



# **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

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**17<sup>th</sup> Assembly**

## **HANSARD**

**Tuesday, February 14, 2012**

Pages 391 - 436

**The Honourable Jackie Jacobson, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

## Members of the Legislative Assembly

### Speaker

**Hon. Jackie Jacobson**

(Nunakput)

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*Minister of Human Resources*

*Minister responsible for the*

*Public Utilities Board*

**Hon. Tom Beaulieu**

(Tu Nedhe)

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**Mr. Daryl Dolynny**

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**Mrs. Jane Groenewegen**

(Hay River South)

**Mr. Robert Hawkins**

(Yellowknife Centre)

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty**

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*Community Affairs*

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*NWT Housing Corporation*

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**Mr. Kevin Menicoche**

(Nahendeh)

**Hon. J. Michael Miltenberger**

(Thebacha)

*Government House Leader*

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*Minister of Environment and Natural*

*Resources*

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*NWT Power Corporation*

**Mr. Alfred Moses**

(Inuvik Boot Lake)

**Mr. Michael Nadli**

(Deh Cho)

**Hon. David Ramsay**

(Kam Lake)

*Minister of Industry, Tourism*

*and Investment*

*Minister of Transportation*

**Mr. Norman Yakeleya**

(Sahtu)

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**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Tuesday, February 14, 2012****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 1:33 p.m.

**Prayer**

---Prayer

**SPEAKER (Hon. Jackie Jacobson):** Members, it's Valentine's Day today. I wish each of you and all the people of the Northwest Territories a Happy Valentine's Day. The House normally sits on Valentine's Day and I know that's hard for some of the Members who come from the communities into Yellowknife and we can't be with our loved ones today. I want to take this opportunity to wish my wife, Jenny, the love of my life, a Happy Valentine's Day. Happy Valentine's Day, hon. I can't wait to see you this weekend. It's going to be good.

Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister, Mr. Miltenberger.

**Ministers' Statements**

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 15-17(2):  
COMPLETING A NEW WILDLIFE ACT**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Members of this House and the people of the Northwest Territories have made it clear that we need to complete a new Wildlife Act.

We need legislation that incorporates the most current tools for wildlife management. This is vital to conserving our wildlife populations for current and future generations.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources has developed a process to address outstanding issues and to revise the proposed new legislation accordingly.

We are proposing to use Bill 9, introduced in the 16<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly, as a starting point for consultation and engagement. It includes changes that resulted from input received during consultation and public engagement meetings held between November 2010 and February 2011.

We will undertake another round of public engagement to ensure residents and various interest groups have an opportunity to provide additional input into a new act. This includes the creation of a stakeholders advisory group with

representatives from industry, tourism, outfitters, resident hunters and the public at large.

Strengthening our relationship with Aboriginal governments is one of the priorities of this Assembly. I intend to meet with Aboriginal government leaders to discuss possible mechanisms to address wildlife management issues of common interest. These include the management of migratory species that cross regional boundaries within the NWT, wildlife management plans, management strategies and action plans to guide the conservation and management of shared wildlife and habitat.

Public information materials, including a plain language version of the draft Wildlife Act, will be developed and widely distributed.

Our regional and local offices will be involved in providing information on the draft act in our communities. We also intend to hold public meetings in each of the five regional centres.

By working together with Aboriginal governments, harvesters, industry and other user groups and stakeholders, we can introduce a new Wildlife Act during the 2012 fall session; a bill that is built on mutual respect, is a practical, workable and efficient system for wildlife management in the Northwest Territories and respects the rights and freedoms of all northern residents.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 16-17(2):  
ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES  
REVITALIZATION WORK**

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Recently MLA Blake and I visited Fairbanks, Alaska, to learn about the Alaska Native Language Program. The trip had both an education and a language focus and I think we can learn a lot from their retention and revitalization strategies, and language acquisition and teaching methods. I believe these significantly complement our approaches in the Northwest Territories.

We met with faculty staff at the Alaska Native Language Centre and the College of Rural and Community Development at the University of

Fairbanks, Alaska. The university incorporates indigenous knowledge and promotes Aboriginal language instruction and immersion programming from a kindergarten to postsecondary level.

For example, the Alaska Native Elder Apprenticeship Program provides opportunities for independent and motivated students to be paired with an elder and work intensively together to study an Alaskan native language. Mr. Speaker, this program is very impressive and today I would like to announce that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment will be researching options, like having elders in our schools and forming partnerships to explore the possibility of such a program, to assist with our work in revitalizing our own Aboriginal languages. These ideas will be more fully explored through the business planning process.

This work will involve discussion with the Official Languages Board, the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board, the Aboriginal language communities, community leaders and Members of this House. Our goal is to increase the number of Aboriginal language speakers, provide employment opportunities for elders and improve educational opportunities for all Aboriginal students. This is in accordance with the Aboriginal Student Achievement Education Plan and the vision of this Assembly to build on the strengths of Northerners. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 17-17(2):  
IMPORTANCE OF THE MINING AND MINERAL  
EXPLORATION SECTORS**

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Mr. Speaker, today I would like to highlight work this government is doing to support the mining industry. We want to ensure we have a territory where exploration and development are undertaken in a responsible manner that benefits all Northwest Territories residents.

I recently attended the Mineral Exploration Roundup in Vancouver. This is the world's premier technical mineral exploration conference, with attendees from over 30 countries. At the roundup, I had the opportunity to speak with people from across Canada and the world about the vast mineral potential of the Northwest Territories. I also met with a number of companies operating in the NWT to listen to their perspectives and concerns.

Mr. Speaker, mining and mineral exploration have brought significant economic opportunities to our territory such as jobs in the mines and with exploration companies, contracts for planes and helicopters to those mines and exploration sites,

and many other spinoff benefits in the purchase of goods and services from northern businesses. Mining and mineral exploration has also provided us with important infrastructure such as the railline to Hay River, the hydroelectric transmission line between Bluefish and Yellowknife, and the Taltson hydroelectric dam.

We support our mining industry to ensure continued economic growth and keep our mining sector strong. For example, our ongoing partnership with the federal government provides funding for geoscience research. For every dollar invested in government-funded geosciences in the NWT, five dollars are spent by mineral exploration companies.

Geoscience research supports future economic development by attracting investment to our territory and creating spinoff exploration projects; projects that provide employment and business opportunities for NWT residents. We will continue to do our best to realize sustainable Northwest Territories opportunities from this development.

Making progress on devolution will be one of the most important ways we can support the mining industry in the NWT. We need only look to Yukon to see how people can benefit when Northerners are in charge of the development decisions in their own territory. We look forward to a future when the people of the NWT can take charge of the decision-making and have a direct say in our economic future and what happens in our territory.

Mr. Speaker, our mines have also brought significant opportunities to NWT residents and businesses. Since the construction of the first diamond mine in 1996, we have seen more than 17,000 person years of northern resident employment. We continue to see Northerners trained for jobs in the mining industry. With the Mine Training Society of the NWT, we are working with Aboriginal and industry partners, as well as the governments of Nunavut and Yukon to ensure people have the skills they need to take advantage of new employment opportunities.

Also since this time, the three diamond mines – BHP Billiton's Ekati, Rio Tinto's Diavik, and DeBeers' Snap Lake mines – have spent more than \$8 billion on goods and services from northern businesses. Nearly \$4 billion of those purchases were spent at Aboriginal-owned businesses.

Even through challenges such as the global downturn in the economy, the diamond mines have remained sincere in their commitments to the North and have been strong corporate citizens. Through sponsorships and donations, these mines have supported community projects and programs across the territory.

Mr. Speaker, we have experienced challenges attracting investment from mineral exploration companies. We have heard the concerns of

industry about the uncertainty of investment in mineral exploration in the NWT. As a government, we are committed to work with the federal government, Aboriginal governments, industry and other stakeholders to address the effectiveness of our regulatory regime so we can provide potential investors with a stable investment climate.

We have a wealth of mineral potential in the NWT: gold, diamonds, tungsten, rare earths and more. Exploring this potential could lead to additional mines that will employ hundreds of NWT residents for years to come. There are seven more projects currently in the works that have the potential to attract more than \$2 billion in new investment and add over 2,000 new jobs in the NWT. We remain committed to supporting the industry and plan to come forward with a sustainable economic development and mining strategy to ensure we realize our full mineral potential and our residents see the benefits.

A prosperous mining industry is a key element in achieving our Assembly's goal of a diversified and healthy economy that provides all regions and communities with opportunities and choices. Mr. Speaker, we must continue to do all we can to promote and support a strong mining and mineral exploration sector in the NWT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

### Members' Statements

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON FEDERAL PROPOSAL FOR SINGLE LAND AND WATER BOARD STRUCTURE

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The federal government's proposal to collapse the regional land and water boards into one big board is disturbing, unnecessary and possibly unconstitutional.

The regional boards were created under claims processes to provide for regional and local control over the pace and scale of development. Federal negotiator Mr. Pollard says the proposed changes are needed to "meet Canada's long-term interest of having a single land and water board structure." Makes a nice sound bite, but a single board does nothing to meet the real problem: failure of implementation.

No less than five federal reports, two Auditor General reports, the 2008 McCrank Report and the 2005 and 2010 NWT environmental audits – the last completed less than one year ago – all contain concrete recommendations for improvements. These include the need to complete outstanding land and self-government processes, complete land

use plans, provide adequate stable funding for boards, fund First Nation governments and community participation to meet constitutional consultation requirements, completion of a cumulative impact monitoring program and keeping board vacancies filled, at least so quorum can be met, are continually called for.

All these actions are under federal control. One big board is a proposal to fix something that isn't broken but, rather, is hampered by the federal failure to meet its obligations.

Can change to boards even be done without opening claims agreements? First Nations signed claims agreements because regional boards gave the assurance of regional and local control. That was the deal. Regional First Nation governments may now wonder what the Crown's promises are worth. The Akaicho and Dehcho might ask how long covenants under their settlements would last.

The federal government has a legal duty to consult and accommodate First Nations' concerns on any changes. I don't see that happening in this case.

Meanwhile, we're talking devolution. This government agreed to create mirror legislation replicating whatever regime exists at the time of transfer. You'd think that in good faith the federal government would seek our consent and include us as equal partners in any move to change the law we will inherit.

I will be asking the Minister of ENR on this government's view on the need for one big board and how we're making our views known to the federal government. Mahsi.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ABUSE OF PRESCRIPTION NARCOTICS

**MR. DOLYUNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Being a pharmacist for the past 20 years in the Territories has allowed me the ability to see changes in prescriber behaviour and people's view on prescription drugs, especially narcotics.

Admittedly, I would have to say our prescribers are doing an incredible job to make sure we aren't over-prescribing for hard narcotics, pain management and therapies. That said, there are always those patients that slip through the cracks and find the means to double doctor, or what we refer to as polypharmacy, for acquiring their drug of choice. Obviously the new WOLF prescriber system has taken care of a lot of this potential abuse and the pharmacy community supports any continued enhancements to this system.

However, I don't want to give the impression that everything is okay out there, as we do suffer like any other jurisdiction in Canada. Prescription drugs

like OxyContin, Percocet, and Tylenol 3s are by far the most prevalent narcotic prescribed for pain management in the Territories. In fact, I want to point out that OxyContin is being phased out of Canada as we speak and a new tamper-resistant formulation of OxyContin called OxyNEO is available and being developed in an effort to prevent individuals seeking OxyContin's euphoric effects for unintended use. This will have huge impacts affecting prescribed opiate abuse.

Regardless of which narcotics are used and sometimes abused are what most health care stakeholders come across when the topic of abuse or prescribed addiction come into play. We are not quite yet at an epidemic state for opiate or narcotic abuse, but this is more from an observational point of view. You see, we have no way to know this information as there are no stats on opiate addiction as such for any community in the NWT. The most recent NWT addictions report published in 2010 provides information for alcohol, illicit drug use, tobacco use and gambling, yet nothing on prescription narcotics.

In any event, it is important that as a government we must be armed with the right information affecting our people. We can all agree that abuse and addiction take on many forms under many different situations, and in order for us to understand the issue of addiction and treat it, we need to know where to start. Emerging drug addictions have to start with gathering of information, and without the proper statistics on prescription narcotic abuse we will never know its true destructive impact on the lives of the people of the Northwest Territories.

I will have questions later today for the Minister of Health on getting assurances that prescription narcotic drug abuse be included in all future NWT addiction reporting and information sharing.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON GNWT BUDGET PROCESS

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a new Member here I'd like to discuss the budget process that this government is involved in. During the process, the government has introduced an act to increase the borrowing limit and we are asking the federal government to increase our debt limit. Not once during this discussion have we discussed the cost reductions in our O and M. I know this is a scary discussion, the fact that we may look at cutbacks or even to make the operations more efficient, but what is scarier is the fact that since 2000 the operations budget has doubled from \$600 million to \$1.2 billion. However, during this time the

population has only increased by 7.5 percent and the public service only by 26 percent.

My questions today will be for the Minister of Finance about what this government has done over the past years to review the operational costs and to reduce this large, increasing rate in the operations.

I know there are a great deal of people out there that believe that we can be doing more with less. We are looking for more money from the federal government; however, if we reduced our costs by 5 percent, that would represent \$60 million.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON EKALI LAKE FISH ADVISORY

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week the people of Jean Marie River received some very disturbing news. A public health advisory was issued about high mercury levels in the fish at nearby Ekali Lake. Last August we also received advisories for Deep Lake and McGill Lake near Jean Marie River, as well as at Fish Lake near Wrigley.

Fish are a very important part of our traditional diet. It's a healthy food and people depend on it to make ends meet in small communities where the costs of store-bought groceries are very high.

I want to be clear that the chief public health officer is not telling people to stop eating fish from Ekali Lake completely. First of all, he is saying there's no problem with eating whitefish from the lake. That is good news. Second, he is saying that it's okay to eat some jackfish and pickerel, but no more than two servings a week for most people. Pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers should have no more than two servings per month. Children aged one to four can have one serving a month and children between five and 11 can have up to one and three-quarter servings per month. It is also better to eat smaller fish because they do not have much mercury.

I'm very concerned about the health and safety of Nahendeh residents. Spring will soon be here and Ekali Lake is a popular place. I want to make sure that the message is getting out. It's important for people to know that they have to be careful about how much jackfish and pickerel they eat from the lake. It's also important for people to know that they do not have to stop eating fish completely. This needs to be explained clearly in the language of the people.

Later today I will have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services about what is being done to ensure people get clear information they understand about the fish in Ekali Lake and other lakes in Nahendeh. Thank you.



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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
HEALTH CARE SYSTEM REFORM

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I heard an interesting exchange on the radio last week regarding the strengthening of Canada's health system. The analyst in the interview compared health systems in other countries to that of Canada and suggested we have much to learn from those other countries. Compared to Australia and Germany, for instance, Canada spends more money per capita on health care and achieves less in the quality of health outcomes. Australia, for instance, spends 40 percent less on health care than we do in Canada. Yet, Australia is much like Canada with similarities to northern Canada, a huge land mass, big spaces and remote, isolated communities.

So how does Australia do it? Well, they have developed a system which uses innovation and technology to reach more residents and spend less money doing it. Let me quote Dr. Snowdon from the radio interview. "One of the interesting innovations Australia has developed is something called general practice networks. So 90 percent of their primary care physicians are organized in networks and they're all focused on particular geographic parts of the country. So that any time 24 hours a day, seven days a week, someone needs a health care support or service from a primary care physician, they're available. And if they're in a very remote and maybe difficult to access community, those physicians use telehealth. So they'll come up on a screen and talk to and have that discussion with that consumer or that patient to figure out how they can help and how they can get the services they need to that person in their own home or in their own community."

That is eerily similar to a system I've heard proposed by the Department of Health and Social Services over the last few years, and the Australian system is well suited to our northern situation. We here want to establish a medical command centre. We have telehealth in almost every community. But are we taking advantage of the experiences of other countries and adapting them to our own? Can we learn from Australia, copy what they're doing and improve our own NWT situation? Sure we can, Mr. Speaker, but are we?

In the past years Ministers have made references to the reform of our health system, to a health strategic plan called the Foundation for Change. It is touted as our health reform guide. To implement the plan is a big job, a long-term job and a difficult job. I accept that. But it has been several years now and I have to ask: Are we really accomplishing

anything? Are we really effecting change? It doesn't seem like it.

We're still badly in need of doctors in Inuvik and Hay River.

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

---Unanimous consent granted

**MS. BISARO:** We still badly need doctors in Inuvik and Hay River; there is still no permanent nurse in Tsiigehtchic; and each year we continue to spend millions of dollars moving people from their home community to a regional centre so they can get the medical services they need. We can provide medical services in our communities. We have the innovation referenced by Dr. Snowdon, we just need to get on with it.

The Health and Social Services budgets in the last two years have earmarked literally millions for the Foundation for Change to reform our health care system. What do we have to show for that money, Mr. Speaker?

I'll have questions for the Minister of Health at the appropriate time. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. Nadli.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
CULTURAL INSENSITIVITY OF  
FEDERAL BILL C-19

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Bill C-19 is before the House of Commons, likely this week. It will be considered and more likely passed over to the Senate. In my Member's statement I want to just illustrate just a great cultural divide, and I wanted to take a moment speaking in my language and I want to end off in just capturing the essence of the differences that we're experiencing right now.

[English translation not provided.]

Mr. Speaker, my point of using my language illustrates barriers to communication but also illustrates that a law that is before the House of Commons disrespects one's culture. I would like to follow up on a question later on in the House. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Seeing as it is Valentine's Day and February is Heart Health Month, I would like to do my Member's statement on cardiovascular disease. Cardiovascular disease is a leading cause of death in the Northwest Territories along with cancer. One of the leading

high-risk behaviours that contribute to cardiovascular disease is tobacco use. In fact, tobacco doesn't only contribute to cardiovascular disease but it does contribute to a high health care system, increases our health care costs in the Northwest Territories. One thing that should be duly noted is that tobacco use is also the number one preventable cause of all of these diseases and deaths that we see, not only in the Northwest Territories but in Canada and throughout the world.

Mr. Speaker, every 11 minutes a Canadian dies from tobacco use. Every 10 minutes two Canadian teenagers will start smoking and one of them will die prematurely. Tobacco use, as I stated, is the single most preventable cause of premature death and it is something that needs to be addressed.

I would like to commend the Stanton Territorial Health Authority for the work that they are doing in making their place of work smoke free and all of the premises smoke free and going along the same as throughout Canada. I would also like to commend all of the work that the Department of Health and Social Services is doing in terms of tobacco control, My Voice, My Choice, the Don't Be a Butthead program. I think it is something that this government needs to continue to do and denormalize the use of tobacco, drugs, alcohol, all types of addictions through policies and legislation that we can bring up in this House here and make it harder for people who are addicted to these substances, get them to quit or even get them de-normalized within our society.

I commend all the work that this government is doing, and I will commend all the work that they will continue to do to fight this addiction of tobacco that is contributing to the high health care costs that we see in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON REGIONAL WATER MONITORING STATION FOR THE SAHTU

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I start my Member's statement I want to say Happy Valentine's Day to all of the people out there. Have a heart on this side here.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say the issue that I want to bring up today. Mr. Menicoche, in a statement, talked a little bit about the fish in the Northwest Territories. We are starting to see some chemicals and metals in the fish and we are warning people about eating fish in our wonderful land. People around Great Slave Lake, Hay River, Fort Resolution, Providence, all the way up the Mackenzie River right to Tuktoyaktuk depend on the water. It is in our blood. People who live along

the Mackenzie River, the water is in our blood and something is not right. We need to have health centres or monitoring stations to check and see what's going on, what's being pumped into our life here. The Mackenzie River, any other water in the North is our life for our people. They depend on it.

We need water, proper water monitoring lab stations in the North. We have only one in Yellowknife, but we need another one along the Mackenzie River. We need to know really the crucial impacts of the tar sands, of pulp mills all coming down out of Fort McMurray and BC.

