



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

3rd Session

Day 10

14th Assembly

HANSARD

Tuesday, July 4, 2000

Pages 397 – 466

The Honourable Tony Whitford, Speaker

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

TUESDAY, JULY 4, 2000

MEMBERS PRESENT

Honourable Roger Allen, Honourable Jim Antoine, Mr. Bell, Mr. Braden, Mr. Delorey, Mr. Dent, Honourable Jane Groenewegen, Honourable Joe Handley, Honourable Stephen Kakfwi, Mr. Krutko, Mr. Lafferty, Ms. Lee, Mr. McLeod, Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. Nitah, Honourable Jake Ootes, Mr. Roland, Honourable Vince Steen, Honourable Tony Whitford.

ITEM 1: PRAYER

-- Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Whitford): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome back after the long weekend. I hope you all had a good Canada Day. Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Antoine.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 13-14(3): Condolences to the Family of Mary Beth Miller

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I rise today to note the untimely passing of a northern sports hero. As Members are aware, Ms. Mary Beth Miller of Yellowknife was tragically taken from us while training at the Biathlon Canada camp in Valcartier, Quebec.

Mr. Speaker, Mary Beth had ambitions that inspired us all. Her successes ranged from the Arctic Winter Games to the North American Biathlon Championships, to the World University Games. She was a role model and a champion. Our deepest sympathies go to her family and her friends during this most difficult time. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Antoine. I would like to extend the condolences of this House to the family of Mary Beth. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement on Pension Entitlements Due to Former Giant Mine Workers

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In March of this year, this Legislature passed a motion in support of pension entitlements due to former Giant Mine workers. The federal government acknowledged this message through both the Prime Minister's Office and the Minister responsible for Indian Affairs and Northern Development. While our message has been delivered to the federal government, unfortunately to date, a workable solution has not been found to resolve the issue of pensions and the funds necessary to offset the deficit in the pension fund for approximately 100 former workers.

The federal government, Mr. Speaker, needs to continue to seek ways so that the pensions for retired Giant Mine workers are topped up, so that workers who have toiled for so many years are able to enjoy the retirement they have negotiated and deserve.

Having given federal support for the laid-off Cape Breton Development Corporation (DEVCO) coal miners in the form of early retirement and severance packages, the federal government needs to reconsider its assistance for former Giant Mine workers. Substantial royalties and taxes were received from Giant Mine through its operating life. While there may be no legal obligation under existing bankruptcy or pension legislation, the federal government should do the right thing and look at how it might provide a supplementary or ex gratia payment to enable the pension fund to be topped up and meet the moral, if not the legal, obligations to former Giant Mine workers.

On the legislative front, Mr. Speaker, we must continue to press for changes in the Federal Pension Standards Act and the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act to ensure we never again find ourselves in this situation, and to ensure that workers' rights are better protected in the future. Within our legislative competence, and possibly the Fair Practices Act, we must look at ways to alleviate such situations here in our own backyard.

Mr. Speaker, there are many lessons to be learned from the Giant Mine legacy — economic, social and environmental. It is our duty to continue to press for the rightful payment to Giant Mine pensioners and to prevent this situation from ever happening again to territorial citizens. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Member's Statement on Pension Entitlements Due to Former Giant Mine Workers

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to speak on the issue of Giant Mine. Mr. Speaker, as you are well aware, on March 27th, this House passed a motion in support of the laid-off Giant Mine workers who were given no severance packages, and what is more, a 25 percent reduction in their pension benefits as of April 1st, 2000.

Also in this House, many Members have spoken to the issues related to the reclamation of the contaminated sites at the Giant Mine property. At the time this House passed the motion, Mr. Speaker, I was hoping very much that the federal government would come through with some action. As evidenced by the letter your office has received on behalf of the Members of this House, which I tabled in this House last week, the chosen course of action by the federal government is that of no action.

Mr. Speaker, I must say that I am particularly disappointed with the cursory statement that the Minister makes in the letter in which he states that the federal government has done all it could for the workers. With all due respect, Mr. Speaker, I

disagree with that position. I would argue that the government has done a real disservice to these laid-off Giant Mine workers.

As I have stated numerous times previously, the federal government was very much the conduit that enabled the sale of asset transactions from Giant Mine to Miramar to take place. It even assumed a temporary ownership of the property to enable the transaction to go through. Further, Mr. Speaker, the government made a deliberate decision to relieve the future owner, Miramar, of the environmental liability that would go to any future new owner. They were not an innocent bystander, Mr. Speaker.

I must say I do not begrudge the deal Miramar has received, but I do begrudge the raw deal that the workers of Giant Mine have received. Mr. Speaker, Minister Nault and his federal counterparts, all the way up to the Prime Minister, should be reminded that they are the Ministers responsible for all aspects of this dire situation. They are the Ministers responsible for the mines, non-renewable resources, labour, bankruptcy, and the environment of our Territory. It seems, Mr. Speaker, that the federal government as a whole is washing their hands of what is at the front and centre of their mandate in this part of the country.

Mr. Speaker, given the reduction of the DIAND budget for the clean-up of the Giant Mine site, which I might add is totally contrary to the commitment it made in its throne speech last fall, the Minister seemed to show as much disregard...

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Your time has expired.

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

MR. SPEAKER: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude her statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You may conclude your statement, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Mr. Speaker, given the reduction of the DIAND budget for the clean-up of Giant Mine sites, which I might add is totally contrary to the commitment it made in its throne speech last fall, the Minister seems to show as much disregard for the environmental safety of the North. I am very disappointed with this as well.

Mr. Speaker, I believe it is never too late for a government to correct a wrong. I urge the federal government to reconsider and compensate the workers for what they are due and clean up the contaminated sites as they have committed to do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

Member's Statement on Pension Entitlements Due to Former Giant Mine Workers

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to also put some focus on the Giant Mine pension situation. Mr. Speaker, our constituents and former Giant employees are frustrated, in fact fed up, with a lack of activity on the part of our federal government. They have undertaken letter writing campaigns,

met countless times with Ethel Blondin-Andrew, but there are still no results.

