillips. Those are the two facts that I put on the record yesterday.

MR. BROMLEY: There were additional facts that the Minister put forward, and I'm quoting verbatim from the unedited Hansard here. The Minister also said that there was a big distinction between the MGM application and ConocoPhillips. The Minister said, "The ConocoPhillips application is very comprehensive. It covers a whole host of areas, which is one of the reasons there was a different decision made by the Sahtu Land and Water Board when they looked at the MGM proposal. It didn't have the same depth and level of comprehensiveness as the ConocoPhillips one does."

Well, in fact, there were others interested. The Sahtu Renewable Resources Board, for example, renewable resources councils, and they actually did a line-by-line comparison, and in fact, there were very few improvements to the Conoco application, but they are equally bad on a number of important points. Conoco certainly had a lot more effort in making friends inside and outside the region, and perhaps that's good...(inaudible)...but unless by depth and level of comprehensiveness that Minister Miltenberger means the application had more nice pictures, it was longer and had a better explanation of Fracking 101, then the application does not provide any more.

Again, will the Minister look into these facts, which are contrary to what he said in the House, and consider adjusting his opinion to the protection of the public interest?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: The information I provided to the House was accurate. The Member is quoting chapter and verse from some document, some feedback he's providing this House that I don't have before me, and of course, we always check when there are issues raised by the Members and they query the actions of government and they ask us to double check. Of course, we'll do that.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad to finally get that commitment. These are the Minister's words, and the record. The vast improvement in the application, as the Minister claimed, doesn't hold up. The conditions that the Minister suggested would be adopted by ConocoPhillips and the Sahtu Land...(inaudible)...don't hold up.

What action does the Minister see is needed here in light of these facts to protect the public interest, the clean air, water, and health of the wildlife and their habitat that this Minister is responsible for? I'm looking for accountability here.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: What we have is a lot of assertions and opinions by the Member. He says they're facts. He asked me to check. We'll check.

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

QUESTION 309-17(4):
FLOOD DAMAGE AND RESTORATION
IN NAHANNI BUTTE

MR. MENICOCHE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. During my Member's statement I raised many of the issues in Nahanni Butte that haven't been completely restored or repaired in the community of Nahanni Butte as a result of the flood. I know that through MACA they have established a flood committee to address their concerns, but I would like to ask the Minister today what committee or process is in place to continue the community restoration one year after the flood.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member is right; there was a flood committee we had made. All the claims have come in and the recommended compensation. We have submitted a claim to Canada for reimbursement under their Disaster Assistance Program.

As far as the committee that's together now to do the rest of the work, I don't think there's a committee per se. It's probably the individual departments now working with the community.

MR. MENICOCHE: I was very happy to be in Nahanni Butte for my spring visit there, and the community has advised me that the damages are still there. There is some work that hasn't been done. The dump road. They're going to have to look at increasing dust control and the cost for trying to get the radio station up and running. Those are the issues.

I'd like to ask the MACA Minister if he or his officials can meet with the community, because they're looking at their own resources to repair these when, in fact, it should be under the purview of MACA and the Disaster Fund.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I will commit to the Member that we will have our officials meet with the leadership in Nahanni Butte to identify some of the work that still needs to happen. As well, the other departments. I know DOT is doing some work on their portion of it. I will make that commitment to the Member that we will get our officials in there to work with the leadership. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MENICOCHE: Mr. Speaker, I am thankful for the Minister's commitment. If he can also work with the Department of Transportation, because there is

road access issues and, as well, it will probably be the same type of gravel that they need for the community, as well, if he can do that. Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, we will work with the other department to see what assistance that we may be able to provide to the community, and I will commit to the Member that we will do that. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 310-17(4):
RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES ACT

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement today, I cited concerns with the Residential Tenancies Act, so I think we could probably dispose of my question very quickly if the Minister is agreeable to a review of the act.

Specifically, I highlighted concerns about fair rental protection measures for hardworking families, a rental officer office that has very little authority or teeth to be able to enforce. The Minister needs to call forward a discussion group between landlords and advocates, to ensure that processes work better when it comes to things like evictions or compromises.

The last issue I want to highlight, complaints that are brought forward to the rentals officer. Quite often the complainants have zero support and are left at an unfair advantage when they do take their courses of action against landlords.

Citing all four of those concerns plus many more I'm sure I can provide today, would the Minister of Justice be willing to open up the Residential Tenancies Act for review and call for some public discussion from groups that should be involved in the evolution and certainly in the creation of a better, stronger act? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In response to the annual report of the rental officer and questions raised in the House, the department undertook a review of the act through a contractor here in Yellowknife, and information about the review and the issues that were brought up were shared with the Standing Committee on Social Programs in December 2012. The review is based on a series of interviews as well as examinations and other discussions with individuals who had concerns about the Residential Tenancies Act.

Initial consultation work is underway and is going to be completed soon. We expect that we'll be coming forward with an LP to standing committee in the fall to make revisions to the Residential Tenancies Act.

There are eight core issues that have been identified in the report that we'll be dealing with: securing a tenure in public housing, application of the act to transitional housing, enforcement of orders, unofficial occupants, conversion to public housing, retention of the inspection report, and consistency with the Condominium Act and tenants' liability and domestic violence. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, that is certainly good news. The issue I think I didn't hear the Minister speak to is protection for renters. Is there a chance to look at opportunities to create some type of rent protection measure?

As we all know, the act allows landlords to raise the rent once a year, only on that anniversary, but the problem with that is they could raise it to any amount. If your rent is \$2,000 and they say, well, let's raise it to \$5,000, which is something legally we can't stop them from doing, we need to put a check and safety valve on this process. That is what I'm asking for.

Would the Minister be willing to look at that issue and consider it in the update? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, it is an interesting point. We certainly are willing to have discussion with committee as we bring the LP forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, maybe just one more on the issue of helping complainants bring forward their cause or concerns. When they go to the rental tenancy office, if they are fighting a landlord, quite often, not always, the landlord is well resourced and able to hire a lawyer to fight their perspective, but the little guy or gal who is fighting their cause, for various reasons is under-resourced, and we want a fair hearing.

Would the Minister be willing to look at that type of fairness and find some way to see how we can find our way through this problem? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, it is an interesting concept. We are certainly willing to have that discussion with the committee as we bring the LP forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 90-17(4):
NWT ARTS STRATEGY PROGRESS REPORT
AS OF MARCH 31, 2013

TABLED DOCUMENT 91-17(4):
RIGHT FROM THE START:
A FRAMEWORK FOR EARLY
CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT IN THE NWT

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following two documents, entitled "NWT Arts Strategy Progress Report as of March 31, 2013," and "Right From the Start: A Framework for Early Childhood Development in the Northwest Territories." Mahsi.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 92-17(4):
PUBLIC WORKS AND SERVICES
ENERGY CONSERVATION PROJECTS
ANNUAL REPORT 2012-2013

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document, entitled "Public Works and Services Energy Conservation Projects Annual Report, 2012-2013." Thank you.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 93-17(4):
LIST OF INTERACTIVITY TRANSFERS
EXCEEDING \$250,000 FOR THE PERIOD
APRIL 1, 2012, TO MARCH 31, 2013

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [Microphone turned off] 32-1(2) of the Financial Administration Act, I wish to table the following document, entitled "List of Interactivity Transfers Exceeding \$250,000 for the Period April 1, 2012, to March 31, 2013." Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Tabling of documents. Mr. Dolynny.

TABLED DOCUMENT 94-17(4):
EXCERPT FROM ACCESS TO INFORMATION
AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY ACT (ATIPP)

TABLED DOCUMENT 95-17(4):
E-MAILS REGARDING ATIPP REQUEST ON
YELLOWKNIFE OFFICE BUILDING CONTRACT

TABLED DOCUMENT 96-17(4):
PUBLIC WORKS AND SERVICES INVOICE
FOR ATIPP REQUEST ON YELLOWKNIFE
OFFICE BUILDING CONTRACT

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table three documents today, the first of which is a copy of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the section where I've highlighted regarding the access to information as a Member of this House. Second item, I have a series of e-mails from my office of Range Lake to the office of Minister Abernethy, which deal with the requests and the ATIPP questions regarding the access to information of the Yellowknife downtown construction of the building. The third item is a copy of a bill for Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act in request of such information. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dolyunny. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. We'll take a 10-minute recess.

---SHORT RECESS

MR. SPEAKER: Order. Item 17, motions. The honourable Premier, Mr. McLeod.

Motions

MOTION 17-17(4):
SUPPORT FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE
NWT LANDS AND RESOURCES
DEVOLUTION AGREEMENT,
CARRIED

HON. BOB MCLEOD: WHEREAS the transfer of responsibility from Canada to the Government of the Northwest Territories for public lands and resources, including rights in respect of water, has been an objective of this Legislative Assembly;

AND WHEREAS negotiations among the Government of Canada, the Government of the Northwest Territories, the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, the Northwest Territory Metis Nation, the Sahtu Secretariat Inc., the Gwich'in Tribal Council and the Tlicho Government have resulted in a proposed Northwest Territories Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement;

AND WHEREAS residents of the Northwest Territories have been informed of and engaged on the subject of the proposed Northwest Territories Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement;

AND WHEREAS the devolution of public lands and resources, including the rights in respect of water, is an important step in the political evolution of the Northwest Territories, with significant implications for both the legislative and executive branches of the Government of the Northwest Territories;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River South, that this Legislative Assembly express its support for the approval of the Northwest Territories Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement.

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

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to introduce this motion seeking the support of the Legislative Assembly for the approval of the Northwest Territories Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement. We are here today because we want to seek clear direction from the Legislative Assembly on this question and we will respect the wishes of this House. This is not simply a symbolic motion. We would not have brought forward this motion today if we did not want Members' support.

When I joined the Prime Minister and the leaders of the Aboriginal governments in this Chamber in March to announce that we had successfully concluded devolution negotiations, I made a commitment to bring this agreement to the floor of this House for approval. We have not done this for other devolution from Canada before and we did not have to do that for this devolution, but we recognize that this is an important agreement, Mr. Speaker. This agreement has the potential to transform the economy of the Northwest Territories, create a future of opportunity and prosperity for all people, give us new tools to manage our environment and help us forge new partnerships with this territory's Aboriginal governments.