Our people need to know what type of impacts it's having on our lives. We depend on water, we depend on the food that it brings and we really don't yet today have an accurate or true account of what kind of stuff is coming in the water and coming down the Mackenzie River or even the Great Slave Lake. Lives are dependent on it, Mr. Speaker.

I'm asking this government to push for a regional lab along the Mackenzie somewhere so we know, we have an accurate baseline to measure the true impacts of the tar sands, pulp mills and what's being pumped into the Mackenzie River. Otherwise one of the prophecies of my elders would come true.

I'll have questions for the Environment Minister at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON POPULATION DECLINE IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The NWT population is declining. Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories has been good to me. I chose the Northwest Territories as a high school student sitting in a classroom in southwestern Ontario. I picked it off the map. I came here. I didn't come here with my family, I didn't transfer here with a job, I didn't come here as somebody's spouse. I chose the Northwest Territories. The Northwest Territories has been good to me. I should be the poster person for the Northwest Territories.

---Applause

But, Mr. Speaker, might I also say that I found a man here that wanted to marry me. That's not a... I just wanted to work that in.

---Laughter

I wanted to work that in because it's Valentine's Day. Thank you.

---Laughter

In the third quarter of 2009 we were the only jurisdiction in Canada whose population dropped. Census data for the past five years shows a definite

downward trend while Canada's population increases and the population of our neighbouring territories, Yukon and Nunavut, are also increasing. To find reasons for our decline we should look no further than the NWT's high cost of living, the lack of affordable housing and slow paced development. People are leaving many of our small communities where there's typically higher unemployment. In communities where the population has increased, the number of occupied private dwellings have gone down, evidence of a housing shortage.

In contrast, the Yukon has experienced steady growth over the same period. The Yukon's population increase is mainly attributed to the mining sector. Two mines came into production in 2010, bringing jobs not only to this industry but also to other sectors. The high price of metals and minerals continue to benefit producers and attract investment from new companies, while on this side of the Mackenzie Mountains companies are still slogging through the red tape. The Yukon also has higher numbers of non-permanent residents, suggesting that more people are being brought in to work in the service industry. These people may decide ultimately to make the Yukon a permanent residence as soon as they have the opportunity.

The Northwest Territories needs to take a hard look at the reasons that our residents leave, why our migrant workers choose not to live here. We need to develop and implement practical strategies that get to the root of why people are leaving. We need targets, we need measurable income, we can no longer afford gimmicks to attract residents, we need real reasons to bring people here, keep people here: job opportunities, comparable cost of living, housing solutions and vibrant communities. This is no one else's job to try to change this statistic than ours. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON BETTY HOUSE FUNDING ANNOUNCEMENT

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to return to the issue I raised yesterday, which is the Betty House, and I want to again state to this House that the Betty House is a very important project in the Northwest Territories. It's very exciting what it will do, and the fact is it will provide so much support for women here trying to get on their feet. Whether they're by themselves or with their children, sometimes they just need that extra lending hand of support. I certainly support the objectives of this particular project.

Since yesterday's statement and certain questions in the House, I've gotten a lot of feedback regarding the Premier's responses to me and it's interesting how certain reasons why people start calling or e-mailing and letting you know that they're

concerned. Many people were not happy and they were wondering if we hurt the feelings of the government. The thing is the government did seem defensive on those particular answers. If they have to take shots at me while I do my job asking where the consultation is, so be it. That's the only way that they need to do this.

The issue is simply this: It's not about the support of the project, it's about the process of the particular issue. I won't read into the record yet again the Premier's insult to me, which I perceived and many others did. The fact is this is an important issue. He highlighted in 2010 there was committee consultation, but interestingly enough research and ourselves cannot find any of this particular stuff. He highlighted 2011 that committees were updated, but one word or a one-liner does not constitute consultation, in my view, suggesting that we're still working out some of the details.

May I remind the House, and certainly not at length, we had some really good quotes from the Minister responsible for homelessness back in May 2011. When I asked him questions about supporting the house, it was interesting how he talked about not having money, not jumping the queue, a worthy project but the community can't get ahead of itself, no O and M money. It goes on and on about how yes, it's an important project, but the fact is there's no money and it needs capital review and, oh my goodness, we shouldn't get ahead of other types of reviews because if we jumped ahead of them we'd probably offend many people in this Assembly.

The only issue here is process and our Members kept informed. I would say the record stands very clear today that Members were not kept informed. I will continue on this particular project during question period.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CONDOLENCES ON PASSING OF TU NEDHE RESIDENTS

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is unfortunate that often I have made a Member's statement that acknowledges the passing of Tu Nedhe people. I do this regrettably, but acknowledge that passing away is part of life and each should be acknowledged. Since December 2011 four Tu Nedhe citizens have passed away.

Georgina Victoria Fabien, born July 30, 1958, passed away on December 2, 2011, at the age of only 53. Georgina passed away while she was asleep. Georgina is survived by her husband, Darrow Andrews; her son, Jason Barrens; her sisters Rita, Angelina, Kaye, Helen and Lorraine; her brothers Lawrence, Henry, Don, Eddy and

Robert; along with numerous nieces and nephews, great-nieces and nephews.

Raymond Paul Simon, born January 19, 1950, passed away on December 14, 2011, at age 61. Raymond passed away from cancer. Raymond is survived by his loving wife, Dolly; his sons Kristopher and Dexter; his daughters Aleda, Destiny, Jen and Sonia; his four grandchildren Silas, Kelsey, Kaden and Roanna; his brothers Alexie, Wilfred, Richard and Patrick; his sister Irene; and numerous nieces, nephews, cousins and many friends.

Tyra Ellen Walton, born December 3, 1934, passed away on January 6, 2012. Tyra passed away from complications with diabetes. She also had four different battles with cancer, from what I understand. Tyra is survived by her husband, Bill Norn, of 42 years; sons Arthur and Andy; daughters Lynn, Dale and Lorrie; grandchildren that she raised, Gerald, Dion and Tanesha; and numerous other grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren.

Billy Lockhart was born February 13, 1936, and passed away on February 2, 2012, at age 75. Billy passed away from cancer. Billy is survived by his sister, Doris; brothers Archie and Paul; nephews Arthur, Roger, Eric, Perry, Earl, Vern, John, Malcolm and Joey; nieces Verda, Della, Rebecca, Ann, Pearl and Rose; along with numerous great-nieces and nephews.

My sincerest condolences go out to the family and friends, and especially the spouses and children of Georgina, Raymond, Tyra and Billy.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

### Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize my wife, Carolyn Smith. Happy Valentine's Day.

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

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd also like to recognize Carolyn and wish her a Happy Valentine's Day.

I'd also like to recognize my constituency assistant, the hardworking Mr. Craig Yeo, whose birthday is actually today. A proud member of Weledeh.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. I'd like to welcome Carolyn and Mr. Yeo to the House. Welcome.

Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

### Oral Questions

QUESTION 64-17(2):

#### BETTY HOUSE FUNDING ANNOUNCEMENT

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement today as well as yesterday and in my oral questions yesterday and certainly today will be principally based on the fact that I don't feel fair consultation was given on this particular project. Discussion and debate are the pillars of democracy in this Assembly and I would ask the Premier to this House if this is going to be the tone of this particular government when we get great projects like this. Are they just going to pass them through without committee consultation, or are they going to ensure that they engage the Membership on this particular side of the House?

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

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll redirect the question to the Minister of the NWT Housing Corporation.

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

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Money for Betty House was first identified in 2009-2010 and was gone through revised estimates. We had some opportunity to have some discussions and that. However, that doesn't take away from the fact that Members feel like they weren't properly consulted on this particular issue, and if that's the case then I take full responsibility for that and ensure that any projects coming through NWT Housing Corporation in the future will be consulted with the Members like we normally do. This is just one that through different circumstances – change of Assemblies, Ministers, presidents and scopes of work – it was actually fairly complicated and we just recently were able to work out the final details.

**MR. HAWKINS:** May I state for the record that's one of the best answers I've heard in this House in years.

My next question to the Minister of the NWT Housing Corporation is: Would he provide at least a written briefing note to Members to show us where this particular money came from, how it was flowed through and how it will affect the bottom line books of the NWT? If it's flow-through money I'm sure the briefing note will explain this. That's the type of information I feel was lost in this discussion and debate.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** The Homelessness Coalition put some good work into this. They came forward with a business plan through the Canada Economic Action Plan. We were able to free up

some money to make a small contribution to the overall cost of the project.

I will be pleased to provide a briefing note on the whole situation of Betty House to the Member and Members opposite.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** No, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 65-17(2):  
HEALTH CARE SYSTEM REFORM

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to follow up on my Member's statement. I have some questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services with regard to our health system reform. The Minister spoke yesterday about moving doctors around. From Hansard I have a sentence where he stated, "We are actually starting on the process now." I feel that reworking how we use our doctors and changing our system of hiring doctors, and how we assign doctors to their jobs is something that we really need to do relative to getting reform done and I think the Minister agrees with me. I'd like to know where we're at in this process.

As I mentioned in my statement, it's been several years. We've literally put millions of dollars, I think \$3.5 million last year, into the Foundation for Change. What have we got to show for that money? Where are we at in the process of changing the way that we use our doctors so that we can get them in the communities where we need them?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mr. Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Although we see that it's difficult to fill doctors' positions in the regional centres where the positions are located – Fort Smith, Hay River, Inuvik, Norman Wells and Fort Simpson – that's still our first priority. Our first priority is still to try to fill those positions in those communities. Failing that, we're having discussions and have had discussions with the Joint Leadership Council, which are the boards or public administrators, to talk about the possibility of having one system pooling doctors in Yellowknife and having the locums come out of Yellowknife as opposed to having locums that come out from other parts of the country.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks to the Minister. I appreciate that. One of the things that I have heard talk of and that the Australian system highlighted is a central command, so to speak, for medical assistance where doctors are available 24/7 and they can assist communities or small health centres

elsewhere with difficult problems. The Minister said that they're discussing things with the health authorities and I recognize that needs to be done, but this has been ongoing for quite some time. I guess I need to know from the Minister – if we're going to do reform, that usually indicates that change is taking place – when can we expect to see some change in how we use our doctors.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Right now we have three public administrators in place of boards. That is at Stanton, Beaufort-Delta and Hay River. In our initial discussions in the communities, the communities had indicated that they would like to see the boards put back in with representatives from the communities. We would like to consult with the new boards or with the current boards. That doesn't mean that we're going to wait until all the boards are in place before we start to make a move on this. We're going right to the communities and indicating that that's what we wish to do. So we have actually had the very initial discussions already at the community level in the Beaufort-Delta with the Joint Leadership Council about this.

As I indicated earlier, there is opposition, but at the same time what is the alternative. The alternative is continuing a system now that is costly and using locums from the South. So we're again, first priority, fill in the community at the regional level, second priority, fill in Yellowknife.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks to the Minister. I have to disagree that we need to get rid of the PAs and establish boards. I am happy to hear the Minister say that we're not going to wait until the boards are in place. I think the Yellowknife Stanton Territorial Health Authority has been without a board for 10 or 12 years. Goodness knows that we can't wait for those boards to be in place. I think there's a responsibility on the part of the government to put their foot down and say this is how we're going to do things. Yes, there needs to be consultation, but when push comes to shove, it's our responsibility to make a decision.

NPs, nurse practitioners are also part of changing the system. The Minister spoke a little bit yesterday about some of the ways that we use our NPs. I think he stated that we have nine nurse practitioners and most of them are in Yellowknife. I'd like to quote from a 2010 statement from [practicenorth.ca](http://practicenorth.ca) which says a commitment has been made to expand the use of nurse practitioners in every health centre, clinic and emergency room in the NWT by 2010.

I'd like to ask the Minister, if we have nine nurse practitioners we obviously haven't met the goal of 2010, but when can we expect to see a significant expansion of the number of nurse practitioners in the NWT. Thank you.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** I can't give that information. I don't know when we're going to be

expanding nurse practitioners. What I do know is that when we do produce nurse practitioners, educate registered nurses to become nurse practitioners, their desire to work in Yellowknife is greater than the desire to go over to the regional centres. That's why we had the nurse practitioners here. We'd love to have nurse practitioners in the regional centres. We'd love to have the nurse practitioners in the larger communities because they do have an expanded role more than registered nurses. But at this time, they are here.

At this time we have several systems that are competing for those resources. Yellowknife is an attractive place. Yellowknife is not a real issue as far as attracting doctors and so on. I think we have 21... I don't know the numbers right off the top of my head, but we have quite a few doctors here in Yellowknife between the Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority, which has a board, and the Stanton Health Authority, which has a public administrator. But those are not real issues, because we're able to retain doctors here. We're able to attract doctors here, and obviously we're also able to retain nurse practitioners here. But because the system is that these health authorities compete against other health authorities because they're separate systems, then the nurse practitioner has an option, because they could have several offers once they become practitioners. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Your final, short supplementary, Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's difficult to be short. I don't know where to start. I guess I need to now ask the Minister, he stated that we need to make changes, he stated that the health authorities compete with each other. What is the department doing to ensure that the authorities do not compete with each other for specialized staff such as NPs and doctors? What kind of a plan is there? What is the department doing on the ground to get the people that we need in the Territories and in our communities? Thank you.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** We're trying to reform governance, first of all. We are trying to work with the human resources to get professional at attracting practitioners. But the key is consultation. We have to consult with the communities in order to reform governance. We can't go in there and say you're losing five positions, Hay River, they're going to be moved here; Fort Smith is losing all their doctors, they're going to be moved here without proper consultation. At the first Joint Leadership Council some of the board members were not happy with this. They want us to continue to push and sell the communities where those doctors are located, and some of the MLAs in here said use us to sell our communities to attract doctors. That's what we wish to do. We want to do that. Our priority

would be to have, like I said, in the communities. Unfortunately, we're having difficulty. We can fill five doctors all at once and that seems to be the way to go, or seven all at once, or nine all at once. It's very difficult to fill the first doctor position or the second doctor position. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 66-17(2):  
FEDERAL PROPOSAL FOR SINGLE  
LAND AND WATER BOARD STRUCTURE

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to address my questions to the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources today. Following up on my Member's statement earlier, I would like to begin by asking: What is this government's position on the federal proposal to collapse the regional land and water boards established under the MVRMA into one board? Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Minister responsible for Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. Premier.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Government of Canada is responsible for making those decisions and we would want to make sure that those decisions do not affect our devolution negotiations. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thanks, to the Premier. I note from Mr. Pollard's statement that the one board proposal will "maintain the co-management foundation of the land, permitting and water licensing processes set out in the Gwich'in, Sahtu and Tlicho agreements and the act." But he goes on to say, "The proposed changes to the act will not provide for regional panels."

I can't reconcile taking away regional panels with maintaining a local and regional co-management promised in the First Nations settlements. Could the Premier explain this government's position on whether this proposal is consistent with this government's priorities for regional and local control of the pace and scale of development? Mahsi.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** I guess, in our view, this demonstrates the fact that we need to move fairly quickly with devolution so that we can have decisions made by the people that are affected by those decisions. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I appreciate the Premier's comments there. I'd say obviously, then, the government does not agree with this and they have a moral responsibility to fight this proposal and retain the local and regional control.

The model of consultation being used here is the typical federal approach of preordaining the outcome. Mr. Pollard says again he will "lead the

consultation process on reconfiguring the current four board structure into one board,” then carry the one board model forward into remaining claims negotiations.

We have two environmental audits and the McCrank Report telling us the solutions lie elsewhere, with no mention of collapsing boards by any of those federal reviews. So the outcome is presupposed and the consultation is apparently meaningless. Will the Premier inform Mr. Pollard that it wants to see the outstanding recommendations for improvement fulfilled before any changes to board structure are considered? Mahsi.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** As the Member may recall, we have been identified as a stakeholder and we were lumped in with all of the stakeholders when the federal government sought input. When we first came in as a government, the Premier and Cabinet, we were advised that we had to wait until letters went to Aboriginal governments before our government could find out the nature of these proposed recommendations. We have since met with Mr. Pollard and we have been asked to provide a written response to the recommendations, and that we would be part of the debriefing when the federal government debriefs the Aboriginal governments as to what their plan is with regard to the regulatory improvement initiative, as they call it. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Short supplementary, Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks again to the Premier. I assume, given that this is inconsistent with our positions on regional and local control and what that comment would mean, we would certainly not support this.

My last question does indeed relate to the devolution situation that the Premier refers to. This federal government is making all kinds of very significant changes here as we are negotiating the devolution goals and whittling away at the sorts of things and resources we are in line to inherit. For example, whittling down from our regional boards to one board and so on. What does this say to the good faith of our partners in this negotiation process when they're doing this while we're negotiating the drawing down of this responsibility? I'd appreciate the Premier's views. Mahsi.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** I guess the federal government is trying to provide some certainty to industry and to level the playing field with other northern territories. Once again, I reiterate that this gives more credence to getting on with devolution so that we can make these changes that will benefit all of the people of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Colleagues, before we go on, I would like to recognize in the gallery two today, the assistant auditor general, Jerome Berthelette and Ronnie Campbell, the Office of the Auditor General of Canada. Welcome to the House.

The honourable Member for the Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

#### QUESTION 67-17(2):

#### WATER QUALITY MONITORING IN THE SAHTU

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wanted to ask questions to the Minister of ENR on the water quality monitoring that could be and should be happening in the Northwest Territories, more specifically working towards another lab in the Northwest Territories. There is one in Yellowknife. I would like to see another one, preferably in the Sahtu where there is going to be a lot of oil and gas development. We need to look at ensuring that people do have safe quality water and that they know what is coming down the Mackenzie River from the tar sands or the pulp mills. Can the Minister answer that question?

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is a lot of work underway in regards to water, as the Member is well aware, over the last few years and continuing to this very day. As a government, we pull together all of our resources within government to make sure we are working with communities. We are looking at source and water protection, making sure from the source to the tap we deal with that water. We have arrangements – especially in the southern part of the territory where the water comes in from Alberta – we have some initiatives with two different groups, the Slave and the Delta as well as the Peace-Athabasca Delta. We are working with the Alberta government, federal government, Aboriginal governments, with a number of NGOs to do all of this monitoring and the collecting of data. We have been looking at the fish. We have been working with the universities, as well; University of Saskatchewan for one. We have arrangements with members of the Council of Environment Ministers. The Premier is a member of Council of Federation which is taking an active interest in the water.

We are currently negotiating our transboundary agreements that are going to be binding to Alberta, Saskatchewan, Vancouver and the Northwest Territories. We know that the Alberta-federal government has just released their monitoring plan for water which includes, to a certain extent, the Northwest Territories. However, we recognize as does the Member, we need to do more. We have discussions currently underway once again with

other potential partners to look at water monitoring, capacity, especially farther north. Specifically if we can do it and find the resources, we think it is very critical if we can get some water monitoring to pass around the Member's community of Fort Good Hope. We think it is an area that needs to have some attention paid to it. We are working on that and should be able to show some progress in the next couple of months. Thank you.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister for outlining all such work that this government is doing to deal with the water issue. I want to ask any thoughts on what they can do for the people of Fort Good Hope. That would be appreciated by the people there. What baseline water quality information is currently being collected now in the Sahtu?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Speaker, we are looking at the Canadian Water Quality Guidelines as guidelines that have been developed probably across Canada. It gives guidance and sets standards to be followed by various jurisdictions. We also, when it comes to water in the communities, it has to, of course, meet all of the standards for the health of people, so it is considered potable and meets all of those various tests as well. Thank you.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Speaker, several years ago Imperial Oil was found guilty by Environment Canada for water quality for dumping chemicals in the Mackenzie River. They paid a fine. I think it was a slap on the wrist for them for about \$195,000 because of their conviction of dumping chemicals in the Mackenzie River. I want to ask the Minister on the water quality lab, is that something that this government is looking at in the future, putting another lab in the Northwest Territories along the Mackenzie River, more specifically somewhere in the Norman Wells or Fort Good Hope area?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Speaker, we see a clear need for community-based water monitoring. It is an issue that has come up through all of our consultations up and down the valley as we develop our Northern Voices, Northern Waters water strategy. As we look at the transboundary issues and the negotiations there, it is clear as well that that type of monitoring, both on the Alberta side and as it enters into the territory and as it goes farther north, are going to be critical.