Mr. Speaker, in this situation, there really are two issues. We all realize we need to get federal labour legislation changed. It does not make any sense to have pensioners at the back of the list behind unsecured creditors, and I would argue that we need to devolve this legislation to this level of government so we can take care of our constituents. There is another issue, as Ms. Lee has mentioned, and that is the topping up of the pension fund.

DIAND was instrumental in putting together the deal that saw Miramar take over the Giant assets, and they are now responsible. Mr. Speaker, these men have given too much to this community, and indeed this country, to now turn around and put the screws to them. The federal government must own up to its responsibility and top up these pensions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

Member's Statement on Pension Entitlements Due to Former Giant Mine Workers

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to speak about the issue of the Giant pensioners today. Mr. Speaker, late last year and early this year for a number of months, there was an awful lot heard on the issue of the Giant Mine pensions. The media were covering this on a regular basis and there was some discussion in this House and in the federal Parliament. It received much attention. It was driven largely by the efforts of people like Mary Kosta when pensions were cut 25 percent.

Mr. Speaker, as other Members have noted, this Assembly unanimously passed a motion in support of the Giant Mine pensioners.

Lately, Mr. Speaker, we have heard very little. In spite of that motion, what we have heard from the federal government is in fact alarming. Late last week, I heard Jim Moore, the assistant deputy minister responsible for Northern Affairs with the federal Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, say that he sympathized with the displaced Giant Mine workers but, quite simply, the Northern Affairs well has run dry.

Mr. Speaker, DIAND has reneged on its commitment made to these workers. Mr. Speaker, I ask the government of the Northwest Territories to again try to bring some focus to this issue and demand that the federal government deal fairly with the pensioners, demand that the federal government ensure that the same thing does not happen again by moving swiftly to change labour legislation. Mr. Speaker, even if they do not move swiftly, I still call on our government to look at occupying the field of labour legislation and develop our own Northwest Territories labour laws to properly protect Northerners. That, Mr. Speaker, will not help the Giant Mine pensioners, but will help the people in the future.

What will help the pensioners now is if our Premier leads a call to Ottawa and demands that the federal government not think that Northerners are going to forget about this issue. We want to see some action. We want to see it now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Merci, Mr. Dent. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

Member's Statement on Highway No. 5

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are in our budget session, and as I have every year for the last four years as we approach the Department of Transportation, I want to speak to the issue of Highway No. 5. Specifically, the lack of chip-seal and the attention to Highway No. 5 in the capital plan.

Mr. Speaker, very clearly in the debate in this House, the issue of transportation and highways has received the attention of many Members. We have heard of safety as an issue. We have heard of road rage in Yellowknife as a critical issue in terms of getting financing. We have heard of the effect on tourism and inter-community travel and trade.

Once again, it has been very clear that the debate and discussion has focused on the road between Rae and Yellowknife. However, I think roads are an issue for all MLAs and Fort Smith is no different. We have one road into our community and the majority of it is not chip-sealed or paved. It is a gravel road that suffers all the downfalls and shortcomings that gravel roads have, in terms of pot holes and maintenance. It is difficult to travel and has safety issues. I do commend, Mr. Speaker, the maintenance crews and staff in the region trying to maintain the road, but very clearly chip-sealing and paving is the answer in terms of cost savings and effective and efficient operation.

It was with certain dismay when I looked at the capital plan for highways, that once again Fort Smith and Highway No. 5 received not one iota of attention in terms of any kind of money over the next five years. Not one shekel, rupee, drachma, or peso, Mr. Speaker. Not one loonie.

-- Laughter

This is an issue for the community of Fort Smith. I will continue to rise and speak to this issue as we approach the budget for the Department of Transportation. I will once again be asking my colleague, the Minister responsible for Transportation, when, Mr. Speaker, will we see even the remotest recognition that this is an issue for the Department of Transportation. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

Member's Statement on Recognition to Volunteers of Hay River Museum Society

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I want to recognize a project that is currently underway in Hay River and the efforts of individuals that are working towards making this project a reality.

Mr. Speaker, the Hay River Museum Society has long recognized the need and importance to collect and preserve the artifacts and stories that tell the history of Hay River, the Hay River Dene Reserve, and the people.

Mr. Speaker, history shows that the Dene people have lived in this area for thousands of years, and from the first permanent settlers of 1892 to today, many changes have taken place. Mr. Speaker, through a series of events and hard work from certain individuals, the society has been able to undertake the Hay River Heritage Centre Project 2000.

For example, the society was successful in obtaining a large building from NTCL for the sum of one centennial dollar and a lease for the land on which it sits. The building, which was formally the Hudson Bay Store, is in itself a historic building.

Funds were received from the Canadian Millennium Partnership Program for a total of approximately \$45,000 and through a trust fund established by the United Church of Canada from sales of property in Hay River.

I have noticed that no money from this government has gone into this project to date, but I am sure that there will be requests. I encourage this government to support this project. At this time, I would like to recognize the co-chairs of the society, Vickie Latour and Peter Austit, for all the hard work they have put into this project.

I know this facility will be a great benefit to Hay River, its residents, and visitors to Hay River. I want to wish them all the success in future endeavours in this project. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Nitah.

Member's Statement on Democratic Victories Won by Mexican Voters

MR. NITAH: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, true democracy received another shot in the arm this past weekend. A former Coca-Cola executive became the president of Mexico following the recent elections. Mr. Speaker, this means Mexico, for the first time, had a truly free-voting electorate in 71 years.

It is like when the walls of East Berlin came crashing down. This was done in Mexico with masses chanting, "We can make change happen!" The free world and Mexicans alike are celebrating the liberation of the people of Mexico. Hopefully, the fallout will spur their economy with much-needed new investment.

Anyone who knows individuals who have fought for democracy will understand the depth of this achievement, and any individual who has lived under oppressive regimes will understand what this could mean to Mexicans' daily lives.

Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories should follow the example of their self-determination. What we need here in the Northwest Territories, in partnership with aboriginal governments, is provincial-type authority to run our own affairs. While we have democracy, we do not have the political authority or financial backing to carry out our political will.

Mr. Speaker, the federal government is withholding the gavel and financial resources from us. Until we organize ourselves in the North, it will continue to do so. Mr. Speaker, we too should demolish our Berlin Wall and get provincial-type responsibilities

and the financial resources necessary to run this territory as it should be.

I congratulate the Mexican people on their victory. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Nitah. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

Member's Statement on Treatment Facilities, Programs and Services

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a report that is long overdue in this House, which we are still waiting to have the Minister table, is the review of Health and Social Services and the department's response to that report.

Mr. Speaker, there are still many unresolved issues, especially coming from the small communities when it comes to treatment facilities and programs and services.

Right now, a lot of communities have accessed federal programs in which they are ensuring they are able to carry those out. There are early childhood programs, the community access program, and the Aboriginal Head Start Program. These programs are all administered through different aboriginal communities which are funded from the federal government, but yet this government is very reluctant to move when aboriginal initiatives want to take ownership and control of the problems that they see in front of them.

I raised this issue a trillion times in the 13th Assembly with the previous Minister, about alcohol and drug programs, such as Tl'oondih, Delta House, and other treatment facilities which have been closed down to make way for a more centralized control approach by this government.

Yet what we see is that waiting and wondering at those experiences where we are not seeing the results we saw previously. In regards to the different programs, there were initiatives tried, such as the Tl'oondih program, which was a child and family treatment facility which was offered to deal with families as a whole.

There was talk about different programs in different areas for the communities like the North Slave who want to take more control over the problems they see with alcohol and drugs, and deal with the community problems themselves.

Yet we do not see much movement in this area. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I will be asking the Minister questions on this matter shortly. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Merci, Mr. Krutko. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Lafferty.

Member's Statement on Affordable Housing

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, here in the North, we have government programs which mandate that we must buy northern products. For example, we have the Business Incentive Policy and the Northern Manufacturers

Directive, which encourages buying locally. I agree with stimulating and building our northern economy, but not at the cost of individuals' basic needs being met.

I am sure that we are all aware that housing needs in the communities far outweigh the supply. In one of the communities I represent, 80 percent of the households are considered in poor need. Substandard housing units are in demand because there simply is no other housing available.

Rather than being restricted by the Business Incentive Policy, and building perhaps one house per year due to the high cost of building materials in the North, I think we might better serve the people we represent by increasing the number of housing units that are built. Right now, when people are interested in building a home through the Housing Corporation, because of the Business Incentive Policy, the extra cost of purchasing in the North makes home ownership unaffordable.

As a government, we could lift the Business Incentive Policy or reduce the percentage of the Business Incentive Policy for social envelope purchases. In this way, we could buy the materials for building many more homes than we are now. I am confident that providing more housing units will improve the well being of all our constituents.

In the long run, what we save on purchases we can put into construction. Through the construction of more housing units, we could create more local employment by providing much needed local employment. We could reduce the dependency on income support. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 4: RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Return to Question 13-14(3): Proposed Hotel Tax

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have three returns to oral questions.

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to an oral question asked by Ms. Lee on June 21st, 2000, regarding the number of establishments where room charges would be subject to the proposed hotel room tax.

I would like to clarify that the proposed tax will be levied as a percentage of the nightly room charge. The tax will be added to the bill of the individual staying in the room. The business will collect the tax and remit it to the government, similar to businesses that collect and remit the tobacco, fuel and payroll taxes.

Based on current tourism establishment licenses, there are 43 hotels, motels and inns in the Northwest Territories. We estimate that there are about 1,000 rooms in these establishments, all of which would be subject to the proposed hotel tax

There are 28 licensed bed and breakfasts in the Northwest Territories. Under our proposal, establishments with less than four separate rooms would be exempt from the hotel tax. There are 16 of these smaller bed and breakfasts in the territory,

leaving 12 establishments with an estimated 75 rooms that would be subject to the tax.

The total number of hotels, motels, inns and larger bed and breakfasts where we anticipate rooms would be subject to the tax would be 55. The estimate of hotel room tax revenues was based on a 60 percent occupancy rate in rooms in these establishments.

There are also 47 lodges currently registered under the tourism establishment licenses. We do not have a room count associated with these establishments, but their capacity is estimated at about 800 persons per night. However, many of these lodges would offer accommodation for part of the year only, and accommodation in some smaller lodges would be exempt from the proposed tax.

There are also numerous other types of licensed establishments, such as tent camps and cabin rentals. We estimate there are approximately 50 such establishments, but the vast majority of these would likely be small or temporary accommodations that would be exempt from tax.

Return to Question 16-14(3): Proposed Hotel Tax Projections

As well, Mr. Speaker, I have a return to an oral question asked by Mr. Miltenberger on June 21st, 2000, regarding the portion of the proposed hotel tax revenues that would come from government employees travelling on government business.

We have estimated that annual room revenues for hotels, motels, inns and bed and breakfasts in the Northwest Territories at about \$25 million per year. The proposed five percent hotel tax is therefore expected to raise about \$1.25 million per year in gross revenues.

Based on 1999-2000 financial information, which is not yet finalized, it is estimated that Government of the Northwest Territories staff on duty travel spent \$1.5 to \$2.0 million on hotel accommodations in the NWT. This means that six to eight percent of total room revenues in the Northwest Territories were accounted for by Government of the Northwest Territories employees. Therefore, \$75,000 to \$100,000 of the gross hotel room tax revenues would come from the Government of the Northwest Territories itself.

Return to Question 49-14(3): Financing Construction of The Inuvik Regional Hospital

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I have a return to an oral question asked by Mr. Floyd Roland on June 26th, 2000, regarding financing construction of the Inuvik Regional Hospital.

With respect to the issue regarding the amount of funding received from the Government of Canada for the completion of the Inuvik Regional Hospital project, I offer the following information.