An agreement this significant deserves some attention from the people of the Northwest Territories and from the Members of this Assembly that are elected to represent them and their interests.

We have done our public engagement, Mr. Speaker. We have consulted the territory's Aboriginal governments. The agreement-in-principle has been publicly available for more than a year and a draft agreement has been available since negotiations have been concluded in March.

Devolution has been a goal of this and previous Legislative Assemblies for many years. When we first met as a Caucus in October 2011, we identified devolution as one of our priorities. We have debated it on the floor of this House many times. We have spent years in negotiations. Now it is time to reap the rewards of that hard work and effort. We have a deal, Mr. Speaker. It is a good deal that creates a solid foundation for a prosperous future.

I am proud of this agreement and I am proud to be able to bring it to Members today to seek the support of this House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The seconder of the motion, Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very honoured today to second this motion. This is history in the making in the Northwest Territories.

If I could go back to my campaign material for the last five elections, I'm sure I'd see devolution at the top of every platform, and that is also a part of a platform that I believe everyone in this House ran on. It is an amazing feat, indeed, to see the agreement that has come into place that is before us today.

I see that the newspaper, the Yellowknifer, says that MLAs have no say on devolution. I would like to know about those hours and hours of briefings that I attended, because we certainly did have a lot of information shared with us as it went along, as did our Aboriginal governments and our Aboriginal leaders, and I want to commend them today, too, for their part in this.

Looking back, I've said this before in this House, but I'll say it again, and not to belabour the point, but as over the years I have scanned the landscape for what kind of leadership it would take to pull this agreement together and pull the Aboriginal governments together, and we know that not every Aboriginal government in the Northwest Territories is yet a signatory to the agreement-in-principle or to the Devolution Agreement, but we have high hopes that they will be.

Like I said, as I look back, I wondered, in my own mind, I would see leaders come along and I'd say, who will lead the staff, the technical people to have that relationship with Ottawa. There are so many things that had to come into alignment in order to get to the day where we are today. I would like to very much commend our Premier, Mr. McLeod, for the work that he has done. He picked up the mantle from previous leaders as well.

I remember the day that Premier Floyd Roland signed the agreement-in-principle in the Great Hall with the Metis and the Inuvialuit, and I believe that was a brave move on his part. There was some heckling going on, and I know he had some trepidation, as well, as he embarked on this, because we want a good deal for our people. We don't want to sign on to something that we cannot believe in and truly endorse, and say that this will advance the aspirations and potential of the people we represent.

Today, as the Premier says, this is a good deal. As everyone knows in negotiations, negotiations are negotiations. There's no such thing as a perfect deal, but this is a good deal. It's a start of much work that lies ahead. There's much legislation to

pen as we go forward, and continued consultations with our partner governments as well, and many things had to align today to bring us to this point.

As I said, I am extremely proud to second this motion, and I am extremely proud of this government and where it has brought the devolution file.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, want to add my comments to this motion here. It has been a long time coming. From the small communities in the Sahtu and through my experience of being an MLA for the last nine years and my other years as being a chief negotiator in the Sahtu land claim, and also through the self-government framework in our endeavours to become our own government in our own land, not until I became a Member of the Legislative Assembly did I realize the difficulty and the challenges that we had, and I realized the amount of authority that Ottawa has on our resources, our lands and our water, and how difficult at times it is for them to honour and respect the people in the Northwest Territories.

It came to a point where I made different analogies about the Northwest Territories being the orphans in the Confederation of Canada. We have to go on our knees to beg Ottawa for this and for that. Even the Department of Indian Affairs, at that time, had more power in the Legislative Assembly, and I thought this is not right. Something's got to be done, and the doors of devolution were opened. Then I said we have a chance.

Then I looked at the economic benefits of this devolution deal, and again, I said Ottawa must have pulled a real fast one on us, because of the amount of millions of dollars they're pulling out of our resources of our land, and the billions of dollars they have taken away from the Northwest Territories. We are asking for health centres, good schools, roads, training centres. We have eight communities in the Northwest Territories that do not have full-time nurses. Unheard of. We have 11 communities without RCMP officers. Should we not be treated like any other community in Canada that we can assure our residents where we come from that they should have those essential services in our communities? On top of that, we should be the boss of our own land that the unparalleled precedent that this motion talks about is the partnership building with the Aboriginal governments.

We have settled land claims. We are in negotiation with self-government. That will not change. We are building up our own Aboriginal governments, inspiring our young people to go to school in classrooms or go to school on the land, learn education wherever you are going to be – that is

the uniqueness of the Northwest Territories – and work with other regions and other people. We have plenty to dream of. This devolution deal is giving us that. We are going to close one door and now open another door to provinces and futures envisioned, but not keep looking at that door and say, well, this is what it could be.

I know we are strong enough. We are smart enough to look at the challenges before us. That is what makes us Northerners. That's what makes us Aboriginal communities, leaders and people. That is what this devolution deal is there for. My grandmother said, anything is worthwhile in your life. You have to work hard. It also means commitment and sacrifice. Do more than what you are paid for. This deal has laid a foundation for my little children, your children and the sacrifice we make.

Ottawa is not going to give up easily. I know that in negotiations they fight tooth and nail like it was them that made the land, them that made the water. We know that is not true, but they act that way. They continue. This devolution will give us strength to the people across the Northwest Territories, that if we are to get what we want, we have to negotiate.

Also, someone said, if you want to get to the Promised Land, you have to negotiate your way out of the wilderness. We have to carry our own load. This devolution is scary because it is a means to success. Now we are going to be the owners. Are we scared of success? We cannot blame anybody but ourselves. We can only pat each other on the back and say, do your best.

We are not going to last forever, but our land will. Our land is the boss. If you put your mind to the land, it will make you very strong. That is what the elders would say. Put your mind to the land, and your land and your mind will be strong. Do not be afraid. If you have God with you, he will guide you. He works in mysterious ways.

I think this devolution deal is telling Ottawa, come to a point where we are standing up. The long-term vision is to have a constitutional place in Canada as true, equal partners of the founding fathers, mothers of Canada. It is the Aboriginal people. That is where we are building our relationship, is to honour them.

When I started the self-government negotiations of Tulita, we only imagined our own government. A lot of people said it can't be done, it won't be done. I said, okay, continue sitting on the sidelines while we go to work. That is what this devolution is doing for us. We are going to work and not to be afraid and work together and show Ottawa. Take your hands out of our pockets in the Northwest Territories and leave the resources where we need them to help our people. That is what it is doing for us and pushing us to challenge ourselves. That is why this devolution deal is critical at this time, that

we start working together with our partnership, create a North that we want to have. The Northwest Territories can be a very unique type of province.

I applaud all of the people that put this deal together over the years that this is going out and talked about, the people who have made some sacrifices for this devolution deal. The time is right to do this. The timing is right on this one here. At first I said no, no. However, over the time I've read and learned about it and I said this is a good deal here, yes.

So I think, Mr. Speaker, that I will continue to support the Sahtu people, and the Sahtu people say yes, we want this deal, let's negotiate our own destiny, let's have it in our hands so that we can tell our kids you did it, and you did it and this is the kind of North that we've created.

I thank the mover and the seconder for bringing this motion to the floor and I'm glad that we're finally having this discussion, and I believe and hope, and the Northwest Territories has a lot of hope. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. To the motion. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's hard to speak to this motion and bring something new to the debate, but speak I will and present my views and those of my constituents on this historic Devolution Agreement and this historic motion that's before us today.

Some months ago I was highly critical of the path taken by the government following the signing of the consensus agreement. I did not, and still do not, believe that non-Aboriginal residents had adequate opportunity to provide input into the final Devolution Agreement and the impending implementation.

I still believe, although not all my constituents do, that a plebiscite would have been the best way to inform, consult and canvas NWT residents on the Devolution Agreement and the implementation of the agreement. But as they say, it's water under the bridge. Here we are today, discussing and ultimately voting on a motion to support, or not, the approval of the negotiated agreement that was signed off some months ago.

Some have taken my criticism of the consultation engagement process as non-support for devolution, but I have never said that I am against devolution. I think it is the right move, the right way to go. It is what this territory needs, and as a Northerner I want my government to have control over our lands and resources. I want us to be masters in our own house, as Mr. Miltenberger likes to say. For too long we've been at the knee of the federal government with hand held out, asking for scraps. This Devolution Agreement is not perfect, but it's good enough. It will give the NWT greater

responsibility and home rule over our own northern affairs.

It's been a long time coming, but I'm happy and proud that we have arrived at this point. Kudos to the Premier and Cabinet, both past and present, to the leadership of all the Aboriginal governments, and to the negotiation staff of all the organizations who've been involved and who've worked so hard for so many years to get us this deal. Some are not still on the file, as we say, but their contribution is no less important than that of the staff who worked on the agreement last week or last year. Negotiations have been a prolonged but a concerted effort by many people, and I thank them all for their outstanding contributions for bringing us to this motion today.

Earlier I said the agreement is not perfect. I guess in any negotiation neither side gets everything that they want. There are concerns with portions of the final agreement and I have to give voice to those concerns.

First, the federal government has chosen to retain control over all of the currently leased NWT lands. We will have control over the rest of the NWT lands, but it will be a patchwork quilt, with many bits of land here and there retained by the Government of Canada. I'm afraid that it will create confusion and difficulty as we move forward on managing our own land, resources and development. It's unfortunate that the final agreement could not have solved this particular riddle. As a result, we will continue to feel the boot of the federal government on our neck for some time to come.

Second, there are many pieces of federal legislation which need to be adopted by the NWT to effect devolution. It's proposed that this legislation mirror the federal legislation and then be amended later on. We will want to tailor some of it to meet our own agenda, our own way of operating, but I know how full the job jar is for the NWT drafters of legislation. I know how much of our current legislation needs to be amended or revised, never mind the mirrored federal legislation. I am extremely skeptical that we will see any changes to the mirrored federal legislation for many years to come, and that will be an opportunity lost for a long time.