We see community-based water monitoring as very critical. We have been spending a lot of time and energy at the border where the water is crossing, but we also recognize there are needs farther north. As we look at our planning for the expansion of community-based water monitoring, we are definitely looking at places like the Member's community of Fort Good Hope where there have been a lot of concerns raised. It would be a good

point to try to do that as we move forward in our planning. Thank you.

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

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have said in my Member's statement that several elders in 1979, Chief Paul Wright and Chief George Kodakin said in the public meeting that one day we are going to put our nets in the water and when we lift the nets, there are either going to be no fish in there or there are going to be fish in there that will be sick and dying and no one will want to eat them. That is the prophecy they said to us in 1979. This is why I bring this issue up of water quality monitoring in the Sahtu along the Mackenzie River. We need to know.

How soon would the Minister be able to tell us that we could specifically have one in Providence, Wrigley, along Norman Wells and so forth, Tsiigehtchic and all the way up to the Beaufort-Delta? Specifically, we need to have water monitoring quality stations in the future. Will we have a lab and ask for another lab? When can the Minister tell us that this is something that he will take to the federal government to start putting these sites into the plan to have along in the Northwest Territories?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I didn't point out at this juncture as we talk about the need to have better information on the water, better decision-making as it pertains to water at a time when the federal government is cutting billions of dollars out of their various departmental programs to save anywhere between \$4 million and \$8 billion this year. They are looking at a lot of cases, scientists and Environment and Natural Resources and a lot of resources that they currently have are going to disappear.

We are pursuing this as a GNWT initiative with some partners that we are working with, but clearly, if we want to do this the right way, if we want to actually have the decision-making, then it gets us back to the need to get devolution so that we have a legal authority over land, water and resource development. We don't have to rely on the federal government. We can use our own sources. We can make our own decisions in the North. That is the critical piece in the next year and a half.

The monitoring stations, we will be working on and hopefully in the course of the next business plan we will be able to show some progress, but in the meantime the fundamental issue that we do need are the levers of control finally in the Northwest Territories, land, water and resource development. Thank you.



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

QUESTION 68-17(2):  
INCENTIVES AND INDUCEMENTS  
FOR POPULATION GROWTH

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement today I talked about the declining population of the Northwest Territories. There are ways of addressing that. We can attract new people. We can keep the people we have. We can multiply the people we have or there is another huge target audience out there, the people who work in the Northwest Territories but live somewhere else. That is what I want to ask the Minister of ITI about today. Have there been changes in the socio-economic agreements that were originally signed with the diamond mines? We hear that the Yukon is doing so well because of the mining sector. We also have a good mining sector with the diamond mines, but if people don't have to live in the Northwest Territories and it's easier if they can be flown out of the South, then I guess they have that option of doing that. So I'd like to ask the Minister of ITI, have we regressed from the original commitment we had with the diamond companies with respect to incentives and inducements to keep people in the North. Thank you.

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

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Concerning the SEAs, we had come up with an MOU with the three diamond mines. That MOU expired last year. We're currently in the process of trying to replace that MOU. I've had the opportunity now as the Minister of ITI, to sit down with the three head folks at the diamond mines and we have to chart a course forward when it comes to replacing that MOU, and I fully intend on doing that and including my colleague, the Minister of Health and Social Services, and my colleague, the Minister of ECE, in a way forward on that. Thank you.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** We are, I'm sure, aware of the challenges faced by these companies, as well, in attracting and recruiting people to work for them, regardless of whether they live in the North or the South, just getting the manpower or the labour force that they need to operate their mines. But I'd like to ask the Minister, in his discussions with the three diamond mines, is it his sense that they are aware of our plight in the need to see more benefit from these resources that we are extracting from our territory and the absolute advantages of having these folks live in the North. Thank you.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you. They're acutely aware of that and I believe wholeheartedly

that they'd like nothing more than to see the majority of their workforce take up residence here in the Northwest Territories. However, the reality is, and I just returned from an FTP meeting in Goose Bay, Labrador, where the economy is red hot in Labrador, as well, and the representative from the province of Alberta mentioned to the Ministers at that meeting that in four years' time the province of Alberta is going to have a 77,000 person deficit when it comes to skilled tradespeople in the province of Alberta, and that's just in Alberta. There are many areas around the country nowadays where people can choose to live where they want to live and go to the work, and that unfortunately is the reality that we're in. That's the hill that we have to climb and I think we really need to start thinking about how we're going to retain the people that we have. I think that should be front and centre as well. Thank you.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you. So apart from the pressure that we could put on industry to try and have their people live and work in the North through inducements and incentives for their employees, what kind of a campaign do we have to try and communicate to people? I mean, we obviously love it here in the North. What kind of campaign do we have as a government to show people the kind of lifestyle, unique lifestyle that they can have here in the Northwest Territories? The Spectacular NWT is a wonderful campaign; you know, a nice place to visit, wouldn't want to live there. Or does it say come and see us and live here? Thank you.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you. We have had the Make Your Mark campaign that has been doing a great deal of work in eastern Canada and trying to tell people about the opportunities that are here in the Northwest Territories. Many people that currently live in a city like Yellowknife have roots in eastern Canada. We need to do everything we can to ensure that we're putting out the welcome mat.

We're looking across the country for people that want to move and live here in the Northwest Territories, but we've got a couple of hurdles again that we need to get over and one of those hurdles is the cost of living. When surveys are done with the mine workers that are on site, the main focus is the cost of living here in the Northwest Territories as compared to the South. That's an obstacle that we have to try to continue to pursue and get over.

The other obstacle is if you look here in the city of Yellowknife with a vacancy rate of 0.6 percent, there aren't too many houses on the market. We really need to do something with the City of Yellowknife, free up some land and get some housing developments started so that there are places. If we're going to try to attract people to live here, we need to have houses for them to live in. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Final, short supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Lots of houses for sale in Hay River. I just thought I'd throw that in there.

One of the other things that we've seen is with the mining companies that come in here. They have trained our northern people, they have employed our northern people, but it is even easier for them to go live in St. Albert or Spruce Grove. We've had out-migration. One of the side effects of our people getting jobs at the mine is that they say, you know what, it's easier to live in Spruce Grove than it is to live in Behchoko, and we've had out-migration as a result of that.

What can we do about this? Where is the campaign to try as a government to encourage people not only to move here but to also stay here? Thank you.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you. We need to really look at communities like Hay River, like Fort Smith, like Fort Simpson and try to see how moving forward we can attract people to live in the Northwest Territories. If there are opportunities for people to live in a community like Hay River, Fort Smith or Fort Simpson, we need to gear up and we need to come up with a way to try to attract people to do that.

We're continuing on with the Make Your Mark campaign and as we move forward it's certainly my intention to try to keep as many people here in the North as we can and attract as many people as we can.

I look forward to working with the Regular Members on the opposite side of the House to ensure that we are doing everything in our power to ensure that that happens, and that includes working with industry. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The Member for Range Lake, Mr. Dolyunny.

QUESTION 69-17(2):

ABUSE OF PRESCRIPTION NARCOTICS

**MR. DOLYUNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand here before you not just as the MLA for Range Lake but as a health care professional who's been practicing here in the North for over 20 years and serving not only the needs of Yellowknife but pretty much the needs of all of the Northwest Territories and prior to 1999, Nunavut as well. So I stand here before you today as someone who I think has got a lot of vast experience when it comes to prescription drugs and health care.

I will not deny the fact that illicit drug use, tobacco, alcohol, these are all serious addictions out there that we see every day, and I don't want to take anything away from those addictions out there, but

what I was talking about in my Member's statement earlier today is what I like to refer to as the quiet addiction. This is the addiction we don't talk about as much, because we talk about the other ones that have so much more press time and media attention. That's narcotic and opiate dependence that leads to dependency as well as addiction.

This is a serious issue that tends to go quietly and unannounced, and again, when you're trying to get information about it, there is nothing out there. So I was very concerned when trying to look for information about it. We statistically have nothing out there to lead by. So my question for the Minister of Health here today is: Why is the department not looking more into the addictions of prescription narcotic abuse and why is this information not available to the people of the Northwest Territories?

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

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The information is not available because the department does not track use of opiates. However, we do have the NWT Pharmacy Act which will give us the power to set up the regulations, but we don't have the funding to set it up. Health Canada does track non-insured health benefits prescription use, if they're going to that program to purchase the prescription drugs; but if they pay cash, we don't track that either. Thank you.

**MR. DOLYUNNY:** Thank you. I appreciate the Minister for giving reference to the act. There's no doubt that the topic of addictions is a high topic for the Members on this side of the House. You can only count on many hands how many times this has been brought up even in this Assembly here. But the idea about addictions is understanding where you start. We talked about emerging addiction areas; well, I don't want to use the word emerging because I believe this has been around here not only for the short period but it's been around here for a very long period of time. Given what was said here today and the response from the Minister, can myself as a Member and the people of the Northwest Territories get some reassurance and assurances that this information can be statistically gathered in the very near future? Thank you.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you. Yes, through regulations we can gather the information. However, at this time, like I said, we haven't gone through the act to gather the information. I'm told that information can be gathered. The electronic medical health records that we are starting to use now allows us to gather information in Yellowknife and Hay River at this time. We need to expand the electronic medical health records right across the Territories as a first step if we're going to track all the prescription drug use across the Territories. For

now we are capable of tracking in Yellowknife and Hay River.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Again I appreciate the Minister's response on that. Can the Minister or his department give some idea of the timelines when these regulations might be altered or amended so that we can gather information throughout the Territories? As I said, this is not just isolated to urban Northwest Territories; I believe this issue is prevalent everywhere. Having an understanding of the timeline would definitely help prepare, with respect to addictions.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** We will be working with our partners at the Bureau of Statistics. We're going to include questions on prescription drug use the next time we do addictions surveys, the general addictions survey. That survey is scheduled to begin in late 2012.

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

**MR. DOLYNNY:** No further questions, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. Nadli.

QUESTION 70-17(2):  
GNWT POSITION ON FEDERAL BILL C-19  
TO ABOLISH LONG-GUN REGISTRY

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the Northwest Territories we pride ourselves in being self-reliant, fending for ourselves, families and communities. Firearms or guns become a large necessity as tools for livelihood for survival and subsistence. As we look forward to the warming weather and spring hunt, can the Minister of Justice give an update to this House in terms of the Department of Justice's perspective on Bill C-19 that is before the House of Commons?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Nadli. The honourable Minister responsible for Justice, Mr. Abernethy.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recognizing the value and importance of hunting in the Northwest Territories and the need for long guns to do most hunting activities, the GNWT has actually always opposed the long-gun registry. Our position hasn't changed. We oppose the long-gun registry and actually support the federal government's position on getting rid of it.

**MR. NADLI:** Supporting the long-gun registry and the government, what measures is the department taking in the likelihood that the bill is passed and becomes law in terms of respecting the uniqueness of the North and also some of the cultural values respecting long guns?

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Right now the long-gun registry is a reality and there is a requirement

to register long guns in Canada. In the Northwest Territories we've always opposed it. We still oppose it. It's my understanding that the bill has actually gone to third reading in the House of Commons and that if it passes it will go to the Senate. If it does pass in the Senate and becomes law, then the long-gun registry won't exist and we support that position. We don't support the long-gun registry.

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

QUESTION 71-17(2):  
UPDATE ON MEETING WITH  
BEAUFORT-DELTA LEADERSHIP

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm just going to follow up on some remarks made by my fellow colleague Mrs. Groenewegen. My questions today are for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Ramsay. It's in regard to his Minister's statement that he gave earlier where he mentioned that mining has brought significant economic opportunities to our territory such as jobs in the mines. Then he goes on further and says that he wants to benefit all Northwest Territories residents.

Back in January we had a leadership meeting in Inuvik and he had mentioned and had some questions in regard to the recruitment process that some of the diamond mines came up to Inuvik, did some recruitment, did some promotion, however, we didn't see much follow-up on that. I do understand that he's in new MOU discussions with some of the mines. I just wanted to ask the Minister what progress has been made in those discussions or since the meetings in January in getting the people of Inuvik, who have gone through some training, getting them possible jobs at the mines.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Moses. The honourable Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. David Ramsay.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's important that the benefits of mining accrue to all regions in the Northwest Territories. The situation right now in the Beaufort-Delta is such that people are looking for work. The mines have done some work in the Beaufort-Delta in trying to attract employees to work at the mines. As we move forward, this is going to be an issue and I want to let the Member know that as we work through whatever replaces the MOU, the opportunities for other people in the Northwest Territories, I'd rather see people living somewhere in the Northwest Territories working at our diamond mines than people flying in from the East Coast or southern Canada.

**MR. MOSES:** I want to follow up as well to a Minister's statement made by Mr. Lafferty, ECE,

directed to Mr. Ramsay. I just wanted to ask Mr. Ramsay, based on some of the results with the apprenticeship and occupational certification that's done through ECE, the department has issued 23 certificates of qualification and eight certificates of competence to journeypersons in the Northwest Territories. Today there are 424 apprentices in the Northwest Territories. Has the Minister of ITI done any work with the Minister of ECE to ensure that once these guys get their papers that they're not just kicked out the door, that they have a job and place for them once they've gone through their certifications?

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** I know a new subcommittee of Cabinet has been formed. It's Economic Development and Employment, of which I'm the chair. I will be working closely with the lead deputy on that, Dan Daniels from ECE. I will certainly be working closely. We need to also keep in mind that as we move forward with devolution and we get more responsibility, we're making decisions for ourselves, we're growing our mining industry here in the Northwest Territories and the opportunities that that will bring, that there are going to be more jobs available. We need to ensure that our people are trained and we'll have to make every effort to work with our colleagues in Nunavut and the Yukon to come up with a comprehensive mine training strategy for northern Canada, something that we will be pursuing in the future.

**MR. MOSES:** I just wanted one short supplementary question here to finish off. That's in regard to the recruitment process that has gone up into Inuvik and the new deal with the MOU that's being discussed. I don't want this to fall onto a case in point where the diamond mines say they've come to Inuvik, they've done their consultation, and leave it at that. It's in the agreements that they've done their consultations. I want to see follow-up. I want to see that in this new MOU that in fact the mines do hire northern people from these communities, regardless if it's Inuvik, Fort Simpson or Hay River; that they are being looked at first for hiring in these mines, in these resources that we have in the Northwest Territories. In regard to the MOU, can the Minister of ITI give us an idea of when the MOU will be drafted or even finalized?

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** I understand the Member's concerns. Obviously the MOU expired last year. We're in the process of working on replacing the MOU and what form that takes is yet to be determined. I certainly will bring up the issue of exhausting all avenues for employment in all regions of the Northwest Territories to the mining presidents when I do meet with them again and we do get some formal correspondence from them on the next steps forward as we work towards a replacement for that MOU moving forward.

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

QUESTION 72-17(2):  
PUBLIC ADVISORY REGARDING  
FISH CONSUMPTION

**MR. MENICOCHE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services about the public advisory on Ekali Lake and other lakes in the Nahendeh riding. I'd like to know the communication plans that the department has to advise the public about eating fish from these lakes.

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

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The public advisory is one of the first key communications that we will do with the community. In the past what we've done when we've had a couple of lakes in a certain area, we've also followed up in writing and attached any other reports that do accompany these type of releases and present them to the First Nations. We know that we've had discussions with Dehcho First Nations. In turn they have met with the local chief and senior admin officer from Jean Marie River.

**MR. MENICOCHE:** The Minister spoke about meetings. Will he be doing a public advertising campaign as well in the Deh Cho Drum and perhaps the News/North?

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Yes, we can do that.

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

QUESTION 73-17(2):  
GNWT BUDGET PROCESS

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated in my Member's statement, I have concerns with the budget process. My questions today are for the Minister of Finance. When was the last operational business review of the GNWT costs done?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We set up a program review office in the 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly to start looking at value for money and efficiencies, economies, looking at how we do business. We also, through our annual business planning process and budget process, look at what the costs to government are and what our fiscal capacity is, and our ability to move forward and where changes need to be. Those are the two areas where we have work on a regular

basis that allows us to examine how we do business with operations, both infrastructure and O and M.

**MR. BOUCHARD:** If we're continuing to do reviews of the operations on an annual basis, how do we include the public or our public sector employees to contribute to some of these cost reductions the ways that we do some cost reductions or the way that we can make the government more efficient? How do we include the public or the public sector?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Over the last few years we have had roundtables on economic development, roundtables on dealing with revenue options. We are as well looking forward to, in the life of this Assembly, moving that show on the road where we will go to regional centres and we will meet and do pre-budget consultation with the communities and with the regions. We also have other activities through the daily work of Ministers that are involved in economic development. As well where we're looking for that type of feedback, we're currently negotiating for collective agreements with the various unions that are going to lay out that arrangement going forward and we want those, as well, to be fair but affordable.

**MR. BOUCHARD:** I'm glad to hear that the government's continuing to do reviews of the costs, but my question to the Minister of Finance today is: Since 2000 the operating budget of the GNWT doubled from \$600 million to \$1.2 billion; how can that be if we're always continuing to look at efficiencies in the government?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** If we go back to 1967 when the planes first came north with the Commissioner, this town, this city – it was a town then I think with barely 4,000 people – most communities had the most rudimentary of services. Minimal roads, minimal services from health, education, social services, economic development; they were almost non-existent. We have invested over the years in trying to build up the North. We made a decision as a territory that we were going to support the kind of community structure that we do have that recognizes the value of communities in place where they are as they have been for hundreds and, in many cases, thousands of years and over the years we've negotiated with the government. The federal government, as well, sees enormous value in having a territory that is full and functioning and vibrant, because it's part of their strategic planning, it's part of their sovereignty.

We have negotiated with the federal government over the years our agreements that have allowed us to slowly improve the level of services in the communities. We employ thousands of people. We do services now that were not even thought of even in 2000. We've added doctors, nurses, rehab people, teachers. We've improved infrastructure.

We've poured billions into infrastructure. We've been investing in the North and we've been investing in Northerners, which is a darn good way to spend money. I think that's why our budget is where it is today. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Your final, short supplementary, Mr. Bouchard.

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad the Minister took me all the way back to before I was born in 1967. I appreciate that, but as I indicated in my Member's statement, the population of the Northwest Territories has only increased 7.5 percent since 2000, but our budget has doubled. Can he indicate to me why those costs are so great when we've only increased by 7.5 percent?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Clearly, over the time from 2000 to the present, there have been significant cost increases. The price of oil, for example, is now, as of this morning, slightly over \$100 a barrel. We've made huge investments in the communities in terms of infrastructure, housing, roads, schools, sewer, water, you name it. We've invested in our territorial highways. We've negotiated collective agreements with the staff. Our staff have increased, as the Member himself noted in his statement, over 26 percent, and we are still running behind the curve. We have hospitals to build. For example, we have almost a \$100 million hospital to be built in Hay River that's on the capital plan that will be part of that investment in the North. Those are the types of investments that have driven our budget, and the quality of life in the North has gone up, as well, over those years. Thank you.

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

#### QUESTION 74-17(2):

##### FUNDING FOR STAFF HOUSING PROGRAMS

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The communities of Aklavik and Fort McPherson have been struggling for the last two years with providing housing for their teachers. My questions are for the Minister of Education. Are there plans to increase the amount of funding of \$25,000 available to the communities to provide staff housing for teachers? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Blake. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. This particular program is under review within the NWT Housing Corporation and that information will be shared with the Members once it's available. But it is under the Housing Corporation, the \$25,000 earmarked for those particular programs. Mahsi.