Mr. Speaker, prior to division, the total amount of funding received from the federal government for the replacement of the Inuvik Hospital and renovation of the Inuvik Hospital was \$18,880,000. Of this amount, \$10,508,608 was retained by the Northwest Territories through the division of assets and liabilities process.

The residual amount owing to the Government of the

Northwest Territories from the Government of Canada for the Inuvik Hospital project is \$16,790,000. Of this amount, \$3.17 million was received in 1999-00 and scheduled future payments are as follows:

2000-01	\$5 million
2001-02	\$4.5 million
2002-03	\$4.12 million

Thus, total funding received from the Government of Canada for this project will be \$27.3 million.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize two gentlemen who worked at Giant Mine for many years and who were affected by the reduction of the pensions, Mr. Kurt Lehniger and Mr. Jim Wyley.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Welcome, gentlemen. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize two gentlemen in the gallery, who are among the people suffering from no action by the federal government, Mr. Romeo Berube and Mr. Lou Delaney. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize another gentleman adversely affected by the inaction of the federal government, Mr. Don McNenly.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to recognize a constituent of my riding and also people from the Inuvik region. I would like to recognize Mary Ross, Olive Itsi, and Ann Bokfurth. From Inuvik, Violet Doolittle, and from the Sahtu, Harold Cook. Welcome.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Welcome to the Legislative Assembly. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a number of people, citizens of Yellowknife, have given tremendous support to the Giant Mine workers' cause. Two members of the citizen support group are in the gallery today, Mr. Bob Haywood and Mr. Steve Petersen.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Welcome, gentlemen. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize visitors in the gallery, members of the Grollier Hall Residential Human Circle and Dene Institute. Harold Cook from Fort Good Hope, Alphonsine McNeely, Fort Good Hope, Mary Ross, Fort McPherson, William Taylor, from Tuktoyaktuk, Agnes Etsema from Yellowknife, Florence Barnaby, Fort Good Hope, Violet Doolittle, Inuvik, Simon Kataoyak, Holman, Olive Itsi, Fort McPherson, Rosemary Elemie, Deline, Ann Firth-Jones, Hay River, Judy Gordon from Aklavik, Kim Beaulieu from Hay River, Louise Delorme from Yellowknife, Annie and Andrea Goose from Holman, Wendy Harvey of Fort Langlely, British Columbia and Monique Gray Smith from Victoria, British Columbia. Welcome.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Antoine. Welcome to the gallery. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too would like to recognize Lou Delaney and the other pensioners from Giant Mine. Lou is a long-time friend, musician and a resident of Weledeh. I welcome him and the other members here. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 110-14(3): Addictions Treatment in the NWT

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement today, I made reference to the concerns we have with the closure of the treatment facilities in the Northwest Territories. Just recently, Corrections Canada has taken over delivering programs at the Dettah treatment facility. I would like to ask the Minister, in light of what is happening with all of these different treatment facilities, especially the closure of the two in my riding, Tl'oondih and Delta House, what is the department doing to ensure the programs and services for alcohol and drugs will be available to people in the Northwest Territories? What are they doing about treatment programs in the Northwest Territories?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Return to Question 110-14(3): Addictions Treatment in the NWT

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as mentioned in this House last week, there is a strategy under development at this time for mental health and addiction. There was also a reform initiative that was undertaken in 1996-97. At that time, it was determined that there are very many different alternatives and options for dealing with addictions. When we look at the statistics for the

number of residential beds available for addictions treatment in the Northwest Territories, it is fairly substantial on a per capita basis. As everyone knows, we do have a fairly substantial problem on a per capita basis. I want to assure the Member the department is undertaking initiatives, albeit they may not be residential treatment options. Options are underway for community-based services. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 110-14(3): Addictions Treatment in the NWT

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, has the Minister considered the possibility of reinstating specific programs like the ones I mentioned, the child and family treatment program, or gender-specific programs for men and women. That was the initiative they tried with the Tl'oondih Healing Centre before it was shut down. Have they considered that?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Further Return to Question 110-14(3): Addictions Treatment in the NWT

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, the department has considered gender-specific treatment. There was a pilot project for a mobile female treatment initiative that was recently started that will be travelling to four different regions. There are many other initiatives under way.

There is a post trauma treatment initiative that is going to be starting here in Yellowknife on a pilot basis. We are working with a broad spectrum of partners, non-government organizations, various input is being sought and we are looking at many different options.

Mr. Speaker, we also have statistics which clearly indicate that residential treatment is not always the most effective for every person. Different people respond to different types of treatment. We have to offer a variety of treatment options. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 110-14(3): Addictions Treatment in the NWT

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are presently almost 30 children receiving treatment at southern institutions, at an average cost of about \$100,000 per child per year. That is a lot of money. I would like to ask the Minister what they are doing to try to establish such a program in the Northwest Territories for children?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Further Return to Question 110-14(3): Addictions Treatment in the NWT

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, under the alternative initiatives program that was undertaken, there was a need determined for child and family treatment. Under that scenario, it was anticipated that the Dettah facility was going to become available and that was going to be designated as a child and family treatment centre.

Since then, a different type of programming has gone into that facility through the Northern Addictions Services. Now, we are back to looking for where we might be able to find a place to treat these young people in conjunction with their families, and deliver that specialized service. The Member is absolutely correct. We do have a lot of youth who are down south receiving very specialized treatment. It would be good to bring this closer to home. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 110-14(3): Addictions Treatment in the NWT

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell the House and the public out there when she will be filing a report in this House so we can see where the government is going on these different initiatives?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Further Return to Question 110-14(3): Addictions Treatment in the NWT

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if the Member is referring to the Mental Health and Addictions Strategy, it will not be during this session. If the Member is referring to the Minister's Response to the Forum on Health and Social Services, that will be tabled this week. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Question 111-14(2): Federal Responsibility for Giant Mine Pensioners

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Premier. It is in regard to the issue of Giant Mine workers. Mr. Speaker, we are well aware that the Premier, as well as a number of Ministers, have had many opportunities to meet with their federal counterparts on many different occasions, notably when they have been down to sell the Non-Renewable Resource Development Strategy. As well, Mr. Speaker, we have had the Intergovernmental Forum, where the Minister of DIAND was up meeting with the Premier.