Third, the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act and the regulatory scheme that falls from it stays with the federal government. One of the exciting possibilities for the NWT as we contemplated devolution, was having control over our regulatory processes. It was going to be something that we could be far better at and stimulate our development in the North, but that's no longer possible, at least for the next five years. The negotiated arrangement will be revisited in five years' time, but there's no guarantee even then that we will be able to take over the regulatory authority.

Mr. Speaker, we are still going to have to put up with the federal government making appointments to our own NWT boards, something which I consider an insult. We will have control over the lands but not the regulatory process. It hardly seems like the simplification of the process that the mining and other development companies are looking for, and I would love to be proved wrong, Mr. Speaker, but only time will tell.

Fourth, we will receive \$67.3 million from the federal government to take over the responsibilities currently handled by the Government of Canada. That number is not enough, Mr. Speaker. I am seriously concerned that the NWT government will end up in a financial hole once all the staff and resources are transferred and we are doing the work that is now being done by federal employees.

Fifth, many constituents have expressed concerns about the implementation of the Devolution Agreement. They asked the following questions for which they have not received answers.

- What will the GNWT do with its new authority and roles in resource management?
- In a post-devolution NWT, after employees and jobs have been transferred to the GNWT, what guarantee do we have that things will remain as they are today?
- What have we heard from the NWT government, to date, to reassure residents that a post-devolution GNWT will carry on with all the activities currently done on our behalf by the federal government?
- What have we heard to give us comfort that the standards of service and programs that we take over will be maintained at the same level as they are now as delivered by Canada when they are delivered by the GNWT?

Constituents have expressed their concerns to me about the lack of information and the lack of opportunity to discuss how the Devolution Agreement will be implemented. The most definitive answer that I've heard is, "Trust us. We will make sure we do everything after devolution that the feds are doing now." That doesn't give me or my constituents much comfort or confidence. To quote a constituent, "Most of my biggest worries around the Devolution Agreement are with implementation, evaluation and monitoring. To date, the answers received, simply, are politically correct, which show no leadership or vision for the future of our territory after devolution." I seriously hope we can continue to have a conversation to answer those questions that are out there.

Sixth, there must be a public discourse on how the new revenues will be used, all that pile of money that's coming to us as a result of this agreement. The Finance Minister has said several times that our new money should be used for infrastructure.

Certainly, some of my constituents disagree with that allocation of funds, as do I. There are many other possibilities for our newfound riches, Mr. Speaker, and the public should have an opportunity to provide their opinions and ideas on how resource revenues should be allocated.

My personal view is that a large view of the resource revenues should be placed into the Heritage Fund on an annual basis.

Last, but not least, Mr. Speaker, we will not get royalties, resource revenues from the Government of Canada's share of the Norman Wells oilfield. This was something our negotiators fought very hard for, but it was not something they could call a win. You win some, you lose some.

Mr. Speaker, this motion asks the Assembly to express its support for the approval of the Devolution Agreement. It seems to me to be a rather tentative way of asking Members to vote yes or no on whether or not to accept the final negotiated agreement. Some may find it hard to believe, Mr. Speaker, but I am prepared to vote yes. I am prepared to support approval for the NWT Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement.

As I said at the outset, this is a good thing for the NWT. It's a huge step in our evolution as a government entity in the Dominion of Canada. And as the Rolling Stones so famously said, "You can't always get what you want." We don't have everything we wanted in this agreement, but it is good enough and I will be supporting the motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. To the motion. Mr. Dolynny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank Premier Bob McLeod for bringing this motion here today. I would like to thank our seconder, Madam Groenewegen, for allowing this to be debated here today.

We've got a lot of dignitaries and guests here today. I want to earmark the fact that we have a lot of signatories here for the Devolution Agreement and I want to thank them for joining us here today, and we have a lot of other distinguished guests. I appreciate everyone taking time out of their schedule to be with us here.

We've heard the word "historic," we've heard the word "epic," and I think I am going to add the word "legacy" to the amount of adjectives we've heard about today's events. We've also heard terminologies used, even today here and even in media. Is today more of a symbolic or is it more of a legally binding motion that we're bringing to the floor of the House, and this is only a few people that can think in that capacity? I will answer that question, but I will do so later on in my delivery here today.

I do want to first and foremost commend the Premier. As mentioned by the seconder, it takes strong leadership, determination and will to guide an organization of this magnitude with so many moving parts, so many levers, and to create this focus and to provide the NWT with such a great opportunity. I want to commend and thank the Premier for his steadfast determination. It takes a lot of will, and thank you for doing so.

I realize there has been a lot of legal and technical work over the years, too many years to count, but I realize that there has been lots of work on things like the consistency of the terms used and all the provisions that were required to meet for us to debate today.

There are way too many champions out there for me to mention here today. They all know who they are, and I think, for myself as a Member here, I'm sure many speak in the same vein. We want to thank you for your devoted attention and help on this subject.

I further realize that there will be ongoing negotiations as we progress along the journey of devolution, and I view today, like many, as just one of those steps in moving forward on this journey. However, there are still some concerns out there. You've heard a few already today. Ms. Bisaro brought a few here, and I want to add a couple more.

In terms of observations that we note at this juncture, there is still grave concern on a number of waste sites this government may be responsible for, and so I hope that the residents of the NWT will be continually updated throughout this process. This has been very loud and clear through many of the negotiations and many of the consultation information sessions. Therefore, I challenge the Premier and his team to keep this issue in the forefront as we move through this journey over the next couple of months.

The other thing that has been kind of an issue for me personally, as well as a lot of my constituents, is – and again, right from the very beginning, I have made it quite clear – this government knows that I haven't been a big fan of the 5 percent cap. Yet, in the same breath, I have been given some comfort, knowing that these shackles will be looked at at some time in the future as we become more productive in our resources and our resource extraction. Again, whether I'm still in office or not, I will keep watch on this one for sure, and I will hold the government of the day accountable, ensuring that the residents of the Northwest Territories will be keeping our fair share of royalties in the future.

Now I'd like to go back to my earlier question. Is this motion on devolution today symbolic or is this in some capacity a legally binding motion of the House? I would probably like to answer it probably this way: Are we prepared, as residents, to live

with the status quo? I think many here, and I think many residents have told us, I don't think they are prepared to do so.

We also heard, is devolution being done at any cost? I don't believe this is the case. I believe there has been a lot of effort, as I said earlier, and you will probably hear it from my colleagues today, a lot of effort has gone behind the case to support that. If one wants to believe we are symbolic in gesture today, this may be legally correct, but I'm sure historians will judge our voice today as having had direct significant political impact on its success.

Before I leave this topic, it's been said by many, but it is worth repeating and I'd like to say this again, this was not the greatest deal of all time for the Northwest Territories, but it is a good deal for the NWT and I am confident that it will ensure our economic future in the years to come.

With that, I give my commitment to this House that I will be supporting this motion.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. To the motion. Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to just begin by saying I'd like to thank the Premier and Madam Groenewegen for bringing this motion to the House. It is a very great motion and I'm very honoured to be speaking to it today.

Actually, I did make a Member's statement earlier, at the beginning of the 17th Legislative Assembly, on the history that this government's been doing, and in a short time period – I think it was only in quite a few months – we started making some changes within this government and how things were done, and that that change continues to happen even today.

Twenty months ago the Legislative Assembly got together. We did have a meeting with the Aboriginal governments, which was never done before, and moving forward, working and strengthening those relationships and we see it here today. When this AIP was signed on, we had two Aboriginal governments that had signed on and now we have five. It is a big step for this government moving forward, not only for this government but for the Aboriginal governments, as well, and the residents of the Northwest Territories.

All that couldn't have happened, as you've heard here today, without a very strong leadership, a strong Cabinet. At the beginning of this Assembly, when we moved forward, we voted the Executive in for a reason: for their experience, their knowledge and the work that they've done in the past. To be where we are today, that goes to show that the work that Cabinet and our Premier, Bob McLeod, have done.

Moving forward, as well, I'd like to offer a sincere thank you to my previous predecessor, the former

Premier and current mayor of Inuvik, Mr. Floyd Roland, who did take that big step for us as well...

---Applause

...to get the ball rolling and get the motions in action so that we can be here sitting today to debate this motion. I would also like to recognize and thank the hard work, dedication and commitment of the devolution team, which today just received a very prestigious award under the Premier's Awards, under the leadership of the Premier as well. I know the work that they've done and the meetings that we've had with them has not gone unrecognized. We appreciate the work that they have done. There have been a lot of sacrifices and a lot of challenges that they have had to endure so that we can get the information and have the changes within the Devolution Agreement package to where it is today and looking forward to signing the final agreement.

I would also like to recognize the work of the previous governments. As Mrs. Groenewegen has said, every government that she has been part of, devolution has always been a discussion item. I'm glad that here today that I'm part of the 17th Legislative Assembly government and moving this forward, as well as the work of the Government of Canada. Once again, it couldn't be here without the commitment and support of our Aboriginal governments who decided to take this on.

Speaking of that, I am very fortunate that in Inuvik, we do have two Aboriginal groups that they represent, we work with, we support with. I would ask them if they would like to say a few words. I would like to say a few words on their behalf, as well, in the House today. The Inuvialuit have been actively participating in devolution negotiations for over 20 years. We have two Members in here that can probably attribute to the work that they've been doing in working with them. They are looking forward and reviewing with the objective of improving the final devolution of land and resources later this summer. Paramount in this review is to ensure that the Inuvialuit Final Agreement on land and resource management system is not affected and are serious intergovernmental arrangements with the GNWT to build and improve the Inuvialuit Final Agreement system of protecting the environment and wildlife to meet the eye of the objectives. The Inuvialuit will be active participants in the implementation of the final agreement, and are preparing to engage the GNWT, and the federal government in particular, with the negotiations of the management of off-shore in the Beaufort Sea. Part of the preparation work is to use the resource revenues for the benefit of the Inuvialuit and work with GNWT to improve the social, cultural and economic conditions in our communities.

In September 2012, the GTC made an important commitment to all the residents of the NWT when it

decided to formally endorse the process to negotiate the present draft Devolution Agreement. The decision to support devolution was carefully considered by the GTC Board of Directors, and this decision was only made after the issue was addressed at the Gwich'in Annual General Assembly of last summer.