**MR. BLAKE:** My next question is: Will the Department of Education be willing to sign a long-term lease with the communities to provide staff housing for teachers?

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** I like those direct questions. I'll try to give him a direct answer. The direct answer is that we've gotten out of long-term lease agreements on the housing for staff. Now we're talking about the Shelter Policy that's before us. It's under review and there will be discussion that will take place with respect to housing for staff, housing for community members, and there will be more discussion with the standing committee. Mahsi.

**MR. BLAKE:** The 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly has prioritized education. I just wanted to note that. Is the Minister willing to work with the communities and myself to resolve the issue of housing for teachers? Thank you.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** I would say yes. We need to work with all communities to deal with the housing for staff, especially the teachers. That's under my portfolio. Education is one of the goals and objectives of this Assembly, and I'll definitely work closely with the NWT Housing Corporation to identify the needs of the communities when it comes to housing for staff. Mahsi.

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you to the Minister for that. I look forward to that response. Mahsi.

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

QUESTION 75-17(2):  
JOINT REPLACEMENT SURGERIES

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question following up from a question that I had in previous sessions to the Minister of Health and Social Services, and that's regarding the backlog and the delay, or the on-hold situation that we have for our joint replacement surgeries. I just want to get an update from the Minister of Health on the progress of those surgeries. Just an update to see where the department is on those. Thank you.

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

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The hospital operating rooms for elective hip surgery or joint surgeries are now running at full capacity. That was effective August 13, 2011. Thank you.

**MR. MOSES:** Does that include the joint replacement surgeries as well? Because it's been a long time since August. We've been about six months. That means we should be getting some of our people in the Northwest Territories through

those surgery rooms and getting those replacements, especially the hip replacement surgeries. Thank you.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** I actually don't know if that includes hip surgery. What I do know is that the operating room seems to have resolved all of the sterilization issues and continues to work on the sterilization issues. As I indicated, the hospital is old and they are doing their best to maintain the pH levels at the operating table. But specific to actual hip replacement surgeries, I am not 100 percent sure on that, but I can get back to the Member on that. Thank you.

**MR. MOSES:** I appreciate the answer that the Minister has given me. I'd just like to ask when can I receive that information, at a prompt time, as I do have a lot of constituents who are still waiting on that hip replacement surgery. Thank you.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** I can provide that information to the Member later on today or tomorrow. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. That concludes our time for oral questions. Mr. Dolyunny.

**MR. DOLYUNNY:** Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to go back to item 7, oral questions.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Dolyunny.

**Oral Questions  
(Reversion)**

QUESTION 76-17(2):  
JOINT MONITORING PROCESS  
FOR ALBERTA OIL SANDS

**MR. DOLYUNNY:** My question today will be for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Miltenberger brought to the House here a Minister's statement the other day regarding a joint Canada-Alberta implementation plan for oil sands monitoring. In his discourse he mentioned, and I quote, "This new oil sands monitoring plan is based on sound science and incorporates world-class tools to monitor and assess air quality, water quality..." And it continues. It talked about transparency and accountability in the monitoring.

Mr. Speaker, we've heard today from two of our Members here on this side of the House the issues of their fish up the Mackenzie River. This was not the first time this was brought into the House and this is not the first time this was brought into this Assembly. This has been brought in other Assemblies. There is grave concern. As a chemist by trade, I'm also concerned with the fact: do we have a proper baseline as we move forward with this type of monitoring plan for the oil sands monitoring. In my Member's statement earlier last

week I talked about the drinking water quality and I have to make a comment that the City of Yellowknife did bring forward their quality of chemical testing and I thank them for that. However, we have not heard anything to refute our own test samples here in the Territories. We have no chemical testing for our own data for Hay River, Nahanni Butte since 2009. There have been no chemical tests according to our data in Trout Lake in 2011 and many of the missing test results were in the Deh Cho community administrative region.

Mr. Speaker, how can we move forward with such an important initiative and yet we have no baseline to create this assessment? Thank you.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a case where we have a situation of a critical service, a critical part of the environment where there is overlapping jurisdictions. We have the political and moral authority. The federal government has the legal authority as it pertains to the water. We take all the steps necessary to make sure that the municipalities and communities have safe drinking water, but in terms of protecting the ecosystems, the aquatic ecosystems, the groundwater and the watersheds in the Mackenzie River Basin, we have a role to play but the legal responsibility lies with the federal government. We are in the process of negotiating those transboundary agreements with the federal government so that we can, in fact, take that over. There have been some announcements south of the border that give us some pause and some comfort that they are on the right track, but we also know that in the Territories, the Member from the Sahtu and I were discussing in this House about the need for additional community-based water monitoring that allows to build on the work that has been done in terms of source water protection and broaden it out to the aquatic ecosystems. Thank you.

**MR. DOLYUNNY:** Again I do appreciate what the Minister is trying to portray here. The bottom line is that we still are dealing with missing test results. I did get some reassurances from the Minister of MACA regarding this information coming forward in the House. We are waiting for that information to come forward, but in the interim, I guess, where are we getting our baseline information as we prepare for this plan?

We are talking about a very futuristic plan about testing the water up and down the river, but as of today we have missing test results. I am asking the Minister of ENR when can we see or get reasonable access to these missing test results for the Members here so that the people of the Northwest Territories feel safe drinking their water.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Speaker, listening to the Member's questions today and over the last few days, it would seem to be that the issue the Member is talking about, he would like some specific confirmation and assurance that what water testing is taking place in the communities at the community level where the water is being put into people's houses and they are using for daily use, that is one issue that would be an area that MACA has responsibility for. The issue of the broader aquatic ecosystems, the water basin, working with Alberta and the federal government and regional governments up and down the valley to look at the type of water monitoring system we are going to have for the general flow and what is coming down river from the south, monitoring the impacts of resource development, all those types of things, those are the areas that we are building on when we talk about community-based water monitoring. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 77-17(2):  
GNWT BUDGET PROCESS  
AND CONSULTATION

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are in follow-up to my colleague from Hay River North when he was asking about if there were ways of consulting with the public with respect to ways of affecting our budget here as a government.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister made reference to his roundtables he has held on revenue options and different things. I would like to suggest that one other idea for input that is not so much public input but it comes from a very reliable source, is asking our own employees of the Government of the Northwest Territories where there are ways to do things more cost-effectively and more efficiently.

You can sort of take the negative spin on that and a lot of talk has gone on in the past about the idea of whistle-blower legislation. That is kind of allowing protection for people who might want to report things going on in the workplace that are costing this government money, but I would rather take a positive and proactive approach to that and find out if there are ways of rewarding GNWT employees who know the system so well, much better than we can ever know it, and could come forward to us with ways of doing things better and rewarding them for that. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member raises an issue and a

source of possible assistance numbering in the thousands. In fact, there have been attempts in the past to come up with ways to engage employees to look at incentives for doing that. That is again being looked at. As well, HR is also looking at whistle-blower legislation.

I agree with the Member that the intent here would be to encourage and reward people for showing initiative and coming forward with good ideas and rewarding people that do that. That is something that is being reconsidered as it has been in the past, but as well there is some reconsideration on the other side of the coin of whistle-blower legislation for those folks that come forward in other areas with information that is helpful to government that may not comply or meet the test on the side of meeting the test for advice that should be rewarded but may have different impacts. Thank you.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** I can't say categorically that I have come across this a lot, but in my time as MLA, I have been approached by people in the public service who do have ideas of different ways of doing things and didn't really feel that their input would be welcomed, that they would be rocking the boat, if they would be potentially... I guess when we work in a group of people, sometimes people don't want to stand out or take that kind of a step. From an inter-jurisdictional point of view, what do other provinces or territories do with their public service that allows them to participate in looking for ways to do things more efficiently? Is the Minister aware of that regime anywhere else? Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Speaker, I don't have that information with me today, but I would indicate to the Member that this government is interested, as we have all struggled with the fiscal reality we are in and the need to be efficient and effective, manage our resources at a time when there are enormous cost pressures and pressures to keep our costs down, that we are looking and interested in every opportunity and avenue that will allow us to achieve our goals, protect programs, protect services and move forward in a way that allows us to do that. We are interested in that, so we want to be able to work with employees that have those types of ideas that could be considered in a meaningful way. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Final, short supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. How long would it take to formalize something like this? It is fine to say we are considering it, but time is of the essence here. He is always reminding us of how many days we have left in this government in days. How long would it take to formalize some mechanism for employees to become more actively involved in helping us do things better? Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** It is in fact about 1,300 days that we have left in the life of this

Assembly. We should be able to have some document that lays out some potential options within the next couple of months. As we go forward, either I or Minister of Human Resources will be able to probably speak about what has happened in the past and what are some of the possibilities, if we want to consider this going forward. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Colleagues, before we go on, there are a couple of things I want to bring up. Members, we support or were given unanimous consent to go back to oral questions, not Member's statements, with your answering and your asking of questions. I want your questions and answers straight to the point. Also, people using your cell phones in here, no more, please and thank you. Respect the House. Respect your colleagues. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

QUESTION 78-17(2):  
WHISTLE-BLOWER LEGISLATION

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to follow up on my colleague's questions and the reference to whistle-blower legislation. Certainly last term we did repeatedly bring up the need to give our civil servants a chance to highlight their opportunities for saving funds and so on, but consistently we have heard complaints about where to take complaints from our employees. So we either need whistle-blower legislation or an ombudsman. Could I ask the Minister of Human Resources where is he at, where is the department at, will we see this coming forward in the near future, whistle-blower legislation or an ombudsman? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The Minister of Human Resources, Mr. Abernethy.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There has been a lot of conversation about whistle-blower legislation. There was certainly conversation about whistle-blower legislation in the last election. I've asked the department to compile the information they've pulled together in previous years on whistle-blower legislation and bring that to me and I was planning to share that with committee. From there I was hoping to get some direction as to whether or not this Assembly wished to actually pursue whistle-blower legislation. I hope to have the information compiled shortly, but there are a number of things happening in the department that are taking a little bit more time, such as the four collective agreements that we're working on as well as some other things.

So I'm hoping to have some information to committee hopefully before business planning, but from there we'll have to decide as an Assembly which direction we wish to take. Thank you.



**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you. I'll keep it short here. My last question. I appreciate that information. I guess I would ask the Minister is he committed, once we make that decision, to act on it and act on it expeditiously. We've heard how time is passing. Last term we brought these issues up, nothing happened. Can we expect real action once we decide? Thank you.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you. If it's the wish of the House and committee directs us to start exploring the legislation further, we will bring forward an LP and we'll follow the normal legislative proposal process. Obviously, if it's the wish of the House, I'd like to have it done in the life of this Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 79-17(2):  
CARIBOU HUNTING TAGS

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I had a concern from one of the residents in the Sahtu. When the Minister of ENR talked about caribou and outfitters, my question to the Minister is before any tags go to any outfitters, that due diligence is there, that the caribou herd is healthy and the first tags go to resident hunters.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure what herd the Member is talking about. Most of the herds, with the exception of a very small harvest on the Porcupine, there is only Aboriginal subsistence harvests, plus there's the banned area outside of Yellowknife, which has specific restrictions. But there are no other harvests going on in the Territories as far as I'm aware. Thank you.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** I do apologize for not being specific. The concern came from my riding and all this concern was that before any tags go to any of the outfitters, that tags for caribou go to the resident hunters so they can feed their families. That's the question I asked of the Minister.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** We have a working arrangement, a very close relationship with the co-management boards in the Sahtu as well. So as we look at the health of the herds and if there are any decisions made to change or adjust the harvesting, that will be done through that due process with ENR involved. There is a clear ranking system where Aboriginal subsistence harvest is protected and that is, as in the case of the banned area, the last one to be impacted. As you work your way up from the commercial harvest outfitters, resident hunters up to the Aboriginal harvest and

that is the process, and there's been no change to that process and we honour that most insidiously.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Miltenberger talked about the sequencing and that it will go through a process for any caribou tags that are going to be going out to the people. First we looked at the Aboriginal hunters, trappers, then northern residents and then possibly to the outfitters if there is enough healthy caribou for the taking. Is that the sequencing as I understand it so that I can tell my people this is how it will be played out?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Yes, that is the sequence and the fact is there is no other harvest across the territory except for the small harvest in the Porcupine, except for the Aboriginal subsistence harvest at this juncture. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 80-17(2):  
HEALTH CARE SYSTEM REFORM

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to address a few more questions to the Minister of Health and Social Services about the Foundation for Change and our health reform and what we're doing in that regard. In some of the Minister's answers earlier he talked about in terms of health professionals, nurse practitioners and doctors, he talked about wishing to do things, but I realize that the department has a very long wish list. My particular question at this point to the Minister is: We may wish to do these things, but what are we doing about attracting health professionals to our territory? Thank you.

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

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We continue to do recruitment. We work with Human Resources to work with each of the health and social services authorities on recruitment. We do have a joint recruitment system. Then once the doctors accept jobs or whatnot, they would then have an option to go to where they wish to go, in most cases. When we're recruiting for doctors in general, usually the doctors end up here, in the history. We have a website, we are working with a couple of universities in the South where we're working with – they're like interns I suppose, but I forget the name, they're residents I think – referred to as residents that we bring up to the North and they work at the hospitals here to see if they'd like to come to the North. Those are some of the things that we're doing, off the top of my head. Thank you.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks to the Minister. I appreciate that we are doing all these things, but they seem to be the same things that we've been doing for quite some time and in order to affect reform in order to

make our health system more efficient, I have to encourage the Minister to change the way that we're doing things and I didn't hear that in his answer. I'd like to know from the Minister, my statement talked about that Australia uses telehealth to do diagnoses, to talk to patients, to assist them from a distance. I'd like to know what we use our telehealth system for. Just what exactly, what activities, what purposes do we use it for? Thank you.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you. We do use telehealth. We do have patients and nurses or patients and doctors that are in the more remote communities or even in the regional centres, depending on what the issue is, to communicate with the doctors here in Yellowknife if need be. Those are the type of things we're using telehealth for at this time. We would be able to expand the use of telehealth once the fibre optic links are completed across the territory. Thank you.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks to the Minister. So we are doing some stuff, it sounds like; communicating with nurses at health centres and clinics that are in our smaller and isolated communities.

I guess I would like to know from the Minister whether or not that means that we are actually doing diagnoses. Are we able to keep patients and residents in their community as opposed to having them travel to a regional centre?

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Some of the telehealth communications have prevented the necessity to use medical travel, if that's what the question is. In a sense, the doctor was able to assist the nurse or another doctor at the other end of the telehealth screen so that individuals could be properly diagnosed by the person that's with the patient. In a sense, I guess it has lessened some of the medical travel costs by using telehealth.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Final supplementary, Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister, I'd like to know what we can do or what the Minister has in plans to do to try and expand that use of telehealth in terms of diagnostics. Are there any targets? We probably don't know how much we're using it now, but I'd like to know from the Minister whether or not there are any targets that the department has set to expand the use of telehealth for medical purposes.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** We would like to use telehealth wherever we can. There is an issue with bandwidth, as well, at some of the health centres in the various communities, but if we can use telehealth, we will use telehealth as much as we can. We will expand the use of it as it goes along. As the health professionals get more comfortable with it, we will be expanding the use of telehealth.

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

QUESTION 81-17(2):  
AMOUNT OF MONEY THE  
NWT LOSES EACH DAY

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have one question to the Premier. The Premier has indicated in the past week the amount of money that the Northwest Territories is losing each day. I want to ask the Premier if he could be a little more specific on the amount and where that amount is coming from. Is it coming from the royalties? Is it coming from the Norman Wells field? Where did he get this number from?

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

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's actually quite a simplistic number. We expect that the revenues from devolution alone would be about \$60 million a year. There's 365 days in a year. If you do the math it works out to \$165,000 a day. That's not including all the money for the employees and the O and M and so on that would also be devolved.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Yakeleya. Item 8, written questions. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

### Written Questions

WRITTEN QUESTION 2-17(2):  
PUBLIC ADVISORIES ON CONSUMPTION  
OF FISH FROM NAHENDEH LAKES

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services.

1. Can the Minister provide a list of all of the lakes in Nahendeh that have had public advisories regarding the consumption of fish over the past five years?
2. Can the Minister provide details of how and when these lakes were tested?
3. Can the Minister advise whether the GNWT or federal government has any concrete plans to conduct future sampling or detailed studies of these Nahendeh lakes?

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

WRITTEN QUESTION 3-17(2):  
INFRASTRUCTURE AVAILABLE FOR  
ALCOHOL AND DRUG TREATMENT CENTRES

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My written question is for the Minister of Public Works and Services.

1. Can the Minister provide an inventory of Government of the Northwest Territories infrastructure currently available in the communities of Inuvik, Fort Simpson and Norman Wells that could house alcohol and drug treatment centres?
2. Can the Minister provide current operations and maintenance costs for these buildings?

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

### Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 12-17(2):  
STATUS REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL  
OF CANADA TO THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**MR. SPEAKER:** I wish to table the Status Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly.

Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Tabled Document 2-17(2), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2011-2012; and Tabled Document 3-17(2), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2011-2012, 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. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Menicoche.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. The committee would like to consider Tabled Document 3-17(2) and Tabled Document 2-17(2).

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Is committee agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you. We'll take a break and then we will resume with that.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** I'd like to call Committee of the Whole back to order. Where we left off yesterday on Tabled Document 3-17(2), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2011-2012, we left off on page 10. We had concluded Health and we're ready to move on to the Department of Justice now. I'll ask the Minister if he would like to bring witnesses into the Chamber.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Yes, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** I'll ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to please escort the witnesses into the Chamber.

Mr. Miltenberger, for the record, please.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I have with me Deputy Minister Mike Aumond and deputy secretary of the FMB, Sandy Kalgutkar.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Department of Justice, operations expenditures, activity, law enforcement, not previously authorized, \$840,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Community justice and corrections, not previously authorized. Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm sorry; I'd like to go back to the first item, law enforcement. I did have a question with regard to the expenditure, the third expenditure for \$206,000 to provide funding for our share of increased costs with regard to the new RCMP allowance policy, I guess, or backup policy.

I know that this policy has been in place for I think maybe two years now, perhaps a little longer, but I'd like to know whether or not this policy is going to have an impact on us in the future. We've got an expenditure here which is beyond our budgeted amount in this particular year. Is this something which is going to have an impact on our budget ongoing or forever, or are we liable to get more funding from the federal government to help us deal with their backup policy which requires us to spend more money on our policing?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Is committee agreed to go back to law enforcement?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you. Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Kalgutkar.

**MR. KALGUTKAR:** Thank you, Madam Chair. This funding will be an ongoing requirement and in fact we have provided for some funding to be included in the 2012-2013 Main Estimates when they are considered by the standing committees.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks to Mr. Kalgutkar. I guess I just would like an explanation then. Is this our share of the extra costs because of the backup policy, or are we bearing more of a cost than the federal government is in this? Or is this the same 70/30 percent share that we have with all of our other RCMP expenses? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It's part of our share of the cost-sharing arrangement, which is 70/30. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Law enforcement, not previously authorized, \$840,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Community justice and corrections, not previously authorized. Mr. Dolynny.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. My question will be with respect to the HALT amount for \$100,000 here, and understanding full well that this is a flow-through program. It looks like this has been a frontload on behalf of the government here for \$100,000, but what's more troubling is that this is in phase four of, obviously, a phase one, two, three and now a phase four project. We're talking about supplementals here. Can the Minister give us some idea why this is not included in the base funding?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Mr. Minister.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. This particular program is application based, and we just finally got word from the federal government that we were successful in our application for this fourth component. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Community justice and corrections, not previously authorized, \$908,000. Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I just had a question with regard to the last item, the funding required to address the increased costs of food. Like other Members, I'm having great difficulty understanding why we couldn't have seen that we were going to need a higher budgeted amount for food costs at our corrections facilities across the

territory. My understanding is that we have budgeted the same amount for corrections facilities for food for about the last three, four or five years. To the Minister, I'd like to know how often we adjust our base funding. I know sometimes it's done every year, but in this particular case it's been four or five years since the base funding has been adjusted. Do we have any method by which we do an analysis of what we're spending? Do we look at trends over, say, the last two years and determine that there needs to be an increase in base funding, or do we wait four and five years before we do that analysis? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. As we've discussed throughout this supplementary appropriation, the process here is fairly set in that there hasn't been, in many cases like forest fire fighting, or the food in this case, adjustments to the base budget. Rather, we've kept coming back and making a case through supplementary appropriation if that's necessary. In this case, it's a lot driven by the fluctuating inmate count. Thank you.