My question to the Premier is, has he, in any of his dealings with the federal Ministers, raised this issue of Giant Mine workers and reclamation, and what has transpired in that meeting? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

Return to Question 111-14(2): Federal Responsibility for Giant Mine Pensioners

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the issue has been raised, primarily through our discussions with our Member of Parliament, Ethel Blondin-Andrew. She has been the primary way in which we have raised the issue with the federal government. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 111-14(2): Federal Responsibility for Giant Mine Pensioners

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the Premier not agree that he is responsible for the well being of Yellowknife citizens, as well as all of the Northwest Territories? Would he not agree that it should be his responsibility to address this issue that is at the forefront of many of the workers who have been laid-off? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return to Question 111-14(2): Federal Responsibility for Giant Mine Pensioners

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the issue is difficulty in federal legislation that allows companies to under-contribute to pension funds and the difficulties that arise because of that. It is federal legislation, and our Member of Parliament has seen the way in which we have worked to raise the issue and to urge the federal government to address the difficulties that have arisen, and to find ways to address it so it does not happen again. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 111-14(2): Federal Responsibility for Giant Mine Pensioners

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think we are all aware that there is a jurisdictional question with regard to this matter, because we do not have jurisdiction over labour and mining and all that. Aside from that, Mr. Speaker, I would argue that there is room for the federal government to manoeuvre, because they were a part of this transaction. Would the Premier take the responsibility of raising this issue directly with the DIAND Minister or the Prime Minister, and ask them if they could work out a special arrangement that fits this process? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return to Question 111-14(2): Federal Responsibility for Giant Mine Pensioners

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if the Member is suggesting that in all dealings with the federal government that this issue take priority, I am not certain that it is possible or we are able to do that. It has been raised. The Member of Parliament has said on record that she sees it as a very high priority, and she has put a considerable amount of time and effort into urging her federal colleagues to

come up with some way to respond to the issue and to find ways to resolve it if possible. I am leaving it to our Member of Parliament to do what she can. If there is occasion to raise it in the proper context for myself to do that, I will certainly do that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. Final supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary to Question 111-14(2): Federal Responsibility for Giant Mine Pensioners

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I just want to remind the Premier that there is a \$300 million clean-up project that is at the bottom of Giant Mine. These are people's lives at issue. May I have the Premier please commit to finding the opportunity when he meets with his federal counterparts the next time, and consider raising this issue as one of the priority items? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return to Question 111-14(2): Federal Responsibility for Giant Mine Pensioners

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will certainly consider finding a time and occasion to deal with the Member's suggestion. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Premier. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

Question 112-14(3): Proposed Hotel Tax Projections

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister responsible for the Department of Finance regarding a return to an oral question about proposed hotel tax projections.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to ask the Minister whether the numbers he has given me of \$1.5 million to \$2 million include the hundreds of millions of dollars that are paid to boards and agencies and municipalities in settlements. That it is all government money, but it is transferred over. As well, the issue of medical travel. Does this relatively small number of \$800,000 include those numbers? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 112-14(3): Proposed Hotel Tax Projections

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, no, it does not include all of the other events, boards, meetings, aboriginal leadership conferences and so on that the Government of the Northwest Territories funds. If we were to count everything like that, then the number would be considerably larger. The question was asked, though, is the Government of the Northwest Territories travel included.

What I have here is Government of the Northwest Territories civil servants' travel, and our best estimate at this point of their costs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 112-14(3): Proposed Hotel Tax Projections

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a fine hair that the Minister is splitting, so I would like to ask the Minister, when he looks at the cost to government, could he in fact get the numbers looked at so that they are accurate? How much is the government spending with this hotel tax in terms of charging itself?

It is clear that just focusing on employees leaves out a huge, as the Minister indicated, segment of the government budget. We are talking about government money and upward pressure on all the agencies and boards we fund. Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 112-14(3): Proposed Hotel Tax Projections

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, we can undertake to do that but, again, it would have to be very much a ballpark figure. Very often when we fund boards or we fund an aboriginal leaders' meeting, we do not break it down as to so much for accommodations, so much for other things. That would really be estimating and I do not think it would be particularly accurate. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 112-14(3): Proposed Hotel Tax Projections

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the concern I have is when you are talking about a tax increase, there are some very clear numbers in terms of the amount of money that is expected to be raised. Considering the fact that the Government of the Northwest Territories is one of the biggest employers and users of hotels in the Northwest Territories and the agencies that they fund, the information is critical.

I would ask the Minister, as he looks at justifying this tax, can he speak with some certainty to the cost, and are his projections of \$1.25 million accurate if he does not know how much the government is spending itself? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 112-14(3): Proposed Hotel Tax Projections

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The \$1.5 million to \$2 million estimate we have now is our best estimate. As I indicated in my return to the oral question, this information is not yet finalized, but if it is important to get some quick information. I am pretty comfortable that this is well within the range of expenditure for Government of the Northwest Territories employees' hotel costs. I will not say with certainty that it is exactly this amount though, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 112-14(3): Proposed Hotel Tax Projections

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The question is, using government parlance, is this a class D estimate or a class A estimate?

-- Laughter

Could the Minister commit to providing us with a class A estimate that includes all government spending that is directed through self or subsidiary agencies to hotel accommodation? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 112-14(3): Proposed Hotel Tax Projections

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given the timeframe we had to pull this together, it is a class A estimate. We will continue, as I said, this is not finalized yet, and we continue to work on it. So over the next few months, as we finalize our estimates and get into consultation, certainly we will work to have as accurate information as possible. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Question 113-14(3): Fair Treatment of NWT Workers

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for Mr. Antoine, the Minister responsible for Justice and the Fair Practices Act. We have resolved in this House and transmitted the message that it is up to the federal government to address pension benefits and bankruptcy and solvency legislation to make sure that workers' rights are better protected in the future.