On behalf of the Gwich'in people, the GTC Board of Directors decided to support the negotiations of GNWT devolution for three reasons. First, the agreement will give the Aboriginal residents of the NWT more control over how their natural resources of the territory are used. Secondly, under this agreement, the Aboriginal residents of the NWT will gain a much greater share of financial benefits, linked to the use of these resources. Third, because, under this agreement, neither the financial benefits nor the chance of power to the GNWT will affect the Gwich'in Aboriginal Treaty rights. This includes the rights under the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement and those rights, powers and financial terms linked to an eventual Gwich'in Self-Government Agreement.

The Gwich'in Tribal Council recognizes the work of devolution is not done once these negotiations are complete. In fact, the real work of devolution is just beginning. The GTC is committed to implementing a strong Devolution Agreement to realize the benefits of devolution for the Aboriginal and all residents of the NWT.

It is with these comments that the Gwich'in Tribal Council encourages all GNWT MLAs to support the present agreement and to vote in favour of the present draft so that the real work of implementing a strong Devolution Agreement can begin at once.

We have two Aboriginal groups in the Beaufort-Delta region who are strongly committed and supportive of this agreement. Being a representative of the community of Inuvik and the Aboriginal groups, and working with them and the great work that they've done to be where they are today, and this government where it is today, I will be in support of this motion.

I just want to leave off with a little quote here that says, "every long journey begins with the first step." This motion today is that first step, it's a momentous step in moving forward not only for this government and all Aboriginal governments but it's a momentous step for the people of the Northwest Territories moving forward. We may not all be in the House 10 or 12 years from now, and we want to make sure that we instill and ensure that we have made the right decisions for our youth and our elders and people of the Northwest Territories moving forward. Thank you, and like I said, I will be in support of this motion today.

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

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we meet here today to vote on the Devolution Agreement with this motion, I believe that we have all found a common interest within our negotiations, which is very important in any negotiations.

This is a great long-term investment for the people of the Northwest Territories. When we first met here at the 17th Legislative Assembly, our vision was for strong individuals, families and communities sharing the benefits and the responsibilities of a unified, environmentally sustainable and prosperous Northwest Territories. Another one of our main priorities was building a strong and sustainable future for our territory by strengthening our relationships with Aboriginal and other northern governments, and also negotiating and implementing our Devolution Final Agreement. I believe we have reached that goal and I will be supporting the motion today.

Also, I'd like to thank the Inuvialuit and the Gwich'in who have signed on as stakeholders with this AIP and also the other signatories that have also signed on. I look forward to the future when other Aboriginal groups also sign on. Thank you.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As my colleagues in this Assembly know, the job of an MLA is not an easy one. Our job is to represent the interests of our constituents and to build consensus, especially when you come from a constituency that is split on a matter of great importance such as this.

I just wanted to go over a few things as well. Devolution is about self-determination and self-government. I know that Members have said that devolution has been on the books for 20-some-odd years, but just a little bit of history. Since the NWT joined Confederation in 1870, I think that first meeting, if you read Hansard, they're talking about devolving more power to the NWT even back then. Since then, many provinces have been carved from the great Northwest Territories and have gone on to be fully provinces of their own.

When I'm deciding over devolution, I'm going to be voting with my heart and conviction for the people in the communities and all the elders that are behind me. It's no secret that the Dehcho have concerns about devolution. The leadership does not want anything in devolution to negatively impact the Dehcho Process for resolving the Aboriginal title and self-government issues.

As MLA for Nahendeh and as a Dene person myself, I share these priorities too. The language in the document speaks a lot that Aboriginal and Treaty rights will continue to be constitutionally protected. As well, current self-government negotiations will not be impacted if, in fact, there

are further lands that, say, the Dehcho want to negotiate. I think at that time there is provision, as well, to increase any boundaries that agreed up and take those lands back from the Northwest Territories.

Earlier in the House, I spoke in my Member's statement about the community of Nahanni Butte. I think that's my focus. I don't want my communities and my residents to lose out on any of the benefits. I urge the Nahendeh communities and the leadership to carefully consider the merits of devolution. There are many benefits that they can use for positive development of their communities.

Just thinking back as I've done my spring tour in the Nahendeh riding this spring, I tried to convey to my constituents and to the leadership. I think in 1985, when we were a full Dene Nation then, we were negotiating a deal with Interprovincial Pipelines, which is now known as Enbridge Pipeline, for a portion of ownership for that pipeline. For whatever reason, it was rejected. The numbers varied, but the number I remember is about 5 percent ownership in that pipeline. The Aboriginal group at that time said no, we will hold out for more. Consequently, the federal government, based on national interest, approved the pipeline, and the pipeline was built. Now they look back, and the 5 percent interest was about \$1 million a year, Mr. Speaker. It's in excess of 30 years, so all that revenue is gone for the communities and the residents that we could have used to develop and build our communities.

I think we are faced with the same thing in the Deh Cho. It seems now if the Dehcho First Nation says no, the communities will not have access to that additional revenue to build their communities. So I'm in a bit of a quandary right now. That's why I stand up here and say we really have to consider this. For myself as MLA representing my constituents, I do not want us to lose out again.

As much as they said in the media in the communities about losing land, the federal government is giving land to the Northwest Territories. Yes, they are. We come from a long, proud history of a trapping economy, and that's using the land. By owning the resources and the land, we can still use the land to generate an economy. Now, that's the resources that we depend on that my parents told me about and my grandparents told me about.

As well, when we talk about devolution, I think about it as well as decentralization: a huge opportunity to get jobs out of Yellowknife into the communities and into the regions. As well, there is talk about additional revenue and creating infrastructure. Infrastructure should not only be built in Yellowknife but it should be built in the regional centres as well. We've got a lot of work ahead of us. We've got lots of legislation ahead of us.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I'm truly in favour of stopping the flow of resource revenues out of our territory, and I stand here today and say I will be supporting the motion on devolution. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Mr. Speaker, I have serious concerns about this agreement, and I know I speak for many Northerners as I describe these concerns to you. But before I do, I want to acknowledge and thank the Premier and his staff who have worked so hard, and in many cases joyfully, to develop this agreement.

This deal provides too little money to take over a regime that is already inadequate and underfunded. The annual funding transfer to run these programs falls \$20 million short, even of the estimates that we developed in looking at devolution a decade ago. We walked away from that deal in part because the money was not good enough.

There are many specific concerns that are bothersome. We will be enacting mirror legislation that perpetuates the weakened federal legislation that underpins the current management regime. We are getting the authority, but not quite, because we are forced to continue with the federal law we've already found so frustrating.

There's Norman Wells. There's the detailed schedules appended to the agreement that have remained unknown until last night and thus are not reviewed. The intergovernmental council is opaque. Concerns remain about the liabilities of contaminated sites devolved to GNWT or those that will develop as a result of limp federal review given the forced time frames and decimated budgets that they must deal with.

We don't know how much the deal will actually set us back. For example, we took firm action to require security for remediation and abandonment costs of development on Commissioner's lands. The new federal regime fails to demand this security, lowering the high standards we've learned are essential to responsible management in the public interest.

Our resource royalty regime is no better than it's ever been, and despite several objective reviews by different parties, including some by the federal government, all concluding our royalty rates are set too low. And despite imminent devolution, there appears to be no intent of this government to protect the public interest as our most valued resources are extracted and shipped off. Consider, for example, that as the federal Minister of AANDC admitted only Monday in Ottawa, the total revenues paid to Canada throughout the life of Giant Mine were \$4 million, a royalty rate similar to what is collected today from diamond mining.

The devolution deal is unsettling because of key authorities retained and actions being taken by our higher level negotiating partner, the Government of Canada. All we get out of this deal is the ability to permit development that the feds have brought forward through their inadequate review processes, when reviews happen at all. The federal government has held back the truly potent powers to decide what projects proceed to environmental review, and to review and recommend controls and safeguards through the environmental review process. We are left with the consequences.

Many believe this deal, and the way it's being done through a naive partner, reveals an orchestrated resource grab. While the federal government makes it ever easier to access and extract our resources ever more quickly, and retains power over project environmental reviews, we are seeing communities and government left cleaning up messes and people suffering ever greater disparities of income and opportunity.

Combined with the GNWT's open for business and worry about conservation later approach, a soaring cost of living, and a megaproject focus that benefits the few, the drain of Northerners will continue and even escalate, replaced with yet more commuting workers from afar. This, of course, would be in line with the strategy of the federal government and, certainly, the extractive industries that clearly have its ear, because as a consequence, it would be ever easier to ignore the public interest in favour of increasing reliance on raw resource extraction. Our current GNWT Cabinet seems disturbingly aligned with this federal government, heightening the worries that many feel.

Should these concerns be realized, we would see a continuation of the regime that has left us historically disgusted with the federal management of resources that has prompted many to already quit and leave. For those of us who are Aboriginal and/or long-term residents, here until death do us part, the lack of power to control the front end of managing development means many residents will continue to suffer from the negative social and environmental costs the federal regime has permitted and even promoted.

I am concerned about the hype and focus on the bucks we will get. To put things in perspective, all of GNWT's hypothetical resource revenues this year would have gone up in smoke with this year's commitment to the Inuvik-Tuk highway alone. And while we are getting more dollars, the federal government is cutting funding to our Aboriginal government partners.

Perhaps the saddest thing of all on this deal is our failure to meet citizen interest in being meaningfully informed and involved. Clearly, it is a different perspective, I know, than the Premier has.

While our Premier and this Assembly could easily have chosen to take this to the people for a direct participation, we chose the paternalistic way, typical of colonizing governments. Hey, people, we have the authority. We can make decisions without asking you a darn thing. As I said, sad.

I remain amazed that this government passed up this golden opportunity to hear the voice of our people and add the stamp of widespread support such a vote surely would have returned. When all is said and done, we still have the potential to learn from this divisive exercise so artfully staged by the federal government and wilfully rendered by ourselves. We do gain significant power, most immediately the opportunity to strive inclusively to gain the trust of those whose trust we have lost, to mend the division this process has cost and ultimately the opportunity to customize legislation to make it our own and eventually to get back to the table to finally devolve the environmental management regime on which responsible decisions can and must be made, decisions by the people who occupy the land.