**MS. BISARO:** I guess I would like to know from the Minister, you know, I understand that this is something that we do. We keep the same amount of money for a number of years, but does the department do an analysis of trends from one year to the next or over the last two or three years and, therefore, look at increasing base funding based on trends? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you. Mr. Aumond.

**MR. AUMOND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Through the annual business planning process, primarily through the forced growth, departments make submissions for forced growth to their base funding if they can demonstrate through factual information that they're actually incurring these costs and they have no other options to mitigate those costs. In some cases the costs of the item which they are looking for is volatile – sometimes it goes up; sometimes it goes down – and in many cases departments have abilities to mitigate the impact of cost increases. It's only when they can't mitigate and they can substantiate the request through that one time of the year, which is the business planning process, that they're allotted forced growth. If they can't, and otherwise they get caught by surprise throughout the year for unexpected circumstances which they could not have anticipated or they could not mitigate, then they come through the supplementary process. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Aumond. Community justice and corrections, not previously authorized, \$908,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Total department, not previously authorized, Department of Justice, \$1.748 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you. Department of Education, Culture and Employment, operations expenditures, activity, education and culture, not previously authorized, negative \$28,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Income security, not previously authorized, \$1.779 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Total department, not previously authorized, \$1.751 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Moving on to the Department of Transportation. Activity, airports, not previously authorized, \$280,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Total department, not previously authorized, \$280,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, operations expenditures, activity, economic diversification and business support, not previously authorized, \$63,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Total department, not previously authorized, \$63,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Department of Environment and Natural Resources, operations expenditures, activity, corporate management, not previously authorized, negative \$104,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Forest management, not previously authorized, negative \$963,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Total department for Environment and Natural Resources, not previously authorized, negative \$1.067 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Does the committee agree that we have concluded consideration of Tabled Document 3-17(2),

Supplementary Estimates, (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2011-2012? Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you. Mr. Menicoche.

COMMITTEE MOTION 6-17(2)  
CONCURRENCE OF TD 3-17(2),  
SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (OPERATIONS  
EXPENDITURES), NO. 3, 2011-2012,  
CARRIED

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I move that consideration of Tabled Document 3-17(2), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2011-2012, be now concluded and that Tabled Document 3-17(2) be reported and recommended as ready for further consideration in formal session through the form of an appropriation bill. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The motion is in order.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Question has been called.

---Carried

Does committee agree we'll move on to Tabled Document No. 2-17(2), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2011-2012?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** I will ask Minister Miltenberger for his opening comments, please.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** I am here to present Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2011-2012. This document outlines an increase of \$400,000 for operations expenditures and an increase of \$2.631 million for capital investment expenditures in the 2011-2012 fiscal year. The total supplementary request is \$3.031 million.

There are four items in the supplementary estimates:

1. \$2.5 million for the Department of Transportation to start environmental assessment work on the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk highway project.
2. \$427,000 for the Department of Transportation for the costs associated with moving NAV Canada facilities and equipment into the new air terminal buildings in Tuktoyaktuk, Paulatuk and Sachs Harbour. These costs will be fully offset by a contribution from NAV Canada.
3. \$400,000 for the Department of Public Works and Services to provide an infrastructure contribution to the NWT Housing Corporation for

its share of the costs associated with the construction of a joint use maintenance and trade shop in Tuktoyaktuk. The net impact on government operations is nil as the funds will be transferred from the department's capital investment expenditures budget.

4. \$104,000 for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources for renovations for office space required for the department's lands and water division, which was established in 2011-12. The net impact on government operations is nil as the funds will be transferred from the department's operations expenditures budget.

I am prepared to review the details of the supplementary estimates document, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. The witnesses are already here. They have already been introduced for the record. This is a continuation. General comments. Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. One of the particular issues in this briefing note is the Inuvik-Tuk highway. I thought it would be beneficial for everyone if he provided a quick synopsis of some of the discussions that were happening. I will speak in terms of theme as opposed to specifics and allow Members to speak in favour or against or their overall position.

Some of the issues that have arisen out of the Inuvik-Tuk highway have been things along the lines of funding arrangements with the federal government to build a proportion of 75/25 being sort of the final billing. Are there other opportunities? Is the \$150 million contribution firm? Members, of course, would like copies, correspondence of funding, arrangements and, of course, conditions. Typically the federal government, as we all know, will build the highway and the provincial or territorial government who then takes it over will, of course, then move to maintenance responsibility.

A lot of Members felt that the cost estimates were too broad. Members want more specific numbers. Long-term implications seem to be unknown; for example, maintenance costs, permafrost conditions, taking away from other major infrastructure properties and, of course, the list goes on.

Risk major had been highlighted. It needs to be fully developed. It includes key decision points, worst-case scenarios. The Minister identified signing an agreement with Canada as the point of no return. Members asked to be kept informed on P3 opportunities and the particular negotiations. This is void including maintenance in a P3 contract. Also to ensure that public funds stay in the North. That is a big issue, allow as many northern contractors as possible and the opportunity to benefit from the project.

Just an overall perspective, the Minister committed to keeping the committee informed which, as all Members I am sure, we certainly appreciate. Details on federal funding arrangements are key for the Minister as he has agreed to procurement processes and contract negotiations are a major issue. He responded to specific requests for technical information regarding permafrost data, route selection. He has also advised Members when project website is live, that he will obviously inform Members. I would assume he is going to inform the public as well so the public can follow this particular issue.

He has committed to providing due diligence of key project milestones and he has stressed repeatedly that, as returning committee discussed broader economic development and mineral development strategies.

Madam Chair, that is just a general overview I offer to committee and Members that I have provided a sort of a quick synopsis to highlighted themes. Many Members will have their own specific concerns which I think are important to get out on the table here today, fleshed out whether they support or don't support or key weaknesses or areas of concern they want to highlight. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I thank Mr. Hawkins for the synopsis of the results of the meetings so far, and at this point I just accept those comments and the summary. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Next I have Mr. Dolynny.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I thank the Member for Yellowknife Centre for giving a brief overview. I want to kind of take that and elaborate it to a certain level here. The concept of the Tuk-Inuvik road here has become more political and emotional in nature. Sometimes we need to look at the rationale in moving forward. The benefits of the people of the Northwest Territories seem to not really have been identified adequately, I think, in terms of a lot of things we talk about cost-benefit analysis, as the Member indicated.

I want to make a point to note that the supplemental here is strictly for the due diligence. I can understand that. The bottom line here is I think a lot of Members felt here that this product has been ill prepared in nature and in some cases the selling points are definitely one in which, being of business background, I have a hard time swallowing. I think some Members do as well.

When we look at the estimated cost back in 2009, it was \$2.17 million. Two years later we are at 38

percent higher. We are not even sure the ceiling of that is \$300 million. We keep referencing a 75/25 split when, in reality, there is a capital of \$150 million, so really we are looking more at a 50/50 split. I want to make sure that goes on record.

The business case we have is two years old. This is going back to the 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly. Again, the P3 component is still pending. Without that proper analysis, I believe the government here is going fairly blindly forward, again, under the how to due diligence. I understand that.

Maintenance costs are still not realized. The last time there was a maintenance cost estimate in 2009 this was \$2 million. Today we don't have a clue. Again, this is still something that the Members are looking forward to seeing. Again, the benefits of the highway have a potential to help with the Mackenzie Gas Project. We understand that, but again we have major companies out here that have stayed relatively silent or at least, if they have, we as Members have not heard from Exxon, Conoco or Shell or companies out there in terms of what they are going to be doing going forward.

Again, while it is likely, there is no guarantee that the Mackenzie Gas Project will proceed. We are at best guess. If it doesn't, really the economic viability of this highway has been reduced to almost zero. Again, I want to make that also known.

Cost overruns from this government and previous Assemblies are well documented. If we use the past as our guide, Deh Cho Bridge, as a cost example, starting off at \$45 million in its early days to balloon out of control at \$192 million. Other large projects like the Inuvik super school have significantly gone over their original budget. Bluefish Hydro Dam, roughly triple to \$37 million, and \$13 million has been spent in Taltson hydroelectric project with no lasting benefit in sight.

Madam Chair, I guess moving forward, my general comments are given that, all this information, we haven't received as much proactive exposure as a government tends to offer here. Again, some of the major issues that came forward, as the Member for Yellowknife Centre indicated, risk management. I want to formulate my general comments to the fact that as of date we haven't seen anything on risk management or anything of stature. I want to point it out that this risk management piece was a critical component of the Auditor General's Deh Cho analysis, the Deh Cho Bridge. Again, I am hoping that we don't repeat ourselves moving forward with this. I am going to leave it at that, Madam Chair. I am sure some of the other Members will have equal comments moving forward.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the Member's

comments. This project clearly is at the early stages and we are doing frontend work so that we can, in fact, find out whether we do have a project. We need to have an environmental assessment, as has been pointed out, in order to approach the federal government about putting their money into work at work first.

In defence of the Inuvik school, I believe that project came in a year early and on budget. The Taltson project is not done yet. There is going to be value for money on that end. We are going to have a bridge that is going to last us long into the future. We have also learned many valuable lessons in the interim.

Madam Chair, with your indulgence, given the amount of time the Minister of Transportation has spent with committee, I will just defer any further comments to the Minister. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you. Minister Ramsay.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, we spent a number of hours with both the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning and EDI committee late last week and provided a presentation to committee on the requirement of the \$2.5 million that you see in the supp before us today. As I mentioned to Regular Members and the committees, the money that we're requesting is to do the due diligence. I know there have been some estimates on what the highway will cost, but if we don't go out and do the geotechnical work and the baseline, find out that baseline information, we're not going to get an adequate picture of what we're potentially getting ourselves into and we need to do that work.

We're not going blindly, as some Members have suggested, into this project. In fact, we are coming back looking for this money so that we can do that analysis, we can get the work done and we can put our best foot forward, get the environmental assessment done so that the project is at a point where as a government we can work with the feds and pursue this project. It's a great project; it's a project that's going to connect the highway system in this country from coast to coast to coast. It's something that is a priority of this government. We intend on pursuing it and it may concern some Members that we're moving aggressively, but this is a moving project.

We have got to hit some timelines, we have got to do the work and nothing happens if you don't go after it and get after it. I think that's something I'd like to see happen, is us get out and get after this project. We've spent some time, I know Cabinet was up in the Beaufort-Delta and spent some time with the leadership up there. People are excited about this project in the Beaufort-Delta. It's exciting from a number of perspectives. It's going to reduce the cost of living in a community like Tuktoyaktuk.

It's going to potentially lead to further exploration both onshore and offshore for both oil and gas. It's a project that we need to continue to support and move forward.

I guess I was a little bit concerned – and I can understand and appreciate some of the concern that Members had – people are saying we're rushing into this, we don't know what the cost is. But if we don't get out and do this work, we won't know answers to those questions. So that's what this is all about. This is a project that has national significance and it's an opportunity for our government to show its maturation and step up to the plate. We have a ready and willing partner in the federal government.

Some Members say that there's a cap of \$150 million. We don't know that. We have yet to hammer out the financial arrangements, as they'll unfold at a later date. We still have to negotiate that with the federal government, but first and foremost we have to get the project to a point where we can have those type of negotiations with the federal government and we're going to pursue that.

This is \$2.5 million on potentially an estimated \$250 million project. So its work we need to do, it's work that would be required and I hope Members see this project for what it is. It's a nation-building project, it's a territory-building project and it is an opportunity for this territory to show its maturity and partner with the federal government to deliver a project like this. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Minister Ramsay. Next on the list I have Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I just have a few comments here in terms of the supp as a whole. It's relatively minor in that there are only four items, I think, on here. Most of them are in and out, but we do have one very significant item and that is the request for the work to be done on the Inuvik-Tuk highway.

I'll back up a bit. I was pleased, actually, to see that in this supplementary appropriation for capital, although its number three, it's a relatively minor amount in terms of the number of projects that money is being asked for, a large amount, in my mind, in terms of \$2.5 million for the Inuvik-Tuk highway. But I think Minister Miltenberger mentioned yesterday that he's looking for the time when I'll be happy with what the Finance department puts in front of me. This certainly, in my mind, is progress, positive progress. We've only had three supplementary appropriations for capital and this one is down from what I think I've usually seen.

So I just wanted to make some general comments. I have some specific comments on this particular project under Transportation, but I'll keep those until we get there. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister Miltenberger, no comment? Thank you. General comments. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you. Pretty much in line with the comments we've heard to date, Madam Chair, or to this moment. So I'll just say that certainly the big item here, the Inuvik-Tuk highway proposed expenditure of \$2.5 million, the big thing for me here is process. Although I have other fundamental concerns, which I'll get into in the detail, this is clearly fundamental work that needs to be done, and we must have known about it for some time now and to be brought forward at the last minute and expect it to take priority when we have, in our current fiscal situation, so many priorities that are already being shelved without debate is unacceptable to me. So that's a major process flaw here. But regardless of that, there are many, many fundamental issues that I have with this proposed expenditure for this fiscal year of which we have six weeks remaining and I will get to those in the detail. Mahsi.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. No comment from the Minister? Mr. Ramsay.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I respect the Member's opinion. I don't necessarily agree with some of what the Member has said.

For him to say that there's no debate, there is debate, this is the first step along the way, the second step along the way. So there's ample opportunity for us to debate this \$2.5 million right here today. Also for the Member to say it's last minute, it does seem like it's moving along quickly. It's a big project. It's something we support from the federal government on: \$150 million. There aren't any other substantial, huge projects going on. The Deh Cho Bridge will be concluded this fall, but other than that we're wrapping things up on the Inuvik school. We need projects, we need jobs, we need economic activity, and this, Madam Chair, does that in spades.

Again, things move quickly. We had the election in October, we had Christmas break, we got back. On a project this size if we want to see construction start next winter, we have to move, we have to get the environmental assessment complete and we have to iron out the details with the federal government to see this project and the opportunities and benefits it will bring to the residents of this territory this coming winter. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Minister Ramsay. General comments. Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The funding that we're going to be debating has to do a lot with the timing of the supp for the infrastructure.



I have not heard one member in our community say they oppose the highway, the Mackenzie Valley Highway. We all actually support it. It's the way that the funding is coming about to continue the work, as Mr. Ramsay has indicated, for the people of the Northwest Territories.

Also, the federal government has signalled this project as a priority through their budget. They're saying we have \$150 million and we're starting to understand that it's a 25/75 partnership and that it may not at the end of the day be 25/75. It might be a 50/50. So what we on our side are willing to risk, chance, is that if it does pan out to be that it's going to cost more than \$250 million or \$260 million then are we willing to borrow more money? Ask us to maybe have our projects delayed for a year or two in our communities? That's the risk.

We know there's work that needs to get done up there. Start working. It's a significant project. What we've been told is that we have to look at this project because it means work next year, which is understandable. The timing here is not really the best for us. They've got \$2.5 million by the end of March. That gives us what, six weeks? Eight weeks? That's the thing that we're looking at.

I think we have learned a lot from the previous government on the Deh Cho Bridge. That bridge isn't even done yet but we have learned and we are still learning. For some of the provinces or the federal government this project is small. This is peanuts to them. I know the Alberta government put a lot of bridges up. They use lots of money. They put roads, also, in areas. They even pave them. Sometimes you don't even know they've got paved roads. I'm in the Sahtu; I don't even know what a road is.

I guess for us, for myself – I should speak for myself – this project has the Government of Canada's radar. We're on their radar right now. They're only capping \$150 million. Unless our Premier and our Cabinet can go there and ask for more money and say make it a real 25/75, because you know what? We're going to start digging into our infrastructure dollars and it's looking like a 50/50 partnership. There's no guarantee that this Cabinet is going to do that. The federal government is going to say we told you \$150 million, that's it. You make up the rest. That's something we have to think about.

I know this project is close to the hearts of the people up in Inuvik and Tuktoyaktuk. As much as the Sahtu wants roads, they want their roads too, so much that they got the Prime Minister to make it a priority within the Northern Strategy. Tell Flaherty to find the money; we're going to help them build it.

It's the timing of this how this supp is coming through. It's how this project is being looked at right now. It's almost to the point where it's a done deal. I think that we need to build the Mackenzie Valley

Highway. I need to say that I hope that this supports the Northwest Territories. I'll ask specific questions on the Inuvik-Tuk road. I think that the Dempster Highway certainly can use this money to pave that road. Dusty as hell, the Dempster Highway. We're not even paving it. I'm sorry for my language. There are people that use that road and they don't even pave that road.

Are we dancing to the Prime Minister's tune? I think this road here will cost more than what I heard from the Minister. Mark my words; it is going to cost more. I just don't know if we're going to pay it. I hope that Mr. Ramsay goes to Ottawa and says we need more. I'm not too sure how that's going to work. I really don't know the consequence of us making that decision today.

I know people up in Tuk and Inuvik need work. I support them. There are some good people up there, hard workers. They need to get on with this road here. Same with Inuvik. It's not our fault that the oil and gas economy is down in that area. I don't know the specifics on that, why they're not working as much as they used to work in that area. Like any other regions, they're also starving for economic development in their communities. They would certainly love to see a \$2.5 million project go ahead in their communities. We're just not that lucky.

I'm going to leave some specifics to the detail. I'm hoping that the Assembly here has some good thoughts as to how we continue to move on this project. The timing is not great. That's the thing that bothers me. Like I said, the majority of Members support the Mackenzie Valley Highway so much that we gave money in the last Assembly to specifically Inuvik and Tuk. Other projects in our communities also need some attention. That probably goes through the normal business plans.

I know Mr. Harper is monitoring our discussions. I hope he's listening too. We should honour and he should honour. If he says 25/75, the Harper government should honour that formula and not get out of it and say it's only \$150 million we're going to give you, you deal with the rest if it's more than what we think it's going to cost. That's what Mr. Ramsay is saying. We need more money. Now we know what it's going to cost us but we need more money to access funding. I hope we haven't closed the doors on our discussions with Mr. Harper or the people of the Northwest Territories will pay. Somehow they will pay.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the Member's comments. Just if I could speak to some of the major points he's made.

The federal government, Ottawa, sees the Tuk-Inuvik highway as a first step to the completion of the Mackenzie Highway. That's very clear to us. The timing piece is important. Since we've been elected and we've had this discussion, we were elected in October and we picked a government in the middle of October, we had a capital session in December. We were also in significant discussions with the federal government about the borrowing limit and our ability to in fact engage in any kind of investment in infrastructure at all, including this project. We were not in a position at that point to say anything definitively because we had not advanced those discussions to the point where we as a government were confident that we had the commitment of the federal government to work with us and recognize our need for a borrowing limit increase.

Since December we had that discussion and we've had the meetings. The Premier met with the Prime Minister. I've been in discussions with Minister Flaherty. We do have that comfort. We do have it verbally and in writing. So we made the decision at that point that we could move on this. We don't want to miss a year. The first available time to come back to this Assembly is where we are right now. We scheduled meetings with the committees prior to this to let them know what was happening to do the technical briefings and all the reviews. We, within a fairly compressed timeframe of this new government, have made, I believe, all the right steps to keep everybody fully engaged.