My question for the Minister, under our own Fair Practices Act or other territorial legislation that might be brought forward to ensure that we do not find ourselves in a situation like this, what can we do with our legislation to help prevent this kind of thing in the future? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister responsible for Justice, Mr. Antoine.

Return to Question 113-14(3): Fair Treatment of NWT Workers

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the honourable Member is asking about what can we do so that the Giant Mine workers' pension problem does not occur again in the future. He asked again about our Fair Practices Act. Earlier on in a statement, another honourable Member talked about our Labour Standards Act.

In the Fair Practices Act in this government, this department is preparing a legislative proposal for a consultation paper and the preparation of draft human rights legislation to replace the Fair Practices Act. The human rights legislation would be there

to deal with complaints and dispute resolution systems within Canada, which is similar to other places in Canada and that would also be suitable for the Northwest Territories.

So, in that light, it deals with equal pay for equal value and so forth, whereas the Labour Standards Act, which was referred to earlier on in one of the statements in regard to dealing with the issue of the Giant Mine workers, this piece of legislation is seriously outdated and in need of a major overhaul.

There was an attempt back in the 80s. There was a three man commission formed to look at this. As you know, the late Jim Evoy was part of this commission. During the time of his death, they were proposing the formation of a tripartite committee. At that time, there was a pressing nature of Nunavut being created and so forth, so this piece of legislation was put on hold.

Perhaps we should look at the Labour Standards Act and try to do some revisions to that legislation to deal with this type of situation, rather than dealing with the Human Rights Act. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 113-14(3): Fair Treatment of NWT Workers

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the Minister for that information and that background. Under the labour standards legislation, are there specific things that we can do under the jurisdiction that we have, to help prevent this kind of thing from happening in the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister responsible for Justice, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return to Question 113-14(3): Fair Treatment of NWT Workers

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Justice had an internal review done, a report on the Labour Standards Act, which was mainly federal legislation. We are undertaking the review of this report in the department. Following the internal review, the department will be preparing a proposal on public consultation for the consideration of Cabinet.

It is still in the early planning stages of changes to this legislation and with the whole move by the aboriginal groups to start building pipelines and so forth, I think there is some urgency to maybe speeding up this process and taking a close look at this piece of legislation. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Lafferty.

Question 114-14(3): North Slave Addictions Treatment Facilities

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, the honourable Jane Groenewegen. The Dogrib Community Service Board is putting funds towards training

drug and alcohol addictions counsellors. I would like to ask the Minister, what is the department doing to make sure they have facilities in which to counsel their clients and they are trained and ready to help their people? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Return to Question 114-14(3): North Slave Addictions Treatment Facilities

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am not familiar with what type of facility is available in the Dogrib communities in terms of infrastructure and physical space. I am not sure what is available in those communities.

I do know that there are community-based projects in 23 of our communities here in the North and I have to assume that these 23 communities' programs are operated out of facilities. I would have to get back to the Member with respect to what our department has funded or will fund in the future in terms of spaces for these trained workers. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 114-14(3): North Slave Addictions Treatment Facilities

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am happy that the Minister is willing to look into these facilities, but maybe she can answer my question and tell me when I should be expecting somebody to come to the communities and look at our facilities?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Further Return to Question 114-14(3): North Slave Addictions Treatment Facilities

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it would be my pleasure to travel with the Member once this House is finished and the summer is upon us and we have some time to free up. I would be pleased to travel to the communities in the Member's riding to look at what facilities are available, to discuss with him the number of workers that are being trained, and where they might work out of once they are trained. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

Question 115-14(3): Grant and Contribution Accountability

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister responsible for Finance. I was rather concerned with what I perceived to be a cavalier response to the Member's question about the hotel tax.

As the Minister states, we cannot be expected to know how much our boards, municipalities, NGOs and people undergoing medical travel actually spend on travel. I am wondering where

the accountability is. How can we be sure the boards are not spending their money on popcorn?

-- Laughter

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Handley.

Return to Question 115-14(3): Grant and Contribution Accountability

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Maybe they are buying some popcorn, I really do not know.

When we provide a contribution to an organization, we base it on the estimates that they provide. Now if it is a board, there is a set of rules in terms of contributions and grants they have to abide by.

In terms of contributions, for example, to the aboriginal leaders meeting last week, we based that on estimates they provide to us. They hold the meeting and we know how many people were there. We know whether or not the money was misspent. Certainly, there is accountability. When I take it down and try to figure out who stayed in the hotel and how many people stayed in other people's homes because there was not sufficient accommodation, that is where it becomes speculative. I am not being cavalier in saying this. I am just saying that it is difficult to break it down with any accuracy and be able to say that, last week at the aboriginal leaders conference, 'x' number of dollars were spent on accommodation. I just do not have that. What I have is their estimate of what they spent. That is the best I can work at. As I say, I am not trying to be cavalier at all. As I said, I have to work very much on estimates. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 115-14(3): Grant and Contribution Accountability

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So when I am an NGO applying for funding and I provide an estimate, does it matter whether or not I actually follow through and make that expenditure? What I am asking, Mr. Speaker, is if, as the Minister has suggested, I have an estimate for a hotel stay and stay at my relative's place, can I turn around and pocket the money? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. That is bordering on hypothetical. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 115-14(3): Grant and Contribution Accountability

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, no, they certainly cannot do something else with the money and pocket it. They have to spend the money for the purpose that is intended. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 115-14(3): Grant and Contribution Accountability

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, assuming they have to spend the money for the purpose intended, I have to assume that the government has a way to track and find out if indeed they are spending the money on that purpose. Can the Minister confirm this?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, I am not sure how to deal with that question, but you may answer it if you wish. Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 115-14(3): Grant and Contribution Accountability

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, definitely, if it is a contribution, then there is one way of accounting for that. Contributions allow a fair bit of flexibility, so that is generally how we will fund, as I mentioned, a meeting of aboriginal leaders, a special conference and so on. There, we work on the main proposal that is provided to us and their best estimates.