To quote one of my constituents, Ms. Lois Little, "The path the NWT is on should be clear to everyone. There should be no divisiveness among us." We should indeed be masters in our own houses, as we have heard before today. Like Ms. Little, I do not believe we are there yet, but I am going to take a leap of trust and believe that we now recognize this as our goal, that we have learned a lot about how to and how not to get there, and that the insides of this Trojan horse – thanks, Mike – are more benign than some fear to be the case.

Yes, I will be voting in support of the motion for this increment of devolution. Yes, I support this historic next step towards home rule for the people of the Northwest Territories. Yes, I agree that for too long our citizens have been held at the whim of the distant, insensitive and often disinterested federal stewardship of our most important prerogatives. We have been under the control of a resource management regime that fails to meet our needs, fails to deliver maximum benefits to our people and, most importantly, fails to sensibly safeguard the social and environmental values we hold dear.

I will be voting in favour of the motion, but as must be utterly clear by now, my support is definitely a qualified yes. I, and I know my colleagues too, will be working hard, either within or outside this House, to try and ensure that this is a good decision, for it is how we go forward that is now critical, completing our family. Let's overcome the divide and conquer strategy we have pursued and meet the needs to get the Akaitcho and the Dehcho on board.

Implementation: Let's recognize that energy is fundamental to our cost of living, and pull it out of the empire of the Department of Energy, Minerals

and Petroleum Development and give it the stance it needs to serve the people.

Evaluation: What course correction assurances will we have in place?

Reporting: How will we strive to be transparent, openly consultative and accountable?

I hope this government has learned that how we do things is almost as important as what we do. Devolution, in principle, can be good. I am taking the high road. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. To the motion. Mr. Bouchard.

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you indicated, this is a big day today. I would like to thank the Premier, Cabinet Ministers and my colleagues here for all the hard work on this topic and all of the MLAs that came before us that have worked on this topic.

I will be supporting this motion. I support devolution, and devolution will give Northerners control over northern issues.

I believe that devolution will bring jobs from Ottawa to the North, and this Assembly has committed to putting those positions out into the communities and out into the regions. Devolution will bring us 60 or 70 million dollars per year. That money will go into the northern economy. It will add additional services to our constituents, to the people of the Northwest Territories. It will be used to pay down debt. It will be used to give money to the future generations in the Northwest Territories.

I have been able to discuss this issue, this very important issue, with all of my colleagues here, as well as all of the people of Hay River. We've been able, over the last few months, to have several meetings there. People have been asking me, is this a good deal, is this the deal we should be signing? I tell them, one of the examples is the Yukon government. As soon as they saw our potential deal, they wanted to go back to the federal government and sign a similar type of deal. So I do believe that it is a strong deal.

Is it the best deal? There are some things that aren't in this deal. Some of my colleagues have already referred to it. Regulatory review process has been left out. The federal government believes that they need to change it and get that implemented before we can take control. That's a big question.

Norman Wells revenue is not in here, resources that are northern. The revenue resources from that project are being taken out of the Northwest Territories and kept with the federal government. Is that acceptable? That's a question that the people will have.

My colleagues have also talked about a 5 percent cap on the amount of revenue sharing we can

have. Some people are concerned with that. Some people feel that the 5 percent actually limits us from raping our environment and controlling how much development we do. We don't want to take too much revenue because we'd just end up giving it back to the federal government. So that controls some of the development that we want to do. We want to do responsible development.

One of the other issues is the contaminated waste sites and what the liability issues for the future will be for this territory. That's a big question mark.

The other issue that's come up is, obviously, there are two Aboriginal groups that have not signed on. That is a shame. We need to keep working on that. Even more recently, as of even today, we're receiving concerns from the NWT, their concerns about the division of the Aboriginal governments' money and how it's going to be divided up. They are very concerned with this. The government is wanting to leave it in the Aboriginal groups' hands, and I understand that concept, but the NWT Metis are very concerned and not sure if they're going to continue to be in the process. I'm very concerned, obviously, about that.

With these concerns, I've obviously indicated that I will support it, and I think the benefits and the future of the Northwest Territories is very strong. So I think devolution will give the NWT a bright, shining future.

Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting this motion. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. To the motion. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud that this discussion, in my view a decision, is before the House. As I said back in March of this year and as I've said many times over the years, home rule is finally coming home to where it belongs: to the people of the Northwest Territories. We're in a position to chart our own destiny. We're in the position, if not the driver's seat, to make our own choices. And remember, sometimes when you're in charge, you do make mistakes. So I don't expect things to be perfect, but the exciting thing about being in charge is the people of the Northwest Territories are in charge, in partnership with their Aboriginal governments. So in other words, the people of the Northwest Territories are in charge of our future.

As I said back in March at great length, although I won't repeat it, Frederick Haultain, our first Premier back on October 7, 1897, had been fighting for a true Northwest Territories. He saw a vision of a big Northwest Territories all across Canada, which would have been, of course, Alberta, Saskatchewan and part of Manitoba. Well, that dream never happened. The Northwest Territories lost its authority back in 1905. So when this

devolution deal gets implemented next year, it will be 109 years since the Northwest Territories has been trying to join the mosaic of Canada, over a century since we wanted to be back at the table and are finally allowed to be back at the table.

We rightly belong in the driver's seat of our territory. We rightly belong enjoying the partnership of our Aboriginal governments. We have five of seven, as you've heard repeatedly here today. I look forward to hearing we have seven out of seven and I'm sure that day is coming soon.

Why do people want to be in charge? Because they believe we have reached the time. Time could not be better. Our future is promising. We cannot miss this opportunity.

Devolution never snuck up on this government. We didn't go to work one day last week and all of a sudden a deal was there. Many people deserve a lot of credit for the hard work that has been brought forward today. A lot of people have dreamt of this, and as mentioned by other Members, a lot of them have always supported devolution. Even those who are concerned about it support devolution in some form.

The mosaic, as I've said, of Canada is a beautiful one. I think it's now time that they let us sit at the table and share and learn about the way the people in the Northwest Territories do government, we do business. We don't just do it willy-nilly. We don't just do it in an autocratic form. We do it in partnership. Every day we tread forward we make new tracks, methods and ways that people have never seen before. As I said, will it be perfect? No, it will not, but Ottawa is finally relinquishing some control and we are accepting it, but in the form of partnership and opportunity.

I have heard this before that the public relations portion of this is the deal, take it or leave it, may have been phrased slightly better. I wouldn't disagree with anybody who has made that problem. Yes, we probably could have run a better public relations campaign. Yes, the statement in the House may have been a little gentler by the Premier at the time. Yes, those who heard it may have been given the chance in the method of saying, wait a minute, this is the deal that people have been working on, either take it or leave it. I don't think it was meant in a mean form, but public relations on this deal probably could have been a little better.

I would say the Premier has met his effort by reaching out. He's sent teams of individuals, experts, knowledgeable people. He's gone to so many communities, there have been so many public meetings, there have been unprecedented opportunities to draw out this type of information. Never before in my experience in 10 years of being in the Legislature, never before in anyone's

experience have we seen anyone go to such lengths to reach out to talk to people and try.

The naysayers will always find fault. They will always say we didn't try hard enough. Could we have gone to every single door? Obviously, that's impossible, but I would say that the Premier, in my view, has met the goal of trying to get out and show Northerners if you've got questions, he's got answers. They may not be the answers everyone wants to hear, they may not be the answers they need to hear, but the fact is that open door, the reaching out, the effort has been made. It's been a relentless struggle, it's been a relentless fight, and I think the people involved in that struggle and that fight to get the message out certainly deserve a great pat on the back from all of our people in this Assembly.

A lot of people said they don't like the deal. A lot of people said that they felt that the details of the deal came late. Mr. Speaker, 43,000 people can't have their hand on that pen. No negotiations of this form are ever done entirely in public. It's when the deal has reached the point where everyone has accepted this is what we can get, and that's what happened in this case.

I hope that in time we will all be working together and I know the challenges before us are many. One of the challenges before us – and it should never be lost upon us – is how we work together in the future. We have many chapters in the devolution deal. We have many focuses when you hear Aboriginal people talk about how their government will work with our government. There is no simple answer.

I've always said someday the true Northwest Territories evolves into a constitutional development, has a Senate that oversees the work of the public government, works in partnership with the Aboriginal governments and we all work together. Is that the right model? I don't know, but I look forward to that discussion.

The race is off and running. I've heard the starter pistol go. We're on our way. We're in the game not unlike ever before. Will the day after look any different? Other than a bit of letterhead, probably not. Deals will continue, processes will continue, stewardship will continue, people will continue.

I don't think that anything's going to change in the context of yes, hardworking Northerners will be working at home with their northern partners and their northern colleagues, all under a banner of northern people.

When Health and Transportation came over, there was not a public outcry about saying, well, you didn't tell us. Now, that's not necessarily a fair comparison, I realize that. But it's time the Government of the Northwest Territories starts

taking charge of its own destiny. We have evolved in maturity. The future truly belongs to us.

As I said earlier, this devolution deal didn't sneak up on us, but in 2007, I remember the elected Assembly came to work here, and they said devolution is off the table. It isn't going to happen. But it's funny, when people get working together with a common interest in saying how can we find a way, we can find a way, let's find a way. It did find a way. The turn of events, as I pointed out, didn't just happen overnight, but perhaps one could say in a serendipity type of way, the stars finally started to align.

As the future now is before us, in many ways it's a blank page. The narrative is ours to write. It's ours to hold. It's ours to embrace. It's for our children and it's for their children. There will always be unknowns, and everyone will know that there will be tough days ahead of us. Today is one of those days. April of next year will be yet another day, and there will be many days when we say maybe we shouldn't have done this. But I think, and I can guarantee, that there will be many days ahead of us that we'll be saying thank goodness we took that extra step. Thank goodness we were willing to put it on the line. Thank goodness we empowered our negotiators to get the best deal they can.

Now, you'll hear, as my colleagues have stated, that my goodness, we didn't get Norman Wells. Well, I don't know if we're going to ever get everything we want. I mean, ask any other province across Canada. Did they get everything they want? I mean, it's part of the process. But did we get what we hoped we could? I think we did.