We need to do this work. We need to have a Class C or B estimate so that we can have a clear number collectively that we can look at and make a decision on how much it's going to cost. As Mr. Ramsay indicated, we also at that point will have a discussion with the federal government based on that number and to see what the split is going to be. Those are all critical pieces. We have made every effort to do this. We, I believe, have made a strong case. We don't want to lose a year. We have 1,300 days left. This project, in order for us to make an informed decision we need that work. The final decision will come before the House. It's not going to be Cabinet sitting upstairs in the office just signing a deal. We're going to have to be able to make the case to this Assembly and to the public and to the people that we're going to spend X amount of public dollars and we're going to spend it on this project, and this is how we're going to manage it, and this is how we're going to be able to finance it, and this is our portion and this is what the federal portion is going to be. We have to be able to make that case to the people but we can't do that until we do this work.

Once again, Madam Chair, I'll ask the Minister, who is much more intimately involved in this process, if he'd like to make any further comments.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Ramsay.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I thank the Finance Minister for that. At committee last week there were a number of questions about decision points and I think some Members were under the impression that by approving the \$2.5 million we're saying yes to the, well, if it ends up being \$250 million, but that's not the case. I can't reiterate that enough. We are not at that point. We need to get to a point, as the Finance Minister said, where we can make an informed decision on whether we can afford it, what it's going to cost us, and those discussions will happen in this Assembly with the Members of this House. That's how this project will move along.

When I was at committee on Friday I gave the committee my assurances that every step of the way this is a big project. You're looking at a \$250 million estimate. It's a big, big project and we need to be working through this project together. We need to be supporting one another and working with one another to ensure that the project does get completed and we can maximize the benefits to residents here in the Northwest Territories and people in the Northwest Territories. That's what I intend to do and I look for that support from the Regular Members to allow us to go out and do this initial due diligence, the work that has to be done up front. As a government we have to invest some of these dollars so that we know exactly what we're getting ourselves into and whether or not we want to get into it. It's the price you would pay for progress.

We have to progress. If we were to backtrack on this and waste a year and lose a year, it's just not something I think we should be even entertaining. I think we need to find this money, get the work done and move forward. Get some things accomplished here. This project is in an area where they need the jobs, they need the opportunities, and it would be welcome economic activity in that region of our territory.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. General comments. Next on the list I have Mr. Moses.

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just in regard to what's been talked about so passionately is the Inuvik-Tuk highway here. Being a newly elected MLA, one of the main things that I've been seeing in my office lately is the increase of income support and people who are looking for jobs. I get a lot of phone calls in that regard and one way that I find that we can fix this is building a big project such as the Inuvik-Tuk highway. It gets my support in the sense that we have a lot of strong leaders in the region who are backing this, and when you have so much passion from some strong leaders, you know

that a project like this will be successful and they would find a way to get it done.

Speaking to some of the comments that were made earlier, we do have a timeline. There is a short timeline to pass this bill, but there's a timeline that we have to get this infrastructure built and we can't lose that year. If you look in some of our other documents that we were discussing over the past couple of days, our income support has gone up close to a million dollars. The way we can look at addressing that issue is to start creating jobs for our Northerners. In discussions with people back home, our main contractor is going to be our local businesses and our local contractors doing the jobs and making sure that both Aboriginal groups are represented in these jobs when they go forward both this year and in the new fiscal year.

We've had our briefings. We've had our discussions with the Minister of Finance and the Minister of ITI. We've had a lot of questions, had a lot of discussions with some really strong debates, and we do have to put a little bit of money forward for this due diligence so that, like the Minister said, we decide from there if we want to go ahead with this if this road is feasible or not. I think that's where this first step needs to take place and not wait another year and then see that it's something that we want to go ahead and do. We should do it now and we should get the support of the Members to look at getting our people in our region off of income support and into jobs, the ones that do want to work.

As a colleague of mine said earlier, it's going to create jobs for years. It's going to create jobs not only in the Beaufort-Delta but right down the Mackenzie Valley for all the communities. It's going to increase communications and it's going to increase our people getting together and being one territory.

I know we will be getting into detail later and there will be some strong questions, questions that have already been asked and questions that have already been answered. I think that we'll wait for those details to come up with some conclusions. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Moses. Next on my list I have Mr. Menicoche.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Just some general comments about how our government miraculously finds money for the Inuvik-Tuk highway and Betty House and the millions of dollars. I've been here seeking some certainty and funding for Highway No. 7 time and time again, yet the capital budget shows nothing for Highway No. 7. I don't know how else to make the case that we have to spend money there. I am concerned that our priority of the Inuvik-Tuk highway will cost a reduction of any future capital

dollars for Highway No. 7. I'm not too sure how we're going to manage it and I just wanted to get it on the record that we have to seriously consider it.

A couple things that are not making sense on this project is that they're asking for \$2.5 million for geotechnical work, potentially another \$2.5 million for geotechnical work next year, and now they're saying they want to begin construction next fall. That's impossible to do. I'm not too sure what the plan is there for the Inuvik-Tuk highway. It just doesn't make sense. Yes, they do the geotechnical. The geotechnical has to be done, so we have to do \$2.5 million this year and the next year. My concern is that should the borrowing limit, if and when it does get increased – and I'm just going to throw out a number because I'm not too sure if we can borrow up to another \$300 million – that we're going to use half or maybe more of that towards the Inuvik-Tuk highway and then we do have other projects.

You know, I made the case this week to highlight and get attention for Highway No. 7. That will be first on the red flag list, but there are other projects in other constituencies that have capital demands that are just as important. How are we going to work towards this planning of future increase of our borrowing limit? That kind of concerns me.

I think the Members have been saying that. I think the biggest concern is giving approval to the first \$2.5 million puts us in a situation where we cannot back down from the future of the project. I think that's an immediate concern. My concern is projects throughout the whole Northwest Territories and how accessible we can be towards any increase in the capital plan.

They speak about the certainty of the federal government giving us \$150 million. I'm not too sure, but nobody's been able to confirm that it is in the federal government's budget. It was certainly in the budget speech, but did it translate into the budget? I don't know if they've given us any portion of that \$150 million yet and will it be in this upcoming federal budget as well. Those are the questions that I have not yet heard answered, and I certainly would like to hear them answered as we move forward.

I know that the window of opportunity for geotechnical work is narrow and small. I don't know if you'll spend the whole \$2.5 million that they're requesting in the next six weeks. Maybe the Minister can assure me or us that that's the case, or are they just kind of asking for \$2.5 million and are only going to spend \$1 million.

The reality of the situation is that they should actually ask what they can have the capacity to do and not just grab untold millions of dollars. Because that's my issue, is that if they're just going to grab \$2.5 million because they think they need it, and I think I need it for Highway No. 7, so why can't I

grab a million or two dollars? Their reasoning is really on shaky ground and is causing me concern, Madam Chair. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. In regard to the process with the borrowing limit, once the number is clear, we will be coming forward with a suggested plan of action that will see us laying out over the next four years the steps we have to take to be able to access and put to use strategically the borrowing limit, some of the money in the borrowing limit. Keeping in mind one of the big things holding us back right now is we have to be able to provide half of the funding for capital out of our own savings coming from our operations. Right now we don't have those savings accrued and we will have to accrue those savings over the next couple of years so that, in fact, in year three and four we can lay out a much more ambitious and affordable capital plan that will see us with the accrued savings and be able to make use of the borrowing limit, keeping in mind we also have to pay that back.

That commitment is there. That will come before the House through the due process and through all the various committees. Once that information is clear and by the time we gather for the budget session in May/June, that information, that plan will have been through, I hope, Cabinet and committee, because the number will be clear.

The other part of the strategy, of course, is the plan to try to put the federal money to use first. In order to do that we need to have the frontend work done, the environmental assessment and this other geotechnical work that will allow us to demonstrate that there is a project and that we've addressed the issues, the geotechnical issues, the permafrost issues, the environmental concerns that may be there, the access to granular material, all those types of things. This is a critical investment, and once again, no deal will be signed or agreed to before it comes back to this House where we can lay it out chapter and verse what the cost is and what's affordable and is it, in our mind, doable. Is the split fair and clear and if it's over what is being initial estimate, is the federal government prepared to move those or all the discussion items that have been brought back to this House? In terms of the commitment to the \$2.5 million, I will ask Minister Ramsay if he will speak to that issue, as well, about the need for the money over the next six weeks. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you. Minister Ramsay.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It is my understanding that the work, the geotechnical and environmental work, much of that is easily done during winter months, which would

require the work to be concluded prior to May. If we are looking for additional funding next fiscal year, some of that work would get done almost immediately on the heels of the work that is going to be done with the \$2.5 million in this supp in an attempt to get the environmental assessment complete so that we can get to the details of the agreement with the federal government. I know the Member said some of this sounds like it is on shaky ground, but we are trying to do what we can so that we are on very solid ground. I think the work that is going to be done, geotechnical and environmental work, is work that is going to be integral to the entire project, obviously, so we need to get that work done.

We do have the \$150 million commitment that was in the throne speech. We have the government's word that they want to be our partner in constructing a highway from Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk. They committed \$150 million, but as the Finance Minister alluded to, we are a ways away from negotiating exactly what the deal is going to end up looking like. That will happen in due course, but from now until then, we have to ensure that we put our best foot forward and do the work that we need to do so that we can be at a point where we can come to the table with that EA and be able to hopefully construct a road between Inuvik and Tuktoyaktuk. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Minister Ramsay. Next I have Mr. Blake.

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to start by commending the Premier and Cabinet on the speed of following through on our priorities for the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly. This project has been highlighted as one of our main priorities for this government. There is a time frame that we have for working up in the Mackenzie Delta/Beaufort-Delta and that is between January and mid-April. If we are talking about holding this project until next year, by the time we get this stage of work done, it will be wasting two years of our term. I don't think that we could put these sorts of major projects on hold just over \$250 million. The day before yesterday we spent \$2.3 million to a good cause similar to this.

In the Mackenzie Delta right now there is very limited work. We have six major construction companies that are sitting idle right now. There is just keeping ice roads open, maintaining highways. Our people need work. Right now we have people going to the Sahtu. They have \$60 million worth of work over the next three years.

Another priority for this government is our economic expense for the territory. Now it just troubles me that to put all of these major priorities on hold over \$2.5 million. It is kind of disturbing me right now. Any major project, you have to do your due

diligence. That is one thing our government is trying to do here. I am in full support of this.

As I mentioned, we have a short time frame. We have about two months to get this work completed. By the fall we will have all of our information that we need for this work to proceed. Hopefully we can move this forward and support our people in the territory. They need a strong economic territory. That is one thing I believe this government, if we all pull together, we could achieve that for people of the Northwest Territories. Mahsi.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Blake. I don't see a response from either the Ministers. Next for general comments I have Mr. Bouchard.

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The biggest concern obviously is the Tuk to Inuvik highway. I am in support of the funding. I do wish this was in the South Slave. I think we also need some of the work and some of the economic development, but I think it is better to move ahead with this project, get the upfront work done, do our due diligence. At the same point, I have some concerns to make sure that after that due diligence is done, we have an evaluation of this project. At that time we can assess whether we want to carry forward. Hopefully at that time we will have worked out our deal with the federal government on their 75/25 deal to the completion of the project, not to the maximum of \$150 million.

I would also like to see the department have a plan of how they are going to implement the northern content, like I have indicated in the House before. I want this money to be spent in the North so that it cycles through the North and goes to northern contractors and northern companies. I trust that the Minister of Transportation is also the Minister of ITI and maximize the benefits to the North and that these dollars stay in the North.

My colleagues have expressed a lot of the concerns and I won't repeat a lot of them, but I definitely will be assessing, once the due diligence is completed, whether it is viable for this project to go forward.

It bothers me a little bit to say we are going to be spending \$2.5 million just like it is a drop in the bucket, but millions before we have to assess this project, but on a \$250 million project there is some upfront costs that have to be dealt with.

I support the funding for right now. I think it is something that we have to go forward with right now as opposed to delaying it for a year. There are a bunch of projects throughout the North, especially in the South Slave that are always being held up by one process or another. Now we have an opportunity to maybe spend some money in the North and get some progress getting going in the

Northwest Territories. They also need the work. I support the project right now. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. Minister Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the Member for his comments and I will defer the response to the Minister of Transportation. Thank you.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the Member's thoughts on the funding. I will say that I am of the same belief that in a project of this size, the benefits, as much as possible, accrue to the businesses and the residents of the Northwest Territories and the majority of that money stays here in our economy and doesn't end up in some southern economy somewhere. I think those are things that we need to strive towards and certainly it is my belief that we can sort out a procurement of the highway that will ensure that that happens. That is a ways away. Today we need to ensure that we can get the upfront work done, the due diligence.

I really do appreciate the Member's support and look forward to his continued support for the Tuk-Inuvik highway. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. We are going to move on with general comments. Mr. Nadli.

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you. I'm speaking in favour of this commitment that we're making to ensure that the northernmost part of the Northwest Territories realizes some opportunities of ensuring that overall a development of the Mackenzie Highway is completed. I support this initiative to ensure that a major infrastructure project of that nature is realized, that it be linked to the overall development of the Mackenzie Valley Highway.

I realize the significance of the \$2.5 million that's been committed. Also at the same time I realize that it's part of our duty as government to ensure that we do share costs of infrastructure development in parts of the Northwest Territories that are not on the mainstream highway system or as part of the mainstream link of the communications infrastructure. So this I think is going to help out people in the northernmost part of the Northwest Territories in terms of lessening the cost of living and for those reasons I support that.

Yet, at the same time, I think my colleagues on this side of this House have expressed some of their concerns in terms of the financial details lacking on how it is on the business case analysis in terms of the amount of revenue that they're going to bring into this project in terms of the management and the expenditures are going to ensure that it's done efficiently at the same time within a set budget. So I think those concerns were expressed by my colleagues. For the most part I think this project

should be realized, but we can't lose sight of the needs of the constituents that I represent. I know this project should not compromise the needs of my constituents of the Hay River Reserve, Enterprise, Fort Providence and Kakisa. I think their needs are equally as real as the needs of the people in the northernmost part of the Northwest Territories. But for the most part I support this initiative.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We appreciate the Member's support. Just to reassure the Member, speaking to the borrowing limit and any additional strategic infrastructure investments, we will be coming back to this House with borrowing limit information in the plan. Clearly we have an obligation as government to make sure that whatever strategic investments are made are spread across the North and that this hopeful tide of good fortune will raise all boats, not just in one particular area. That's a commitment of the government. Once again, I will ask the Minister of Transportation if he wishes to respond further.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Ramsay.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do appreciate the Member's comments in regard to the funding request, the \$2.5 million. I just want to restate something I believe my colleague Minister Miltenberger stated earlier. The Tuktoyaktuk to Inuvik highway is the first section of the Mackenzie Valley Highway and we need to start somewhere. If we want to realize the dream, a highway in the Mackenzie Valley, this is the beginning of that. So, again, I just wanted to put that out there. We need to start somewhere and this is where we're going to start. I appreciate the Member's support. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, Minister Ramsay. Mr. Nadli. We'll move on to Mrs. Groenewegen.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I've listened with interest to all of these comments. I guess they call it a debate for a reason. I don't know if this is a debate or not, but I'll tell you this is a debatable investment, that's for sure.

I feel conflicted. There are so many unknowns, so many needs, so little resources and we're kind of jumping off the bridge here blind and hoping we're going to find a parachute on the way down I think. I guess that's the nature of taking risks. We take a leap of faith and you hope for the best.

But some of the concerns, Mr. Chairman, if I can summarize them, and I want to say as a returning Member there is an element of déjà vu on the Deh Cho Bridge on this because it was just a couple of million and a couple more million and a couple

more million and pretty soon we were at \$9 million and do we keep going or do we shut it down? Well, ultimately that decision was taken away from us and because we'd done the work, we were committed financially, psychologically, emotionally. People talk about infrastructure; it's hard not to be supportive. Nation building, territory building, you hear these phrases, but I guess the issue is there's a lot of things that we'd like in all of our regions, but we've got to pick and choose what the projects are that will go ahead.

The issue with this specific project that I have a concern with is the timing. We're being asked for a supplementary appropriation so that this work can all be done in the next six weeks. I find it hard to believe that this money can be spent, expended and the work completed in the next six weeks.

On the flipside of that, the region is economically slow and this would provide activity. So every argument has a counter to it. So we spend another \$2.5 million, Ottawa is talking about austerity measures, they're talking about reductions all over the place and yet we hear from our representatives that go down to Ottawa, that Ottawa is committed to this project, that this is a pet project of the Prime Minister, that Minister Flaherty has made the commitment. We haven't seen it on paper, but we understand that's the case. Then it begs the question, well, why is our little government being asked to put another \$2.5 million on the table, and then another \$2.5 million on the geotechnical, on the due diligence, when the federal government has so many more resources. If this is really their idea, it's not their idea, but I mean if there's really all this support there for it.

So I think that there are pros and cons at every turn on this thing. One of the concerns I think is some of the foundational work, the cost-benefit analysis, the technology. We hear about the issues with Highway No. 7, with the Dempster Highway, with the melting of permafrost, with the enormous costs of maintaining and in some cases kind of restructuring the transportation infrastructure we already have that's being affected by wear and tear and changing ground conditions.

So we just need to go into this with our eyes wide open here, folks. There are a lot of unanswered questions. The cost-benefit analysis for this piece of work, there's the science. How are we going to build this road so that we're not ending up with something like even we had between the Rae turnoff and Yellowknife here? My goodness, that's a new highway, if you can call it a highway. It's very sad driving on that road. It seems like we practically started repairing it the day we finished building it. If you think it's a problem here building on rock and the Canadian Shield, wait until you get up there. Have we assessed what the ongoing maintenance cost is? We're going to raise the expectation in the

Beaufort-Delta and in Inuvik and Tuktoyaktuk that these folks are going to have a serviceable road to travel back and forth on. We could have a pile of mush when we're done. It's a global changing in the weather. But, again, I guess that's all part of the risk factors.

So there are good things to be said. There are questions to be answered. So we're called upon to make a decision. I hope that the federal government stays true to their commitment that after we've financially committed to this project and continuing with this due diligence and putting this money out front, I certainly hope that the federal government doesn't get any cold feet on this. I hope they stay with us on this.

I like the fact that it is a cost-shared project and that we're not doing it on our own. There are some people who would say that this type of infrastructure is totally a federal responsibility, but if it favourably impacts our borrowing limit then some would say development is a good thing, we need more money for development, we need this kind of activity in all regions of the Northwest Territories to spur on economic development.

There are others on the converse that would say this government shouldn't be getting into any more debt than the \$500 million limit that we have right now. There are people who say we shouldn't be mortgaging the future. That's another argument you hear out there. I'm just trying to articulate some of the concerns.

In a perfect world if the road gets built and it is the beginning of the Mackenzie Valley Highway and we can afford to maintain it going forward... Every time we make a commitment like this, though, we also have to remember that it's not just a one-time thing. It is the ongoing maintenance and upkeep of a piece of infrastructure like this. We're not going to abandon it after we start it. It is the ongoing cost which we don't really know much about at this point. Whatever we spend on this we won't spend on something else and there are a lot of priorities out there in our communities on a much smaller scale, many of them, than this particular one.

However, on Friday afternoon when we met in committee I said I would support the \$2.5 million and I will continue to support the \$2.5 million today when we vote on this. It sort of sounds from what I've said leading up to this that I'm doing so with some trepidation about what the future of this project is. I do support development outside of the capital. We talked about the \$2.3 million for Betty House and the \$40 million office building going uptown. Where does it end in terms of the concentration of capital in Yellowknife here? This is an example of something outside of Yellowknife and I hope that the same consideration will be extended to other regions as we go forward and look for projects that we can support.

I will say today and put on the record we need something in the South Slave. We've got prospects, we've got promise of things that could create jobs and create economy for our people, but we need a fair and equitable distribution of the resources.

I've heard other people say road? What's a road? I mean, we're pretty fortunate in the South Slave, too, that we are all connected by roads. We do have a pretty good road infrastructure there and that's something other parts of the Territories only dream of. But it will come and this will be one step towards it.