If their total costs are less than what they had required from us, then they would be expected to reimburse us. If it is done as a grant, then it is completely accountable and they have to provide us with statements of what happened. It depends on how we are giving the money. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Handley. Final supplementary, Mr. Bell.

Supplementary to Question 115-14(3): Grant and Contribution Accountability

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My argument is that there has to be accountability. I think this government does know how the funds are spent and can give us some real blue chip information and let us know exactly how much of this tax will be the government taxing itself or its various agencies. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. There was no question. That was a comment. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

Question 116-14(3): Giant Mine Pensioners

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier and it relates to the issue of the Giant Mine pensioners. Mr. Speaker, when I met with some Giant Mine pensioners last month, they confirmed that they thought this government had done a fair bit to help get the issue raised in Ottawa and were hoping we would continue to do that.

I am concerned today that in response to Ms. Lee, the Premier has said that he does not see how this issue can continue to be a priority. I note, Mr. Speaker, that one of the main agencies we deal with here, DIAND, says right now that the well has run dry. They have no more money. Since DIAND was the department that was held out by the Premier and the Minister responsible for Finance as potentially ready to invest in our future and help us ensure that we had Northerners ready to take on the economic opportunities that are just on the horizon, if DIAND will not follow through on a commitment to Giant Mine pensioners, how can we count on them to follow through on the

hope that the Premier and the Minister responsible for Finance have led us to believe we should have?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

Return to Question 116-14(3): Giant Mine Pensioners

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am being quoted by the Member. It never quite sounds like me when somebody else says it. Maybe it was because I am always so positive and it does not come across that way when somebody else repeats it from the other side.

Let me just say that the issue is a very important issue, but it is not an issue that touches on the lives of everybody in the way that revenue-sharing and devolution does. We had agreed as a Legislature that those would be the primary issues that would drive the agenda of this government towards a better tomorrow. The issue of the under-contribution to the pension plan by Giant Mine is an important issue, and we have raised it as well as we can with the opportunities we have had.

I understand there was a comment by an assistant deputy minister responsible for DIAND that says they are short of money. I have not heard a statement from the Member of Parliament, Ethel Blondin-Andrew, or from the office of the Minister responsible, Bob Nault. We will follow up on it and inquire as to what the status of this issue is. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 116-14(3): Giant Mine Pensioners

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hope that by the status of this issue, the Premier was talking about the Giant Mine pension issue. Mr. Speaker, publicity is an important way to bring pressure to bear on the federal government. Will the Premier commit to raising the issue of the Giant Mine pensions again with the Minister responsible for DIAND? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return to Question 116-14(3): Giant Mine Pensioners

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Yes, Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will find a way to bring it again to the attention of the Minister and contact the office of our Member of Parliament as well, Ethel Blondin-Andrew.

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

Supplementary to Question 116-14(3): Giant Mine Pensioners

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Premier's response. Mr. Speaker, on March 21st, the Premier said that this government will continue to urge the federal government to be vigilant on regulating private pension plans and amend its pension and labour legislation. Could the Premier tell us if this government followed through on this commitment, and if they have not, will they again commit to following through on it?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return to Question 116-14(3): Giant Mine Pensioners

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Yes, we will continue to follow up on that commitment we have made. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Question 117-14(3): Federal Environment and Development Commitments

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Further to the Giant Mine issue, Mr. Speaker, I would like to pose a question to the Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. We have seen in the past few weeks the department's failure to live up to the Giant Mine clean-up fund. Just today, Mr. Speaker, the department has again pulled the rug out from under the northern program in its failure to live up to commitments to fund the Protected Areas Strategy. What impact will this cut have on our ability to sustain this very vital project? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Handley.

Return to Question 117-14(3): Federal Environment and Development Commitments

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I heard Jim Moore, the assistant deputy minister for the Northern Affairs section of DIAND, on the radio this morning talking about the inability of that department to honour their commitments with regards to the Protected Areas Strategy. I understand that the amount was not \$700,000 or \$750,000, but actually about \$350,000. That is of concern to us as a government, because we are also committed to implementing the Protected Areas Strategy. It does have an impact because we are doing this jointly, and DIAND has the largest share to carry.

That is of concern. It does mean that our share of the Protected Areas Strategy this year is about \$220,000 plus a PY, and it raises a question of do we keep on going here without our partner being on-side with us? We have not had an EDA since 1996. That is of big concern to me. I heard David Nutter talking the week before about the slowdown and the lack of money on Giant Mine clean-up and Colomac clean-up. That is of big concern to us because, as Ms. Lee pointed out earlier, there are a lot of dollars worth of clean-up to be done there. These are big issues for us.

The pensioners' fund is another one. There is a whole list of things that DIAND has not lived up to their obligations on. It really does, Mr. Speaker, go to DIAND's ability to be able to do their job if they get a northern affairs section. I do not know if they have the capacity anymore, given the magnitude of the problems. Nor do they have the vision or the commitment to do this. I have serious concerns that DIAND, as the department responsible in the northern affairs program in particular, that the staff in there are not able to keep up with the growth and the opportunities here.

While we have Ministers and political leaders who are excited and very optimistic, I am not sure that the bureaucracy will be

able to keep up. That is just another reason why we have to keep pushing away at each of these issues. We have to keep working together in terms of devolution. I do not see any other course except to keep hammering away and to negotiate all of these things, from EDA to protected areas, mine clean-up, pensioners funds, all of them. We just have to keep pushing away as Northerners. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 117-14(3): Federal Environment and Development Commitments

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I certainly support the Minister's objective of hammering away on these, but it does seem to illustrate something, and I am wondering if the Minister would agree that what we have here is a rather unsettling trend that is going on in Ottawa in regard to some fairly substantive programs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 117-14(3): Federal Environment and Development Commitments

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not sure if it is a trend, but certainly I think it is an indication that within the bureaucracy in Ottawa, they have not yet realized the magnitude of the opportunities in front of us here. They have not geared up their department to be able to meet these. I do not know if it is a trend, but it is certainly a situation that is not a good sign for us. I think it is again, all the more reason why we have to work to make sure that Northerners are making those decisions, not some individuals working in Ottawa. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 117-14(3): Federal Environment and Development Commitments

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At least the two programs that we are looking at here, the Giant Mine legacy and the clean-up and the Protected Areas Strategy and the miners' pension situation. These are substantive issues that have been on the books for a long time. I am very concerned that the federal government is losing ground. What steps can the Minister take to bring concerted pressure on Ottawa to live up to, as I say, some very substantive and long-living problems?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 117-14(3): Federal Environment and Development Commitments

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think, looking at the big picture, the direction that we have taken, that the Premier has taken, and that Cabinet is on in terms of the Intergovernmental Forum, the meetings with the Ministers in Ottawa and so on, is the right approach. When it comes down to more specific programs, like economic development, the fact

that we do not have an economic development agreement, then I think the document the panel tabled last week on the economic strategy was the right direction.