As spoken earlier, even the Yukon is now glaring at our deal, thinking we must have done something right, and that alone should be asking ourselves are we doing something right. I think, yes, we are, because of that. There are many indicators of this.

The sky will not fall on implementation day. People will be working hard, and I know they will. But I believe Northerners who are doing the jobs right now, who are taking care of certain stewardship that will be transferred over, will continue the fine, exemplary work that they are doing today, and I think no less of them today and worry in any fashion, and I know they will contribute just as hard to the northern destiny, to the northern fabric before us.

Devolution doesn't end anything. It begins everything.

I've heard my colleagues, and I agree, there is much concern about contaminated sites. It was a chapter that didn't quite move forward on this initiative. The feds are choosing to keep it under them. Many people are worried, and frankly, I think that their concerns are correct. Do we need to ensure that stewardship is kept high and

implementation and concern of those are always on the front burner of every issue? I agree. But it doesn't mean any less of a job is going to happen tomorrow. The feds, in time, will continue to take care of those issues, and when the day is right, we will decide when they are part of our issues.

Now, as I said earlier, there's much work to be done, but I'm thankful for the compromise that many of our partners have finally done and agreed, and they have all joined to come forward with us on this journey. I look forward to next April when we can say today our destiny truly is ours.

Now, to close off this, I want to say that there has been great concern about the regulatory process. At this time, I don't believe that this is a particular issue. I believe the work that is being done by the federal folks will continue. I believe our environment folks will continue to do good work. And I think any criticism of that is individual criticism, because of this government, of them as Northerners, of those people who you say won't do as much of a good job. As I said earlier, I believe that their skills and abilities will continue in partnership with us all and we will all continue to proceed with great pride.

If you haven't noticed, I guess I will be voting in favour of devolution, in case there is any question. This is a unique time. Whether people realize it or not, it may just seem like a page in Hansard, but today is a unique time in the world we will all look back and all ask ourselves, where were you on that day? Today is a special time for all of us. For that, I am going to say, once again, I will be voting for devolution and I'm awfully proud to be part of the group that saw this through. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [Translation] I will be not be voting in favour of devolution. In developing the responsibilities to territorial government is what we are going to be voting to be...[Translation ends]

...recent public information session as information sessions, not general consultation of seeking the public's views on devolution understanding that this is a take it or leave it deal.

What choice do we have? As a leader, I have major concerns regarding the lack of movement of both the GNWT and federal government on the progress of negotiations of the Dehcho Process. The federal government and the GNWT must support the conclusion of land claims and self-government negotiations with the Dehcho, the Akaicho Territory. For the Dehcho Dene and Metis, the land is paramount, in front and centre. The fundamental issue is land quantum, the size of how much land both levels of government will allow the Dehcho to

own. Dehcho leaders have stated that the initial offer is inadequate.

Another matter is Dehcho land use planning has to move forward to receive favourable consideration. It has been 12 years since the start of the land use planning process. We cannot plan forever. I strongly encourage the Premier and Cabinet, along with the federal government, to move forward with the regions in good faith and build the trust that has been laid before. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to welcome all the people to the gallery, Aboriginal government leaders that are here, the hardworking devolution crew that is here, taking a moment's respite from their labours and taking close notes about the concerns of where we are today.

Eighteen years now I have been an MLA and I have been waiting that long for this day, myself and Madam Groenewegen. This fact is one of the reasons that I ran for re-election. It was to try to conclude the process that we started late in the last Assembly.

As I can say once again, this is the biggest political moment since division. There will be no others for decades to come of this significance. It is a critical next step in us realizing our political destiny. It is not an event; it is a process.

The basic question for me and for Northerners is a simple one as we stand here burdened and bowed by the very many federal shackles that constrain us. We look at the agreement that we have negotiated, that will get us almost shackle-free. Will we be better off tomorrow or today after this vote than we are today? The answer is unequivocally yes. When people want to know, that is the language I put it in. We have to get rid of those federal shackles. There is going to be some there that are extremely galling, but we will get there. We can get to them as we take this step. It is not perfect. This government and this federal government will continue their work. This next government and the next federal government, as well, will follow through on the implementation and the pressure from Northerners to take over and finally control the resource development piece will be relentless.

We talked at great length in this House about the economics. That is good and it is important. The one piece that I want to mention that I think is incredibly important and we don't want to overlook is water. We're going to finally have legal control over water. We're negotiating transboundary agreements with the provinces. Within the next few months they're going to be complete as a package, hopefully, and Northerners finally will control that

most valuable resource. I say that not lightly, because we've been across this territory to every community and the one thing that people say is the most important that binds everybody is water. We had to work hard to do that and the devolution negotiators deserve credit, because the federal government was tough, and wily, and slippery, and we had to watch very carefully. We are going to have, finally, at long last, that right, and that right, to me, makes this even more important.

So I will be, clearly, supporting this motion. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Robert C. McLeod, to the motion.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank Mr. McLeod for bringing this motion forward. I want to thank Mrs. Groenewegen for seconding it. I want to thank the devolution crew for all your good work on this. As always, we task you with doing something, we make political decisions and then you're left to put it into a document and you did a fantastic job.

During the course of our political careers, we run into many highlights and I've heard a couple pointed out. One was the division in 1999, and I've been fortunate and I've had a few highlights so far. One of my major highlights, I think, was being a witness to the Gwich'in signing on to the process in Aklavik in September 2012. I thought that was a huge move on their behalf and I thought it showed tremendous leadership, because I think it was said, at the time, it was better to be inside the tent than outside, and I totally agree with that. I commend them for it.

We've heard a number of different reasons today why we need devolution and we heard the Member for Nahendeh talk about an agreement they may have walked away from years ago that cost \$30 million.

I posed a written question one time as a Regular Member on the amount that we've lost in resource royalties in the last 20 years, and I was surprised at the amount. It was huge, and our share of that would have been very significant and the Aboriginal governments' share would have been very significant. This is not just about the money, it's about, and I've always been a firm believer, is we need to be decision-makers in our own land and not have those decisions made for us. I truly support this agreement.

The Member for Frame Lake before was quoting a Rolling Stones song that says you can't always get what you want, and I totally agree with that. Mr. Miltenberger said, is this perfect? It's not, it's still a work in progress, but if you look at the second part of this song it says that if you try sometime, you just might find you get what you need.

---Laughter

---Applause

And what we need and what we have today is a starting point, and the starting point is the Devolution Agreement we're going to sign, and it will be refined and it will be more beneficial to us.

We can negotiate for the next 40 years and what's going to happen? That's all we're going to do, is negotiate for the next 40 years. Are we going to be any further ahead? I don't think so. I think the Member for Weledeh pointed out the fact that we may have walked away from a deal a few years ago that had a bit more money tied to it, and how long did we wait after that before we got to this point. So we can negotiate and negotiate and negotiate, and at the end of the day, resource royalties continue to leave, decisions continue to be made for us.

I want to thank the Aboriginal governments. I mean, it was huge that they all signed on. We all have our differences as a government, Cabinet to Regular Members, our differences with the Aboriginal governments, they have their differences with each other, but I commend you all for, at the end of the day, realizing and seeing the bigger picture that we need to unite and do this and I think it carries that much more weight.

There are a couple of groups that haven't signed on yet. I'm fairly confident that they will and I think, at the end of the day, you want to work for your beneficiaries, look after their needs, but at the same time you have to look at the big picture, and I think the big picture and best interests of everyone is to sign on and I think they will make that decision.

Twenty years from now, when I'm sitting on my steps at my cabin with my 870 Express, waiting for the birds, I want to look back on my political career at some of the decisions that were made during my time and there's been many. There's been many, and there's going to be more.

I see my grandchildren, their friends being beneficiaries of the decisions we make today. I'll tell them for the twentieth time – I know they probably won't want to hear it anymore by then – that I was part of a group of leaders, a group of 13 or 14 that got this deal done. We were here for the signing on to devolution, the implementation of devolution in 2014. I was part of that leadership along with all the Aboriginal leaders across the Northwest Territories, and I'm pleased to say I'm a part of that.

Needless to say, I am supporting devolution and I am looking forward to the many benefits that it's going to bring residents of the Northwest Territories in the future. We do need a starting point and the starting point is right now, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am certainly honoured to speak in support of this historic motion in the House today.

This government is committed to creating jobs and economic opportunities for the people of the Northwest Territories. We want a strong, diversified economy that creates long-term sustainable prosperity for our residents. Devolution will finally give this government, those of us gathered in the Chamber here today and the many governments that come after us, the tools and authorities to make that happen.

Our natural resources are the source of our wealth and prosperity. We have abundant oil and gas resources, minerals, rare earths and hydro potential that will fuel economic growth in the NWT and contribute in a great way to the overall Canadian economy. Responsible and sustainable development of those resources will create more jobs and opportunities to local businesses well into the future.

We have long held the decisions that influence the business and economy of our territory are better guided and managed by the people who live and work here. That's the best way we can make sure that the NWT residents benefit from the development of resources located here in the NWT and it's the best way we can make sure that development fits our priorities and our values.

With the final agreement on the devolution of authorities over public lands, water and resources, the people of our territory will finally have the power to plan and guide how we use and develop our natural resource wealth sustainably and responsibly. It will give us the ability to make sure our residents benefit from development in our territory and manage any environmental or social impacts.

For the first time in our history, we will be able to take control of the decisions affecting our economy and generate our own revenues to invest in our territory. New responsibilities will mean new jobs in the Northwest Territories and we are continuing to look at opportunities for decentralization as we work on an organizational design.

A revenue sharing agreement with our Aboriginal governments will open the doors for strong, viable and sustainable partnerships. Finally, we will be able to take a proactive, not a reactive, approach to economic decision-making here at home. The Government of the Northwest Territories will be able to look to the future and be able to plan for it. And, Mr. Speaker, we've already started.

In this session I've tabled the reports from the Economic Opportunities Strategy Advisory Panel and from the Mineral Development Strategy Advisory Panel, and when devolution comes, we are going to be ready to make the most of the

opportunity for all of our residents responsibly and sustainably.