I will support the expenditures contained in the supplementary appropriation here for infrastructure, but a lot of it requires a leap of faith.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Once again, I appreciate the Member's support. If I could make an observation that I think all of us that have been here for at least the last Assembly and prior, but definitely the last Assembly, would consider ourselves somewhat battle hardened when it comes to the road followed for a major project. The ups and downs of things like the Deh Cho Bridge. Now we sit here, I would like to say we are not sadder but we are wiser. We know we have to invest this money up front to answer the very legitimate questions the Member has raised before we make any ongoing long-term commitment. I think that's the thing that is different here. We are all going to be in the same room when that information is put on the table and we'll be able to make an informed decision. At that point there will be some risk involved, but hopefully we will have enough information that we can make that determination.

If I can just quickly comment about the South Slave, I assure the Member's concern. There are issues tied to energy and power that we have to sort out with potential mining ventures like Avalon and Tamerlane. We're intent on trying to negotiate and come to some agreement that will allow those projects to have a chance. There are opportunities coming, but I appreciate the Member's support.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. I believe Mr. Ramsay wants to comment as well.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to follow up on the Finance Minister's comments and to Mrs. Groenewegen, I do appreciate her support. Looking at, I know some Members like to draw a comparison to the Deh Cho Bridge and I think the comparison is not something we can draw. I don't think there are a lot of comparisons between the Deh Cho Bridge and the Tuk-Inuvik highway. On the Deh Cho Bridge it was always the federal government was going to come

to the table and that was the premise for the Deh Cho Bridge all along. At the end of the day the federal government didn't come to the table. In the Tuk-Inuvik highway we have the best possible partner we could get as a government. We have the federal government committing \$150 million and they want to be our partner in building this vital piece of infrastructure in our territory. Like I said, we couldn't ask for a better partner.

If you look at the infrastructure and the level of investment in this territory in the past five years through programs like Building Canada and CSIF, it was an unprecedented amount of federal dollars that flowed into this territory to build vital infrastructure across the territory. What better partner to have on a project than the federal government? We're fortunate enough, I believe, to have that commitment by the federal government of \$150 million to pursue the Tuk-Inuvik highway. I think there's little comparison that can be drawn with the Deh Cho Bridge and I just wanted to put that out there.

On the other issues that Mrs. Groenewegen had on maintenance, we've done some early estimates and it was brought up at committee as well. It's approximately \$2 million a year. It's based on maintenance costs on the Dempster Highway on a comparable distance of highway. Again, these things have to be vetted and they'll be vetted through that geotechnical and environmental work that needs to be done.

I again think it's early days but there's little comparison that can be made to the Deh Cho Bridge aside from the magnitude of the investment in infrastructure in this territory. That's the only comparison that you can make.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Last on my list for general comments I have Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to confirm that we are still on general comments.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** That's correct, Mr. Bromley. Seeing that there are no other general comments, does committee agree to go to detail?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** I'd like the Members to turn to page 5 of the supplementary appropriation infrastructure handout. Supplementary Appropriation (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2011-2012, Department of Public Works and Services, operations expenditures, asset management, not previously authorized, \$400,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Department total, not previously authorized, \$400,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Department of Public Works and Services, capital investment expenditures, asset management, not previously authorized, negative \$400,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Department total, Public Works and Services, capital investment expenditures, not previously authorized, negative \$400,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Supplementary Appropriation (Infrastructure Expenditures) No. 3, 2011-2012, Department of Transportation, capital investment expenditures, airports, not previously authorized, \$427,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Highways, not previously authorized, \$2.5 million. Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Probably all of the points that I'm about to mention have been expressed already, but I feel that I need to get on the record where I'm coming from with regard to this project. I expressed in my general comments that I have some concerns. I want to say at the outset I am supportive of this project. I think it is a project that is going to be, as has been mentioned, nation building, territory building, it is a good project. I have huge problems with the process and I have huge problems with the lack of concrete information that we have at our disposal in order to approve this expenditure and to basically the cost of the project as we go forward.

At the outset, Mrs. Groenewegen says that there are some people that feel this whole road is a federal responsibility. I'm one of them. I believe that it is the federal government's responsibility to build new roads and it is then the territorial and provincial responsibility to maintain that road. I haven't seen in my time here anything, I don't think, if so, very little if anything, from the federal government that will support new road building in our territory. I really believe that it is the federal responsibility to do that.

In regard to the whole project, I am really, really nervous that we have no project costs. We are being asked to approve a specific amount of money here. We're going to be asked to approve another \$2.5 million, so we're told, in next year's capital budget. We've already approved that budget but we've been advised that they're going to come back and ask for another \$2.5 million to finish this geotechnical work in 2012-2013. So we're already at \$6 million by the time we get to the supp for 2012-2013. We're already at \$6 million for this project, but we don't know what the end cost is. That really concerns me. Do we have any idea, any



finite idea of the cost of the project? I don't think so. I've heard the feds are going to give us \$150 million. Initially we thought it was going to be \$225 million then it went up to maybe \$230 million, well then \$260 million, maybe \$283 million, and now I'm hearing a number of \$300 million. If that's the case and if the federal government says, well, we're only going to give you \$150 million, this government, this territory, our residents are now looking at paying \$150 million for the Tuk-Inuvik Highway. Where's the 75/25 split in that? My math doesn't work that way. If that's the case and the feds pull out at \$150 million and the project costs us \$300 million, that's 50/50. I can't get any guarantee; I can't get any assurance from either Minister that tells me that we're going to be able to have a 75/25 split. The fact that we don't know the cost of the project is really disturbing to me.

The other thing in terms of the project in general is that we don't know what kind of a project it's going to be. Part of this money that we're approving is going to go to determine whether or not it should be a P3. It might be a P3, we might finance it ourselves. There are a number of options out there. I haven't been given any assurance as to what kind of method we're going to use to finance this project.

Mrs. Groenewegen, I think, mentioned that it feels like a bridge project and I have to tell you, I've only had one term here but I was unfortunately intimately involved with the bridge project and the cost overruns and just with all the difficult decisions we had to make. I feel very much in the same position. The Minister suggested we should be hardened after the bridge experience. I have to say that I may be hardened but I'm also extremely gun shy. This project does not feel good. It doesn't feel comfortable.

There are a couple of statements in our briefings and also today from the Minister that we've got to hit some timelines. We have to do this and we have to do that. We're being pressured on a number of fronts, one in terms of time, apparently, and one in terms of the federal government. I don't think we need to be pressured and I don't think we should accept that pressure, because it's rushing our decision on this project.

Somebody talked about dancing to the tune of the Prime Minister and I thought that was a pretty apt quote. I think that was Mr. Yakeleya and I have to agree with him. I think we are dancing to somebody else's tune and I think it's important that we dance to our own tune. There doesn't seem to be a willingness, I guess, on the part of the government to exert our autonomy, to make a statement that no, this is not something we want to go to unless we really do want to go there. I feel like we're not really making a valid decision.

I have a great deal of concern with the timing of this request. I have expressed before, I don't

understand why we as Members were not advised, we had no inkling of a \$2.5 million request coming forward in this session. We approved a \$1 million expense for the capital budget for 2012-13, and at that time there was, to my mind, no indication that we were going to be asked for more money. I didn't get a valid explanation or I didn't get a lengthy explanation that this project is in the works. This project is ramping up. We're going to be having to make some decisions in the near future. We're probably going to come back and ask you for some money and it will probably be a couple of million dollars. I don't remember hearing that at all. I think if I had been aware of that in the fall and in December when we discussed the capital budget, I'd have a much different view of this request at this point right now.

Economic development has been mentioned a number of times and I appreciate that we are assisting a region that is struggling, that has no economic development, that needs the economic development, but it's not the only region in our territory. I feel really strongly that we definitely need to assist this region but we don't need to do it in a hurry. If the reason for doing this project and doing it in a such a hurry is economic development, well, then from my region, where's a road through the Slave Geologic Province? Mining is struggling in our territory. It's struggling in my community. A road through the Slave Geologic would have a huge impact on mining and exploration in the NWT, but that doesn't seem to be there.

A couple of other things. There's a lack of a risk assessment. That's been mentioned and that is a concern for me. There's the ongoing maintenance once the construction is done. There doesn't seem to be information on what that's going to cost us. This is building a road in basically new territory. There are not a lot of roads built in this kind of an environment throughout the world. We really don't know what maintenance is going to cost us. There hasn't been an adequate cost-benefit analysis, at least not a recent one. The one that we have been given to have a look at is a couple of years old. Those things absolutely concern me.

I think – and it's been mentioned already, but I agree with it – that this project is going to take away from other projects that we may want, other elements of our budget, and it's important for me to recognize that this expense, I think, is going to force us to leave some other things undone.

I see my time is up. I just want to see if I can get my last shot in here. I think I'm done. Thank you, Mr. Chair. If I have more, I'll come back on the list. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. We're going to go to Minister Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's gratifying to know that the

Member supports the project; otherwise she could have some really tough questions. We're caught on the horns of a dilemma here. The Member has rattled off a whole list of questions that have to be answered. We're saying we need the money to answer those questions so we can make an informed decision. It is unfair, it would seem to me, to dam the project, but let's not put the information on the table so that we can make the decision to see if, in fact, it is a viable project, we can afford it and it fits into all our other strategic goals.

Mr. Chair, I would hope the Member would give us that grace and that latitude to be able to answer the very legitimate questions that she's raised. I will ask the Minister of Transportation if he has anything further to add in terms of the specifics. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Minister Ramsay.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm happy the Member supports the project. But listening to the questions she had, I believe I answered a number of them in the hours I spent with committee last week. I think I've mentioned the fact that maintenance on that 135 kilometres between Inuvik and Tuktoyaktuk, the estimate that we put out there is about \$2 million a year. That was mentioned at committee. It was mentioned earlier today, and I'll put that out there again for the Member.

She has, I guess, cast some negative aspersions about a project that we haven't even gotten off the ground yet. All we're asking for is the \$2.5 million to do our due diligence, to do the work that's going to answer the questions that she has today and she had last week at committee. We're not asking Members to approve a \$250 million project. That's not the exercise we're having here today. The exercise we're having here today is to approve \$2.5 million so that we can get the work done that's going to answer the questions.

Rest assured, we will come back to Members with those answers. We will come back. Before we take any step forward, we're going to come back to this House and we're going to have that discussion with Members so that everybody is on the same page, so that we can support the effort to build the highway between Inuvik and Tuktoyaktuk. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Minister Ramsay. Moving on with the detail here, we have Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Repetition, they say, is good, so you will hear some repetition to my remarks. I did keep my remarks brief in general comments on purpose, so I will lay out some of my concerns.

I think there have been a lot of good points made and the fundamental one doesn't seem to be

getting through, and that is, of course, the process and the unrealistic timing that's available at this very late stage of the game, six weeks today before the end of the fiscal year to mount this piece of work during what I suspect is the warmest winter on record and will present all kinds of challenges that would impede the already rushed, I'm sure, work to be done during this period for two and a half million bucks.

I do agree, as well, having had the experience of last term and listening to previous Members' experience, the Minister will understand this on the Deh Cho Bridge project, that there are some disturbing parallels here. But I want to start by noting that that project was probably the biggest fundamental reason for causing us to manage ourselves into the debt crisis of today, which, of course, it's all wrapped together for our reasons for running back and forth to Ottawa begging for an increased debt limit. Now there is some discussion on what we're to do with that increased debt limit. I think that perspective is important to be had and it can't be denied here.

My understanding is things were rushed into with the Deh Cho Bridge project and that's how we got into that situation. In my brief experience, the Cabinet would continually bring to committee either a done deal or a deal that had to be done immediately or the costs would be greater. Of course, I think when we finally did sign on the dotted line, it was \$150 million or \$160 million. Now we're at \$192 million or something. As my colleague Mr. Beaulieu predicted, he is suggesting maybe \$250 million by the time we're done. We'll see. Originally this project was estimated at \$150 to \$200 million. Most recently the estimate was \$250 to \$300 million.

I'm having a hard time hearing myself think here, Mr. Chair. In fact, in committee the Department of Transportation told us it was \$2.5 million per kilometre, and if my rudimentary math is right, I believe it's 141 kilometres: 140 times \$2.5 million is something like \$350 million. I think there is a lot to be said and done yet about what the cost of this project is, but we know it's climbing with each bit of additional detail that we acquire.

I do appreciate what's being proposed here is due diligence. We need to do that work. It's being proposed that we start construction before we're completing the due diligence, because we're going to do as much work again next winter, which has been pointed out by one of my colleagues that that seems very odd. Mr. Bouchard, I believe. So I'd like to get more on the understanding there.

Another point, committee requested before Christmas a critical cost-benefit analysis on which to base our interest in this project and decision-making. This week we were finally provided with a very high level look at the economic effects of the

project that was done a year and a half ago and it highlights potential net benefits from the road predicated upon the Mackenzie Gas Project going forward. We heard on the news yesterday that Imperial is looking for a three-year delay and even deciding whether or not they do the road there, so we know what to expect from that standpoint. Disturbingly it also points to a lot of lost jobs and GDP to the territorial government based on lost opportunities because, of course, this highway is essentially a major subsidy to the oil and gas industry and it allows them to forgo using local services and so on and allows them to use their own services brought up from wherever. So this study did highlight that understanding.

Under our currently strapped fiscal dilemma, we have many competing and critical needs for on-the-ground infrastructure. As we jump at this new and very costly project with immature plans to start construction next fall before even our due diligence is done apparently, these other priorities get eclipsed and their potential recedes as the few existing resources get committed in the future. This is exactly what happened with the Deh Cho Bridge project and we will never recover from that. I think of things like the Stanton Territorial Hospital, community energy systems, other infrastructure projects that can help with the cost of living in our communities. These sorts of things come to mind here.

We hear that this project is needed because the area is economically depressed and people need jobs. I agree that this region, which has been characterized by a boom and bust economy for a long time now solely based on the oil and gas industry, is a need of economic development and jobs. But here again we propose a project which provides flash in the pan jobs as I call them, and rather than doing the hard work of determining what is the real beneficial development that will actually contribute to lasting jobs, meaningful jobs that support a local economy, a strong social fabric and a healthy environment, I think we cannot continue to jump at anything because an area needs economic development.

I recognize that this area is economically depressed right now. I would love to find a way to spend these dollars in a meaningful way rather than jumping at anything that happens to be by. Fundamentally though, it needs a sound basis of planning to do that.

Again, this reflects this pattern that I am seeing that is disturbing and, again, the parallel with the bridge project. We are falling into this pattern at jumping at something rather than doing this hard work to come up with a good and lasting development. Again, I think we need that planning. This is exactly how we got into the trouble with our current debt crisis, how we finessed ourselves into getting this serious debt

and forgoing critical infrastructure opportunities. The costs of forgoing such opportunities are, again, permanent and we will likely never recover those costs.

The concern about being a rush job has been posed and clearly this has become a rush job. We just heard about this and we are told this year \$2.5 million and another supplemental budget already expected for next fiscal year, yet there are only six weeks to get this work done. It is unlikely that it will get done, I would venture to forecast, because of some of the logistic problems. The work will accrue, of course, not to the whole region and so on. As I understand it, it will go to one company and there will be a few jobs, but I suspect most of these dollars will go to the logistical costs. That is where the costs are in this particular work: the equipment and so on.

I think better decisions and benefits can come with solid planning, and a little bit more on that later. But I see my time is up. I am happy to continue comments later, Mr. Chairman, if there are others in line.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would ask that Mr. Minister Abernethy be allowed to make a motion.

#### MOTION TO EXTEND SITTING HOURS, CARRIED

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Mr. Chairman, notwithstanding Rule 6(1), I move a motion that the Committee of the Whole continues sitting beyond the hour of daily adjournment for the purpose of continuing and concluding consideration of Tabled Document 2-17(2), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2011-2012. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

---Carried

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** We will continue with general comments. Sorry; details. Minister Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have listened to the concerns by Mr. Bromley. It is very similar to the concerns of his colleague Ms. Bisaro. The one thing that strikes me is that if we were sitting in Yellowknife and it had no road south and we were debating the merits and benefit of a road connection, we would be having an entirely different debate or the debate would be ones where we would be playing different roles. So I think we have to keep in mind that there are all of these benefits that are going to come when you build roads. Diefenbaker had it right on the money: roads to resources to open up country. We have to make the first step. We will come back with the information. We will address the questions so that

we can make an informed decision. We have committed to do that. It is critical that we, as a Legislature, allow this project to have the latitude to be able to do the work to find out if it proceeds at all. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Mr. Bromley, do you have anything to conclude?

**MR. BROMLEY:** Yes, Mr. Chairman. I would suggest that in the scenario the Minister paints, if Yellowknife did not have a road, undoubtedly this road would not be happening in that scenario and under these conditions, and I agree with that. That is the oversight and accountability that we are trying to bring from this side of the House. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister Ramsay.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to respond to Mr. Bromley's comments. Again, I respect Mr. Bromley's position. I don't agree with everything and his arguments on why he should not support the \$2.5 million, but the way I look at it, and again people are trying to make parallels with the Deh Cho Bridge and it's just not an accurate depiction of this project because we have a partner that's putting in \$150 million into this project and that's the federal government. We didn't have that with the Deh Cho Bridge project.

Again, I think this project is developing our territory from a number of perspectives. The federal government being our partner, they're interested in sovereignty. Arctic sovereignty has been a big issue. That's at the forefront of the decision to support the construction of the highway, social development of the region and also economic development. Those real jobs that Mr. Bromley talks about, they are going to be born out of resource extraction of some type. In the Beaufort-Delta, oil and gas development, both onshore and offshore, that's where the real jobs are and that's where the real development in that region of our territory is going to take place and that's how it's going to happen. This road is just a part. It will make up the foundation of the potential economic prosperity of the Beaufort-Delta.

So, again, I respect Mr. Bromley's thoughts, but I tend to disagree with him. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Minister Ramsay. Continuing with detail. We have Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** We've still got time?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to respond to some of the comments that I didn't get a chance to talk to earlier and at the outset.

I want to state that I take offense to the Minister of Finance's remarks that suggest that I am biased. I

certainly am not. I am required to hold this government accountable and that's what I'm doing. I don't feel that I am opposing or supporting any particular project except that it is in the best interests of the people of the Northwest Territories and I would ask that the Minister reconsider his statement.

It is important that the government be opposed if, it's my belief, we're not doing things in the right way, and that's what I'm doing. There are times when we have to agree to disagree and that's what you guys are doing, but I have yet to hear what the Minister mentioned the other day that's going to give me comfort relative to the process and the timing questions.

I still don't understand why we had no knowledge that this information or this request was coming forward several months ago. I believe firmly that there should have been some indication that this was where the project was going. I want to say that I appreciate that due diligence is required for this project and I think I would be even more upset if that wasn't what was being asked for.

But again, my main concern is that we are being asked to approve something in very short order. We're being asked to approve something, which in my mind is being thrust upon us and where we don't have adequate information to make a reasoned decision and what I consider an adequate or a positive decision. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Of course, if the Member has taken offense by any of my comments, my intent was not to offend her. I acknowledge the fact that I appreciate her support and she does ask tough questions. I mean, there's no doubt about it, she's good at it. So we owe her the response that she's asked for and which is what we're asking for. So I meant no offense to the Member. Whatever comment specifically offended her, I'd be happy to withdraw those. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thank the Minister for his comments. I think he probably well knows what comment it was that got me a little excited.

Again, I have to state that one of the things that I'd thought of the other day when we were in committee, we've received a huge amount of information from the Minister of Transportation during briefings and there's been an awful lot of questions asked and the same questions were asked here today. But I've found the Minister saying the same thing over and over and over in an effort to convince me without providing me with new

information. Without adequately answering my questions is not convincing me and giving me comfort and that's where I'm at.