We will get Northerners working together. We will keep using that document to continue to negotiate on an EDA, on the Protected Areas Strategy. We intend to follow that up. I intend to write to the Minister responsible for DIAND and remind him that we agreed to continue the interim resource management agreement funding at their request and we need them to honour their commitments.

Our money is just as scarce and hard to come by as is the federal government's. We need them to live up to their commitments in the same way that we are doing ours, even though it means some cutbacks. We will keep on following up on the pensioner fund and the mine clean-up. Our people are negotiating regularly in terms of our need to define what is our responsibility and what is their responsibility. We are ready, even with our tight budget, to honour our commitments and we honour DIAND to do the same thing on each of these areas. We are looking at the broad picture, but also at with dealing with each one of them individually and specifically. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 117-14(3): Federal Environment and Development Commitments

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I certainly would like to think that Ottawa is not singling the Northwest Territories out. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister advise whether our northern neighbours are also seeing a similar trend in this area? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 117-14(3): Federal Environment and Development Commitments

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, in my discussions with both of our northern neighbours, they are facing the same kind of situation. They have the same sort of frustrations we have. We will certainly continue to work with them. In fact, there is a meeting set for this fall to deal with this very specific situation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

Question 118-14(3): Funding For Improvements to Highway No. 8

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transportation. In light of the concerns on Highway No. 3, I just want to remind the Minister that you also have eight other highways out there, and we should ensure those highways are being maintained and the dollars are there to make the improvements we need. Yet a large portion of this budget has been allocated to Highway No. 3, so I want to ask the Minister, can he bring the standards of Highway No. 8 up to the same standards of Highway No. 3?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Transportation, Mr. Steen.

Return to Question 118-14(3): Funding For Improvements to Highway No. 8

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am not sure what standards I am required to bring Highway No. 8 up to. It seems as if everyone has a different opinion on the condition of Highway No. 3. I am not clear. What I can say is the department is committed to keeping all of the highways safe and passable.

Mr. Speaker, we do have road reports issued every day which suggest the conditions of each highway and the driving conditions that can be expected on those highways. I have not received any report that says any one of the highways is not safe and passable. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Steen. Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary to Question 118-14(3): Funding For Improvements to Highway No. 8

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with the number of potholes and rough spots on our highway system, the Dempster Highway is pretty used to that. There have been attempts made by this government to find ways of improving it. I would like to ask the Minister if he is willing to consider the possibility of expanding the program for calcium on all highways in the Northwest Territories, so we can ensure we have smooth highways, less dust, and hopefully less potholes? Will the Minister consider expanding that budget?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Transportation, Mr. Steen.

Further Return to Question 118-14(3): Funding For Improvements to Highway No. 8

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member is correct in that calcium does help to improve highway conditions, including the dust conditions on the highway. The department will consider increasing the calcium on our highways, subject to the amount of money we receive, of course. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Steen. Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary to Question 118-14(3): Funding For Improvements to Highway No. 8

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of the concerns, especially from the communities who are outside of Highway No. 3, is we have seen a decrease in the amount of money that has been spent on maintenance of our other highway systems. Because of the Minister's statement, where he says we will do within the budget, right now, the budget is not adequate. I would like to ask the Minister if he would consider looking at increasing the amount of money that is spent on maintenance for the other highway systems? Almost 80 percent of the money is being spent on Highway No. 3.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Transportation, Mr. Steen.

Further Return to Question 118-14(3): Funding For Improvements to Highway No. 8

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a major portion of the department's budget was approved through supplementary appropriations earlier in the year. We already have our expenses pretty well laid out for the year, including Highway No. 3 and the other highways as well. If we look at increasing any of our expenditures on the other highways, it would have to be in light of exactly how much funds the Legislative Assembly is appropriating for us to do the job. Unless there are some changes made in this year's budget, it is all laid out for this year. We would have to be looking at future years. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Steen. Final supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary to Question 118-14(3): Funding For Improvements to Highway No. 8

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in light of the interim appropriation that was passed, we are still dealing with the main estimates. I believe it is in the Minister's discretion to come forth with some recommendations by moving some money around. I would like to ask the Minister, will you consider moving some money around so we can have more money for maintaining the roads outside of Highway No. 3?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Transportation, Mr. Steen.

Further Return to Question 118-14(3): Funding For Improvements to Highway No. 8

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the department has presented its budget and its business plan to the standing committees. They are not only for this year, but suggested projects for next year as well. I presume the standing committee took some serious looks at these things and came back to us as to what they would like to see us do.

We are responding to that in what was presented to the Legislative Assembly as our plan of business for the next few years. However, there is always room for some adjustments within the plan. Of course, the department is subject to the will of the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker. If the Assembly directs us to change the budget, we will do that. Right now, we have presented the budget and our expenditures based on where we, as a department, feel the expenditures are required. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Steen. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

Question 119-14(3): Additional Federal Funding Sources

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Finance. In light of some of the questions and responses I have heard this afternoon, they have caused me some concern. There has been much talk

about getting more revenues from Ottawa to help us out in the Northwest Territories. From what I am to understand in some of the responses made by Minister Handley to an earlier question, that might not be the situation.