Economic development needs infrastructure and this government is already making investments that will help to support growth. With the support of Members, we began construction on the Inuvik to Tuk highway earlier this year, and as part of a completed Mackenzie Valley Highway, this road will support increased exploration and development both on shore and offshore and connect the North and its resources to the rest of this country. Going forward, we will soon table a proposal with Canada that will help guide investments in our transportation infrastructure over the next decade and position us to clearly take advantage of our Devolution Agreement.

I have heard from my constituents and people across the Northwest Territories. They want the opportunities and benefits that devolution will bring. They understand the potential risks and rewards that come from responsibility and that responsibility that we will be receiving, but they have elected us to work in their best interest and I believe devolution is, indeed, in everybody's best interest who lives in the Northwest Territories.

In closing, I just wanted to give thanks to Members I've served with in the past in the three governments previous to this one. I want to thank the Members that are here with us in the House today on this historic occasion. I want to also thank the Aboriginal governments and partners that have helped us reach today's milestone. I also mentioned earlier the devolution team that we have in the gallery today and all the hard work that they've put in.

In closing, I really do believe that we have a great deal of thanks to give to our Premier, Bob McLeod. Under his leadership and guidance, we've been able to get where we're at. He's able to build partnerships, build respect amongst our partners, and we owe him a debt of gratitude for getting us where we're at today.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. To the motion. Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. [Translation] We are talking about a very important issue here because we're going to transfer a lot of power to the territorial government here. The Premier has signed the agreement and I'm very happy that that was done. Today is a very special day, and when you look at it, I want to thank all the people that work on the devolution.

In 1967, that was the last time that we had some of the issues of devolution to happen. That was the Health and Education. Since then we also had the highway put through to the Northwest Territories. But now we have a document in front of us that is

going to have everything included that we had agreed with, and we're starting to see it.

I know that there are some people that are not satisfied, and it is very difficult to have everybody agree, but when you look at the federal government and within Canada and the provinces, and also from the Nunavut government and other governments, it is very difficult to work with the budget, the money. But now with this agreement, it is an agreement that we may not see again, if we don't agree with it, for a long time.

This agreement that is in front of us for the North, a lot of people are looking at it in the North. I know that there are a lot of people looking at us when we're working on this agreement. There are a lot of issues that are within that agreement, but we are talking about generations that are to come, that are not here yet.

All the people were involved in the North with this agreement, but we've been talking about this for almost 30 years, because it's very important. We are very careful. We want to make sure that we include everything that we wanted. I know the federal government, the way they work, so we have to be very careful and we have to have a lot of our Cabinet work with us, also the Aboriginal governments. We have to be very careful of the way the words were worded within the agreement, and also the federal government looked at the document, about the document, and we've been talking to the communities and to the people. When the Prime Minister came to the North, he looked at the agreement. We all opened the issue of devolution to the people at that time.

Also, the negotiating team travelled to all the communities and it was a very difficult job, but they did it. I know there are a lot of leaders here in the House and we're here because they supported us. We are in one House. We are going to work with them and they are going to work with us. That is the only way that we are going to strengthen our political beliefs and concerns.

So if we are going to make this agreement work, we have to work on it ourselves. If we wait for the federal government, it's going to take years on some issues that we're concerned about. I know there are some issues we can change if we take on devolution. Devolution is going to help us with all those issues. Our House is going to be in charge of all the issues of the North as one person in this House, if devolution goes ahead.

On my last note, Mr. Speaker, the implementation, after we have signed our agreement with the federal government, we are going to be travelling on a new path on implementation. It's almost like putting a puzzle together and we are going to be working on this for the next year. Like a baby, we are going to be holding each other with our elders in hand, and all the other leaders in place, and all

the northern people. We are going to hold hands and move forward. That is what we want, and that is why we are here and have come to this issue now.

Under the Premier, this has been done under the Premier and it's a very difficult job, but it's done. Also, Floyd Roland, who was the previous Premier, worked on it. The Legislative Assembly has a lot of people who worked on it too, all the Aboriginal governments who are in House with us and also our Inuit neighbours and the Inuvialuit and the Gwich'in. The Tlicho is also in support of this agreement with us. I know that we worked many years and it's now like we have won. I know a lot of people are listening to us today, and in the North, right up to the Arctic Ocean, they are watching us.

I am here representing four communities. I am representing Tlicho, so I would like to thank all the people of the Tlicho Nation. Thank you very much. Now that the motion is in front of us, I am going to be in support of this motion. That's what I have to say. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. To the motion. Mr. Abernethy.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to start off by thanking the Premier for bringing this motion forward and Mrs. Groenewegen for seconding the motion, bringing her five terms and tons of corporate history and knowledge to the table. I'd also like to thank the devolution team and all of our Aboriginal government partners – the Inuvialuit, the Gwich'in, the Sahtu, the Tlicho and the Metis – for all the good work and important work that they've done in bringing this agreement to our table and to our forum here today. I also look forward to working with all of our Aboriginal partners as we move forward, including the Akaitcho and the Dehcho.

The days when territorial matters are decided by federal politicians and federal public servants should be long over. Northern residents now have what matters to them and Northerners should be making the decisions about what happens in our own territory.

Like many of my colleagues, I was born and raised in the Northwest Territories. As a lifelong Northerner and Minister of Human Resources, I know firsthand that we have the talented and educated people we need to manage our new responsibilities and deliver the programs and services that we are taking on. We don't need somebody else making our decisions for us. Northerners can do this for ourselves, and I do mean ourselves. I'm not referring to some anonymous or faceless "us" outside of the Northwest Territories.

It is this Legislative Assembly that will be passing legislation, establishing the direction that will guide

decisions about land and resources after devolution. It is you and I and all the Members here. We and future Members of this Legislature are the face of devolution, and we are the ones that will be held to account for those decisions by the people who put us here.

Devolution will help us fulfill the vision that we set for ourselves at the start of this Assembly. By voting to sign this agreement, we are giving future Legislative Assemblies access to resource revenues that can be used for northern priorities instead of sending the money straight to Ottawa, or we could be investing in our people, our environment and our economy. The departments I'm responsible for are already at work planning for a smooth and orderly transition from federal to territorial responsibility, should the House support this motion.

The Department of Human Resources is engaged in organizational design and other work to welcome federal employees into our nationally recognized public service. These incredibly talented and dedicated federal employees who are passionate about the Northwest Territories, those of them that live here in the Northwest Territories, will now be able to go down the hall and talk to other Northerners who are as passionate about this territory and who are the decision-makers, as opposed to having to communicate with Ottawa, with individuals who have never been here and certainly don't have the same type of intimate knowledge or passion for the territory that the federal employees who live here now do.

We value the knowledge and experience of these federal employees and look forward to having as many of them as possible joining us. We will make job offers to the impacted federal employees in the NWT who work in transferring programs. There will also be new positions created to replace work being done in Ottawa. This will create new job opportunities not only in Yellowknife but also in the communities, and decentralization is one of our major planning considerations. The GNWT will adopt about 27 acts of regulations on the transfer date, should this motion be supported and passed.

The Department of Justice will prepare the many pieces of the legislation we will need to ensure a smooth transition of legal authority, existing rights and program delivery. After the transfer date, the GNWT will be able to change the legislation, if needed, to make sure it reflects northern values and priorities.

I have hosted a number of meetings to talk about devolution. My constituents have been heard. Overwhelmingly, the people of the Northwest Territories express their support for moving decision-making about public lands and resources closer to home. But devolution will come with its own challenges and there may be some growing

pains, but we and our residents are ready, willing and able.

I look forward to voting yes on this motion. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. To the motion, Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. [Translation] Mr. Speaker, today I'm happy for the people here. Since I have been a kid, I've been brought up on the land. The federal government has been our boss, the way we trap, the way we hunt, the way we survive on the land, the animals we kill. If we should shoot a moose or something, we were on the tagging system before. It's a long way we've gone from those days.

We people sitting here, with the agreement that we are signing today, the people who are going to be sitting here after we are here, are going to be the boss of themselves. Right now the federal government is running business for us. There are people in Toronto, there are about 10,000 of them who all come together and they are the ones who talk for us. They are the boss of us from over there. Who's drilling, mineral exploration, looking for oil, these are the people who are our bosses.

Today, with the agreement we've made, we people from the cold here, from the North, we live together and we should be the boss of our own resources and the water. It wasn't like that before. Should a job come up, it's usually the people who come from the South to take over our jobs. The way the people are living here and the money that is here, the opportunities that we offer here, exploration for minerals, oil and gas exploration, it's the people from the South who are running it. But today, by signing this agreement, some of the revenues will be coming to us here. With that money, we will work for the people. It's not much money right now. The smaller communities, it's not enough for everybody in the smaller communities, but there's not that much work in the small communities. So we should be working. It's hard to buy stuff. The federal government is taking care of everything for us and it's not that much money that we are operating with.

Now, the federal government, with the money that is going to be handed to us upon the final agreement, working with the small communities, would probably benefit from it through jobs. Right now, it's the people from down south who are running our business for us, the land, the water. We can't have that anymore. Once we sign the agreement, by the way we are...for the numbers here, we will be talking for the people from inside here. We will be making our own decisions and people from the South will not be making those decisions for us. [Translation ends]

...I am contemplating here today because I believe control for resources and the regulatory regime that surrounds the resources, the extraction of non-renewable resources, should be in the hands of the people of the Northwest Territories. I think the water is a real major issue. The control of the water is something that will come to the Territories under this deal and that is essential. The control of the land, the decision-making on the renewable resources, the resource development that will come over. There will be a regulatory review that the government is going to retain control of in five years, and at that time, there's a possibility that some or all of the regulatory process will move into the hands of the Government of the Northwest Territories.

I think this agreement is positive for employment across the territory. I think decentralization is a big part of devolution, and I think that all of the wages and individuals coming to work here in the Northwest Territories, whether they be in Yellowknife, the regional centres or the small communities, will be better than having those people working in Ottawa making those decisions. Just the multiplier effect of having the money spent in the Northwest Territories and the wages paid, that alone will benefit the people of the Northwest Territories. Infrastructure spending is going to benefit people of the Northwest Territories. We haven't made a final decision on how we will spend our resource revenues from this agreement, should this agreement be finalized, but either way, it will benefit people immediately or it will benefit people of the Northwest Territories in the future. I support this motion.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. I'd like to now cease debate on the motion and allow the mover to make his closing remarks. The honourable Premier, Mr. McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Members, for your comments here today. It is clear that each of us cares deeply about the future of this territory.