So I accept the Minister's offer to withdraw his remarks that I am biased. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister Ramsay.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To the Members that feel we're rushing into this, this project was initiated by the leadership in the Beaufort-Delta, by the Inuvialuit, the community of Tuktoyaktuk and the Town of Inuvik. The PDR work was done and it was initiated by the region. It was a regional effort to get the PDR work. That work was done by the communities that are up there. If we have a \$150 million commitment from the federal government and it's a priority of the government to build the highway between Tuk and Inuvik, what do Members want us to do when we have opportunity? Do they want us to sit on our hands and not take that opportunity, or do they want us to do something and move things forward?

This is an effort to make progress, to move forward, to get the work done so construction can start on the highway between Inuvik and Tuktoyaktuk this coming winter. That's where we're at and that's what we're asking Members to support.

To Ms. Bisaro's comment about answering questions, I'd be more than happy to answer any questions and we can go back and forth. Ask me a question and I'll answer it and then we can get that done. Let's get it done. I want you to have the comfort that I have answered every question that you have so that we can move forward. Let's do that. This is the forum we can do that in, let's do that. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Minister Ramsay. Minister Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think we're back to the horns of a dilemma where we're being asked to answer questions that we can only answer once we've done the work. The detailed questions about permafrost, geotechnical work. The cost-benefit analysis has not been completed and you have our full commitment. We the government and the Minister have disclosed all of the information we have available and trying to make the case to justify getting the funds to in fact do the work to answer those very questions that the Member has raised so vigorously in the House here. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. To the Minister of Transportation, why did we not hear anything about this extraordinary cost last fall? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It was there but we weren't in a position to make any decisions to move on it until we had advanced our discussions on the borrowing limit far enough where we were prepared to make a commitment. So that is how this whole process transpired, but the intent, if all went well to do the work, that information, as far as I'm aware... I'll ask Mr. Aumond to clarify the detail. I'm of the understanding that it was there.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Mr. Aumond.

**MR. AUMOND:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Minister is correct; the department, I believe, always knew it had to do the work. But as the Minister of Finance had referenced, we weren't in a position to advance expenditures to complete that due diligence until the borrowing limit discussions had advanced to the point where we felt confident that we could proceed. So it's an unfortunate set of circumstances as the timing didn't work out in such a way that it would normally. But given the circumstances, I think that the department had advanced this work to the point as fast as it could, given where we were with the borrowing limit. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Aumond. Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. Thanks for the explanation, but I have to say I'm afraid I can't buy it. We are constantly, I shouldn't say constantly, but very often as Members we are provided with information which cannot be shared with the public. We're given information on a confidential basis to let us know what the government is doing or what the government is thinking about doing to get our opinion on whether or not we think the government should go forward, a yea or a nay or to provide some input. I find it really hard to believe that this government, knowing that this project was possibly going to be there, couldn't have given Members a heads-up. That's where I'm coming from. It goes to the difficulty that Regular Members and Cabinet have with communicating with each other. It's a trust issue and I appreciate that, but that's basically, I shouldn't say that's my only concern but that's a lot of my concern. It underlines a lot of my concern that we are, as I think somebody's already stated, very often presented with a fait accompli: Here it is, this is what we're going to do, it's really important that we do it right now, just trust us, everything will be okay. I can't do that.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I could just restate this sequence:

Without the comfort that we achieve on the borrowing limit, any discussion was academic. It was a moot point because without the money it wouldn't have been advanced. We weren't in a position to bring it forward for consideration until we reached a point in our discussion on the borrowing limit that we had that comfort. There is no attempt to mislead, as the Member's indicating. It's unfortunate that she's got these trust issues, but clearly we've been trying to follow this process to the T. Once again I will ask Mr. Ramsay if he would want to supplement that.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Ramsay.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't have a lot to add to that but we have the \$150 million commitment from the federal government. We had the \$1 million notional amount in the capital plan. We're going to move forward with the project. I don't think that was a secret to anybody. We wanted to move forward with the project. Being that it was tied to the borrowing limit, there were some constraints on the timing.

I just want to assure Ms. Bisaro and others that as this moves forward, we need to work together. You have my assurance that we will work together. I'll get you the answers you need. The timing's tight but this is a fluid process. It's a huge project and we'd be fooling ourselves if we thought \$1 million was going to cover our upfront costs on a potentially \$250 million project. We knew it was going to cost us more, it's just happening quickly. It may be happening a bit too quickly for some Members' liking, but that's the nature of this. It's moving quickly, we need to act on it, and we need to get out in front of it and do the work. That's what we're trying to do.

I want to assure the Member that we will work together every step of the way and there will be many other junctures along the road here or points along the road where we will have to come back to committee and tell you exactly what we're doing, and we intend to do that. We're not trying to hide anything. We're not trying to fast-track anything. This has been in play for awhile now.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Moving on to detail we have Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Although I'm not as excitable, perhaps, as my colleague Ms. Bisaro, I still do have my standards and I'd like to start by asking the Minister, who withdrew his remarks specifically for Ms. Bisaro alone, in relation to his statement that if I was, if this was Yellowknife I'd be supportive in putting a motion of non-support, which I have not expressed. My expression has been non-support of this \$2.5 million for this year specifically, for this project. I'd happily look for a good way to spend those dollars,

in my mind. If he'd care to broaden his withdrawal of the remarks.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm well familiar with the taste of humble pie and crow if it will aid the debate. I'll happily withdraw the comments that Mr. Bromley would not support a road out of Yellowknife if there was not one.

**MR. BROMLEY:** In the interest of debate, I prefer not to go to rules, so I'm happy to move on.

I'd like to perhaps just sum up my input with the following: First of all, we do seem to be so rushed to get this baby birthed that we are guaranteeing a premature baby with all the challenges associated. I think we need to go forward but we need to go forward with good and thorough planning reassured by a reasonable time schedule. Unlike the Minister of Transportation, I do not see that as a waste of time. His reference to taking a reasonable amount of time, that's not a waste of time, in my mind. Let's complete due diligence next winter and then debate our opportunity and capacity to go forward on a sound basis.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** We appreciate the Member's summing up of his concerns. Of course, the government takes a different approach that time is important, that we need to do the work to get the information. As the Member for Mackenzie Delta pointed out, in actual fact, by next winter this will actually be drawing things back not one year but two. So I appreciate the Member's comments, but as Ms. Bisaro had indicated, there will come a time when we will agree to disagree and this will be one of those times.

**MR. BROMLEY:** That concludes my comments.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Highways, not previously authorized, \$2.5 million. Ms. Bisaro.

COMMITTEE MOTION 7-17(2):  
DELETION OF \$2.5 MILLION FROM  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
HIGHWAYS ACTIVITY,  
DEFEATED

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that \$2.5 million be deleted from the activity highways under the Department of Transportation, capital investment expenditures, not previously authorized, on page 7, for the provision of funding to undertake engineering and environmental assessment work for the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk highway project.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** A motion is on the floor and is being distributed now. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I certainly support this motion and I think, at the same time, I would like to see us direct Cabinet to look into some productive ways to spend these dollars, if we do indeed have these dollars.

I didn't get a chance to or didn't remember to ask whether these were theoretical dollars, debt dollars we were spending or not. Dollars we don't have. I think that's one of the important aspects of it.

The other thing is I think we need, before we go down this road, an appreciation of the cost-benefit analysis side of the equation. I'd like to get a briefing on that. The old document I received certainly doesn't provide the confidence required for this expenditure. I will be supporting this motion.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think I've spoken all I need to speak. I think hopefully it explains why I've brought this motion forward. I would like to ask for a recorded vote.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** The Member has requested a recorded vote. All those in favour. Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I did earlier this afternoon provide some committee observations. I just wanted to provide a few of my own, and seeing as how we have an opportunity to vote on this deletion, it's probably a good time to throw them in as well.

Just quickly, the Minister did agree to look into many things, as I highlighted earlier today, and he's giving me his nod and he's certainly doing that. I believe he will do that as he's agreed to follow through.

Just some of the concerns that I've had, which is there is a lot of good faith taken in on committee's side of this equation whether we're supporting this or not supporting this. Of course, we all know that if he was known as MLA Ramsay only, on this side of the House, he'd probably be having a tough time sitting where we are, accepting that a lot of this is taken strictly on good faith.

That said, a lot of the particulars that have come forward, the way I view it is this is a lot of money being invested on developing a project to the point of where we have to get to understand it, how much it will cost, how much will be involved, how we foresee it being our full expenditure. There's a lot of work being developed out of this \$2.5 million.

At this particular time I'm going to exercise a small amount of caution by saying that I will vote... It's tricky. I'll be voting against the motion to delete the money because I think this type of work needs to continue to go through to assess the project on a broader basis. I will say, as I did put to Mr. Ramsay in committee, that we need some clearly defined

milestones to help us understand when we get a full appreciation for the picture of what it's going to cost, how much involvement. We need to have a clear deciding point when we're either all in or not at all. He's agreed to come back with some of those details. I see that this money is being invested in a wise way to help develop the project to a position where we can make a formal decision on the broader issue.

I didn't have a lot of comments but I just thought that this was probably the only time I'll speak to it this evening and I wanted to emphasize that I will cautiously be voting for the broader project, which means I will be voting against this motion.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. I'll go back to Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The motion here that's brought to the table to delete from Transportation puts the project in jeopardy. The timing is not great. The work that needs to get done for this year and next year to help us to continue this major... This is a major milestone for the Northwest Territories. We've been at this road for so many years. Finally the federal government has coughed up \$150 million. The people in Tuktoyaktuk, the people in Inuvik went down to Ottawa and lobbied hard, schmoozing the Prime Minister, Cabinet Members to a point where the federal Cabinet said this is a priority for the government. They indicated that through the money they said they were going to give to us. I hope that we develop stringent policies or accountability, guidelines to see how other projects of this significant amount go forward.

In the Sahtu we are completing our project description reports. I know some people up there are looking forward to going through the environmental assessment and later on through securing funds, like they're doing right now up in the Beaufort-Delta. I don't know if that will be done in the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> Assembly. We'll have these kinds of discussions; the future MLAs will have this type of discussion.

The thing for me is that it's damned if you do and damned if you don't on this project. We need to go ahead with this project. The Minister has heard us. Cabinet has heard us. Somehow they put the project together with other things in place such as the Borrowing Act because of the potential for oil and gas up in the Beaufort-Delta. I know what it's like for people to work and not get income support. I know what it's like for people to go to the office for income support. We had the Minister tell us that people were laying people off in the Yellowknife area and their income support shot up. I know people in my area have worked this winter and the income support payments have gone down dramatically. It's a real fine balance of politics being played here.

I am going to give the benefit of the doubt to the Minister and say, you're an honourable man. This is what you said you were going to do, work with us, and for your staff to do this work and to get it going. I know this kind of money can certainly be used around the region on different projects in the North. We find it like this. I know they need it in the southern area of the North. They need it here around this area here, in my region, in the Beaufort-Delta. But we are working closely with the federal government and the federal government wants this project, and we already said it in the Caucus that it's a priority.

I think the question for me, and I've had some concerns, is how do we go about getting this project on the go. I didn't expect a couple months ago when we said yes, we'll give them a million dollars, I didn't think that far ahead or couldn't see that far ahead that they were going to come back with \$2.5 million. I remember talking about that and my friend spoke against it, next to me. But I spoke in favour of it. I remember that day, because we had some people in the gallery who were listening to us from the Beaufort-Delta area. I firmly believe that by...(inaudible)...a million dollars, that we're going ahead, not knowing that they were going to come back with this.

I think that's what we need to be ready for and prepare ourselves for. This is a big project. The window of opportunity is there and we need not shut the blinds on that. For me to not support this is very difficult. I want to say, Mr. Chair, that the project needs to go and need to think the importance of this. I'm certainly looking for it in the future when the Sahtu starts construction on their roads or even the Mackenzie Delta, that we will get support. Hopefully from this we'll learn some lessons. Because we're certainly looking forward to roads in our area, especially now with the amount of oil and gas exploration that's happening and potentially could happen in the years to come. Those are my comments, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. I'd also like to inform the Members here today, obviously, of the use of parliamentary language and the proper etiquette moving forward. I know it's been a long day for everyone. To the motion. I have Mr. Menicoche.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I will be voting against this motion and I hope government has heard. Well, I can only speak for myself that I continue to be cautious and concerned as we proceed forward with the, people keep saying the project, and the government keeps assuring us that we're taking baby steps, and that's just what I'd like to see.

I do want to see the project description. I do want to see the total cost estimate. I'm concerned that the federal government maybe will maintain that their

only contribution will be the \$150 million. However, we have to show them the amount of work that would be involved, and we all know that the cost for the project will be very expensive only because of the amount of the terrain. But we have to do that project description report and the environmental assessment has to be done.

I believe that most of the work can be done this winter and next year as well. I'm kind of doubtful that we would be breaking ground and building a road next fall, but at the same time, I do want to see how much this project will really cost. I'm in favour of the money staying in the supplementary estimate request, so I'll be voting against this motion. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. To the motion, Mrs. Groenewegen.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will be voting against the motion as well. However, as I said in my general comments, I have serious concerns. I support the project in principle. I said in my comments that I'm having déjà vu of the Deh Cho Bridge. The Minister of Transportation assures me this is nothing like the Deh Cho Bridge, but that's how I'm feeling, and if anybody had a front row seat on the Deh Cho Bridge, I did. And strangely, my colleague was sitting right beside me and he shared my concerns about the Deh Cho Bridge. Anyway, I guess what I'm trying to say is respect the trepidation we're feeling.

Of course, we don't want to deprive the Beaufort region of this project, and to say we don't support transportation infrastructure is to say we don't support motherhood and apple pie. Of course we do. But, like I said to committee one day, there's a verse in the Bible that says nobody goes out and starts to build a house without first counting the cost, and I'm just wanting us to take into account all the costs and all the ramifications. But, yes, in an ideal situation this is the kind of infrastructure we'd like to have. I said I'm glad that's it's up in the region where things are slow now, and I'm sure that the company that gets the geotechnical work will put lots of Northerners to work on this project and it will create some economy up there. I won't say anything further than that.

I do appreciate Minister Miltenberger's experience showing through here today when he retracted that comment about if it was in Yellowknife he'd have the support of these folks here. I know we all say things but, of course, we expect our Ministers to have this stately decorum and never argue with us. Just answer the questions and not show any emotion. His experience and good judgment showed through on that and I thank you. I will not be supporting the motion. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. To the motion. Mr. Nadli.



**MR. NADLI:** Thank you. I, as well, will be voting against the motion, but at the same time I want to ensure that this project proceeds forward, but again, without trepidation from this side of the House including the perspective that I share with my colleagues from this side. In the end we need to ensure that the wealth of government plus industry, if it ever is realized for all parts of the North, will be shared and everybody will have a job. I think, ultimately, that's what we're trying to strive for. But at the same time, we want to ensure that we have a good fiscal plan, we have a good management system in place so that these major projects are done in a very efficient manner, and at the same time, we get value for the dollars that are given to us and we try to manage it wisely.

On those points, I'll be voting against this motion. At the same time, without saying that I support the initiative that will start as the construction of this highway. Mahsi.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Nadli. To the motion. Mr. Moses.

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, will not be in support of the motion. Obviously seeing it is a big project that is going to affect my region that I represent and it's going to be great news for the people back home and the jobs there it is going to create is going to be a lot of happy people up there. Just seeing what it's going to start off with in the creation of the Mackenzie Valley Highway, where I stated earlier is going to be a lot of work to come for years down the valley.

I also just wanted to also commend the government on our Caucus priorities, something that we did earlier in this government. It is great to see that we've already started hitting some of these priorities that we've recognized, such as the working with Aboriginal governments. You are doing a good job on that to be taking the first steps moving forward and getting this Inuvik-Tuk highway and building the infrastructure there. It just shows that this government is standing behind what it says it is going to do. Over the next four years, we can start looking at our priorities and dealing with them and that people of the NWT will start to have faith that we do say we are going to get done.

We do have to make some tough decisions whether we agree with them or not. Most of the time when we make these tough decisions it always has to be in the best interests for the territory, for looking into the future of what it is going to represent for the territory as a whole. There have been some really good debates over the last few days. It really opened my eyes into the whole government system on how things work here. I look forward to the next three and a half years of working with these people, Members here on this side and that side of the House to ensure that our Caucus priorities that we

did recognize earlier in this government actually we follow through with them.

I think right now we are off to a great start and in terms of this motion that is before us, I won't be supporting that and moving forward so that our priorities are addressed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Moses. I will call upon Ms. Bisaro to conclude the debate on the motion.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't have much to say. I want to reiterate that I do support this project. I do recognize and I am pleased that we are going to provide a stimulus and an economic stimulus to the Beaufort-Delta area. I recognize that this is going to be an ongoing project that is going to continue on down the valley. I have to say that I cannot support the expenditure the way that it was presented and particularly in the current budget year. I would reiterate that I would ask for a recorded vote.

#### RECORDED VOTE

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The motion is on the floor. The Member has requested a recorded vote. All those in favour, please stand.

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Bromley.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** All those opposed, please stand.

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Mr. Nadli, Mr. Hawkins, Mr. Menicoche, Mr. Moses, Mr. Yakeleya, Mr. Bouchard, Mr. Blake, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Abernethy, Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. McLeod - Yellowknife South, Mr. Lafferty, Mr. Ramsay, Mr. McLeod - Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mrs. Groenewegen.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** All those abstaining, please stand. There are none. The results of the recorded vote on the motion: in favour, two; opposed, 15; abstentions, zero. The motion is defeated.

---Defeated

We are going back to page 7, supplemental appropriations, infrastructure expenditures, highways, not previously authorized, \$2.5 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Total department, not previously authorized, \$2.927 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you. Department of Environment and Natural Resources, capital investment expenditures, corporate management, not previously authorized, \$104,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Total department, Environment and Natural Resources, not previously authorized, \$104,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Does committee agree that we have concluded consideration of Tabled Document 2-17(2), Supplementary Appropriation (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2011-2012?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** With that, I'd like to thank our witnesses here today; Mr. Kalgutkar and Mr. Aumond. Sergeant-at-Arms, would you please escort the witnesses out of the Chamber? Thank you. Mr. Menicoche.

COMMITTEE MOTION 8-16(2):  
CONCURRENCE OF TD 2-17(2),  
SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES  
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES),  
NO. 3, 2011-2012,  
CARRIED

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that consideration of Tabled Document 2-17(2), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2011-2012, be now concluded and that Tabled Document 2-17(2) be reported and recommended as ready for further consideration in formal session through the form of an appropriation bill. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. There's a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

---Carried

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, Members. I will now rise and report progress.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Report of Committee of the Whole, Mr. Dolyunny.

### Report of Committee of the Whole

**MR. DOLYUNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Tabled Document 3-17(2), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2011-2011, and Tabled Document 2-17(2), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2011-2012, and would like to report progress with two motions being adopted and that consideration of Tabled Documents 3-17(2) and 2-17(2) are concluded and the House concur with those estimates and that an appropriation bill to be based thereon be introduced without delay. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dolyunny. The motion is in order. To the motion. Is there a seconder to the motion? Mr. Bisaro.

---Carried

Colleagues, before we leave today, I'd like to recognize my son Mitchell in the House today. It's always good to have my family down.

Item 22, third reading of bills. Madam Clerk, orders of the day.

### Orders of the Day

**PRINCIPAL CLERK OF COMMITTEES (Ms. Knowlan):** Orders of the day for Wednesday, February 15, 2012, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
  2. Ministers' Statements
  3. Members' Statements
  4. Returns to Oral Questions
  5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
  6. Acknowledgements
  7. Oral Questions
  8. Written Questions
  9. Returns to Written Questions
  10. Replies to Opening Address
  11. Petitions
  12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
  13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
  14. Tabling of Documents
  15. Notices of Motion
  16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
  17. Motions
  18. First Reading of Bills
    - Bill 2, Interim Appropriations Act (Operations Expenditures), 2012-2013
  19. Second Reading of Bills
  20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
  21. Report of Committee of the Whole
  22. Third Reading of Bills
  23. Orders of the Day
- MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Madam Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Wednesday, February 15, 2012, at 1:30 p.m.
- The House adjourned at 6:42 p.m.