We have a chance to make history here. For all my life, critical decisions about what happens in this territory have been made by the federal government. When I was born in Fort Providence, the Territorial Council, the forerunner to this Legislative Assembly, was still based in Ottawa, and included five appointed Members and only three elected representatives.

Times have changed. There are 19 of us now, responsible for our own budget of approximately \$1.5 billion. We direct a territorial civil service that administers a broad range of programs and services for our residents in communities across the Northwest Territories. We have a permanent home of our own here in this building where any Northwest Territories resident can come and see

their government in action. The Commissioner is no longer directly involved in our decisions. We now answer, instead, to the people of the Northwest Territories who elected us to represent their best interests and make decisions on their behalf.

Change and evolution have been a hallmark of this government ever since it came north in 1967. We have steadily taken on responsibility for the programs and services that Canada delivered here, programs and services that provinces were already managing for themselves and their people. Responsibility for public lands and resources is one of the last remaining provincial responsibilities that we do not have in the Northwest Territories. It is time for that to change. Decisions about our land, water and resources need to be made here, in the Northwest Territories, by Northwest Territories residents. We can make that happen with a yes vote on today's motion.

This Assembly has a vision of a strong, prosperous and sustainable territory. Devolution is the path to that future. Responsibility for our lands and resources is the key to unlocking the economic potential that will provide opportunities to all our residents. It will give Northerners, the people who live here and know the land the best, the authority and tools to manage development and protect our environment. It will create a new era of prosperity that will ensure the social needs of our people are met.

Why is this agreement important? It is important because it gives us control over our own natural resources. It gives us control over resource royalties. It allows us to expand our taxation base which, in turn, makes us more able to be responsible and accountable to the needs and desires of our people. It makes us less dependent on bureaucrats in Ottawa, and it empowers our elected government to govern this territory.

What will devolution give the people of the Northwest Territories and their government? Devolution will bring greater decision-making power. Northwest Territories residents will have a greater voice in decisions about how public land, water and resources are managed, how the economy is developed, and how the environment is protected. It will bring new government revenues. The Northwest Territories, just like the provinces and Yukon, will keep a share of the revenues collected from resource development on public land. This money can be used to support public services, grow the economy, and invest in infrastructure projects that improve life in all our communities. A portion of these revenues will also go to Aboriginal governments to help them grow, build capacity, and meet community needs.

Devolution will provide for coordinated land stewardship. As part of this devolution, our government and participating Aboriginal

governments have agreed to work together on land management and natural resource stewardship. We will also continue to work with the Akaitcho First Nations and Dehcho First Nations with or without devolution.

This means decisions about development and environmental protection will better reflect northern needs and priorities across the territory. It will mean more responsive resource management. We will adopt about 27 federal acts and regulations on the transfer date. There will be a smooth transition of legal authority, existing rights and program delivery. Public services will continue. After the transfer date, our government will be able to change the legislation, if needed, to make sure it reflects northern values and priorities. We will work with Aboriginal governments, regulatory boards, industry and other stakeholders to help ensure government processes provide the efficiency, transparency and certainty to support renewed investment.

Devolution will mean jobs for our people and new opportunities for Northwest Territories businesses. New jobs will be created across the territory as a direct result of devolution. Economic spinoffs from these jobs and related responsibilities could be as much as \$28 million per year, creating new opportunities for local business. Aboriginal governments will also have new revenues to provide opportunities based on their specific needs.

We could not have reached this point without the participation of the territory's regional Aboriginal governments. I would like to thank them for their support. Aboriginal governments helped us negotiate this agreement, and their involvement goes back many years. I am pleased to see that some of their leaders are here today to witness this vote. They are as much a part of devolution as the Members of this House are.

The Government of the Northwest Territories has long recognized the legitimate role that Aboriginal governments play in the lives of their people. We support them in the negotiation and implementation of their land claims and self-government agreements. We have worked very hard to foster government-to-government relations with them. We know that the people of the Northwest Territories are best served when the governments that represent them have the capacity they need to manage their responsibilities.

A key feature of the proposed Devolution Agreement is the separate Intergovernmental Agreement on Lands and Resource Management among our government and participating Aboriginal governments. This separate agreement offers the promise of improved harmonization and potential for shared capacity. The relationship respects the jurisdictions of the Government of the Northwest Territories and Aboriginal governments, while offering opportunity for meaningful input and advice

on land and resource matters. In that spirit of respect, recognition and responsibility, we have committed to sharing a portion of the resource revenues from development on public lands with participating Aboriginal governments. This is in addition to any benefits Aboriginal governments receive from resource revenues to their land claims. We are the first and only jurisdiction in Canada that has offered to share resource revenues with Aboriginal governments with no strings attached.

I have said many times before that our natural resources are the source of all wealth. We need to develop them to benefit from them, but I have also said many times that we do not support development at any cost. Development has to be responsible, it has to be sustainable, and it has to provide real benefit to the people of the Northwest Territories.

Devolution will give us a sweep of legislative authorities and tools that will help us ensure that development in our territory is responsible and sustainable. This agreement will finally put Northerners in a position to ensure their priorities are being reflected in resource development and environmental management decisions. That is as it should be. We are the ones who live here. We know this land and we know what matters to us. We have a vested interest in ensuring the long-term sustainability of the land.

Our government's commitment to conservation and sustainability won't change just because we have devolution. We all know the Northwest Territories has great potential. We have what the world needs. We have the energy and mineral resources that the world wants. Devolution will allow us to use that natural wealth for the direct benefit of our people, for our children and our grandchildren. It will secure the financial stability of the Government of the Northwest Territories and our Aboriginal government partners, and enable us to work together for the good of all the residents of the Northwest Territories.

Our time has come, the North's time has come. We have been working on this deal for many years and it is time for us to finally enjoy the results of that work.

We have been to the people, we held more than 45 public and stakeholder meetings and formally consulted Aboriginal governments. The message to us was clear: the people want devolution. Not supporting this motion is a vote for the status quo, for more of the same. I think we are passed that. I don't believe any of us are really satisfied with more of the same. We are here to improve the lives of our people in this territory.

Today's vote is a chance for us to stand up for the Northwest Territories and the people we represent. It is a chance for us to stand individually and collectively as the elected representatives of this

territory and say yes. Yes, I believe in my territory and I believe in our people. Yes, I believe that we have the potential to be a truly great part of a great country.

I do believe in this territory and its people. It is high time for Northerners to take control of their future and make their own decisions about our economy, our environment and our society. I have every confidence that we will, as a territory, and as the elected representatives of our people, rise to the challenge and together create the future that we have long envisioned for ourselves.

I will be standing up for the people of the Northwest Territories today, Mr. Speaker, and I invite all my colleagues to stand and join me. Thank you. I would like to ask for a recorded vote.

RECORDED VOTE

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Recorded vote has been requested. All those in favour, please stand.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. McLeod – Yellowknife South, Mr. Lafferty, Mr. Ramsay, Mr. McLeod – Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Dolynny, Mr. Bouchard, Mr. Hawkins, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Moses, Mr. Bromley, Mr. Yakeleya, Mr. Menicoche, Mr. Blake, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Abernethy, Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. SPEAKER: All those opposed, please stand.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Nadli.

MR. SPEAKER: All those abstaining, please stand. All those in favour, 17; all those opposed, one; abstentions, zero.

---Carried

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 18, first reading of bills. Mr. Yakeleya.

First Reading of Bills

BILL 24:

AN ACT TO AMEND THE LIQUOR ACT

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, that Bill 24, An Act to Amend the Liquor Act, be read for the first time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Bill 24 has had first reading.

---Carried

MR. SPEAKER: Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 22, Territorial Emblems and Honours Act; and Tabled Document 70-17(4), Electoral Boundaries Commission, Final

Report, May 2013, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I'd like to call Committee of the Whole to order. We have two items before us today: Bill 11 and Bill 20. What is the wish of the committee? Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: 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: Can I have the report of Committee of the Whole, Madam Chair.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, your committee 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, Mr. Chair. Motion is in order. Do we have a seconder to the motion? R.C. McLeod. It's Inuvialuit Day.

---Laughter

---Carried

MR. SPEAKER: Item 22, third reading of bills. Mr. Miltenberger.

Third Reading of Bills

BILL 11:
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION AND
PUBLIC AGENCY STATUTES
(BORROWING PROVISIONS) AMENDMENT ACT

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, that Bill 11, Financial Administration and Public Agency Statutes (Borrowing Provisions) Amendment Act, be read for the third time.

MR. SPEAKER: Bill 11, Financial Administration and Public Agency Statutes (Borrowing Provisions) Amendment Act, has had third reading.

---Carried

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. R.C. McLeod.

BILL 20:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE
TLICHO COMMUNITY GOVERNMENT ACT

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Monfwi, that Bill 20, An Act to Amend the Tlicho Community Government Act, be read for the third time.

MR. SPEAKER: Bill 20, An Act to Amend the Tlicho Community Government Act, has had third reading.

---Carried

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Schauerte): Mr. Speaker, orders of the day for Thursday, June 6, 2013, 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
5. Returns to Oral Questions
6. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
7. Acknowledgements
8. Oral Questions
9. Written Questions
10. Returns to Written Questions
11. Replies to Opening Address
12. Petitions
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
 - Motion 18-17(4), Organ Donation/Human Tissue Act
 - Motion 19-17(4), Extended Adjournment of the House to October 17, 2013
 - Motion 20-17(4), Proposal for Use of New Resource Revenues
 - Motion 21-17(4), Liquor Commission Profits to Prevention
18. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 25, Supplementary Appropriation (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2013-2014
19. Second Reading of Bills
 - Bill 24, An Act to Amend the Liquor Act

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

- Bill 22, Territorial Emblems and Honours Act
- Tabled Document 70-17(4), Electoral
Boundaries Commission, Final Report, May
2013

21. Report of Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

23. Orders of the Day

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

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 5:08 p.m.