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The Honourable Tony Whitford, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRAYER	1041
MINISTERS' STATEMENTS	1041
71-14(5): NATIVE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF THE NWT (KAKFWI)	1041
72-14(5): KYOTO PROTOCOL (ANTOINE)	1042
73-14(5): TRIBUTE TO VI BECK (KAKFWI).....	1042
74-14(5): MINISTER ABSENT FROM THE HOUSE (KAKFWI).....	1042
MEMBERS' STATEMENTS	1043
SENIORS' FOSSIL FUEL SUBSIDY (KRUTKO)	1043
NORTHERN TRANSPORTATION COMPANY LIMITED (DELOREY)	1043
HIGHWAY NO. 3 MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS (LAFFERTY)	1044
BREAST HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK (LEE).....	1044
RETIREMENT OF ANGLICAN BISHOP OF THE ARCTIC CHRIS WILLIAMS (OOTES).....	1045
RESULTS OF THE JEAN MARIE RIVER ELECTIONS FOR CHIEF AND COUNCIL (ANTOINE)	1045
BREAST CANCER AWARENESS AND FUNDRAISING EFFORTS (BRADEN)	1045
FIREARMS REGISTRATION DEADLING (MCLEOD)	1046
REPAIRS TO THE HAY RIVER CENTENNIAL LIBRARY (GROENEWEGEN)	1046
OBLIGATIONS OF THE FEERAL GOVERNMENT FOR INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING (DENT)	1047
ELEVENTH ANNUAL CIBC "RUN FOR THE CURE" (BELL).....	1047
ADDITIONAL PARTICIPANTS IN THE "LETTER TO THE QUEEN" LITERACY CONTEST (STEEN)	1047
RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY	1048
ORAL QUESTIONS	1048
360-14(5): CABINET DIRECTION TO THE NWT POWER CORPORATION (GROENEWEGEN)	1048
361-14(5): GNWT SUPPORT FOR FIREARMS OWNERS (MCLEOD)	1049
362-14(5): IMPROVING CONDITIONS OF HIGHWAY NO. 3 (LAFFERTY).....	1050
363-14(5): SENIORS' FUSSIL FUEL SUBSIDY PROGRAM (KRUTKO).....	1051
364-14(5): GNWT STAFF RENTENTION POLICY (DENT)	1053
365-14(5): CO-PAYMENTS FOR MEDICAL TRAVEL (DELOREY)	1053
366-14(5): CONTRACT FOR FIRE SUPPRESSION AIR TANKER SERVICES (BELL)	1054
367-14(5): STANTON REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITY OPERATIONAL REVIEW (BRADEN).....	1055
368-14(5): STAFF SHORTAGE AT STANTON REGIONAL HOSPITAL (LEE)	1056
369-14(5): REPAIRS TO HAY RIVER CENTENNIAL LIBRARY (GROENEWEGEN)	1058
370-14(5): INCOME EXEMPTIONS UNDER INCOME SUPPORT GUIDELINES (MCLEOD)	1059
371-14(5): NEGOTIATED CONTRACT FOR AIR TANKER SERVICES (KRUTKO)	1059
REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON THE REVIEW OF BILLS	1060
BILL 22: AN ACT TO AMEND THE CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES ACT:	1060
TABLING OF DOCUMENTS	1060
61-14(5): A DISCUSSION PAPER ON CANADA'S CONTRIBUTION TO ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE (ANTOINE)	1060
62-14(5): NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS WORKSHOP ON CLIMATE CHANGE, REPORT ON THE YELLOWKNIFE WORKSHOP HELD ON JUNE 13, 2002 (ANTOINE)	1060
FIRST READING OF BILLS	1061
BILL 27: AN ACT TO AMEND THE ELETIONS ACT, NO. 2 (HANDLEY)	1061
SECOND READING OF BILLS	1061
BILL 24: AN ACT TO AMEND THE WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT	1061
CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS	1061
REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE	1061
ORDERS OF THE DAY	1061

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Monday, October 21, 2002****Members Present**

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

ITEM 1: PRAYER

-- Prayer

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Good afternoon, colleagues. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**Minister's Statement 71-14(5): Native Women's Association of the NWT**

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to salute the work and service of the Native Women's Association of the NWT.

During this time of unprecedented change and growth in the Northwest Territories, the extraordinary women who make up this valuable association are to be commended for their tireless commitment to issues concerning health care, education, child care, social services and self-development in our communities. For over 25 years the strength and determination of the Native Women's Association and the wisdom and guidance of its membership have been reflected in programs and initiatives such as:

- The Native Women's Association Training Institute through which many aboriginal women have been able to graduate to a better quality of life, both for themselves and for their families.
- The Victim Services Program which helps numerous clients every year to face and address their personal difficulties and challenges.
- The Human Resource Development Program that is opening doors daily for individuals who for many reasons may not have the opportunity to advance.

Mr. Speaker, two weeks ago I was proud to address the annual general meeting of the Native Women's Association of the NWT at which a new board of directors was identified. Today I would like to thank, in particular, the outgoing members of the Native Women's Association board for their work, their sacrifice and their commitment.

- President Liza Charlo-Pieper of Yellowknife
- Margaret Ireland from the Deh Cho
- Ruth Stewart, Mackenzie Delta

Angie Lantz, South Slave

- Doreen Wesstrom, Weledeh
- Elder Helen Gruben, North Mackenzie Valley
- Elder Mary Heron representing the South Mackenzie Valley

It is the policy of the NWT Native Women's Association to alternate its leadership between representatives of the NWT's northern and southern regions. This year Gina Dolphus from Deline, a northern representative, was elected as president. She joins the other newly elected members of the Native Women's Association board:

- Vice-President, Noelene Villebrun of Fort Resolution
- Patricia McKinnon representing the Mackenzie Delta
- Agnes Silverthorn, Deh Cho
- Cece Heron, South Slave
- Lyla Erasmus, Weledeh
- Elder Julie Lennie representing the North Mackenzie Valley
- Elder Lena Pederson representing the South Mackenzie Valley

Together with existing board members:

- Secretary Treasurer, Annie Goose from Holman
- Agnes Kuptana, Holman
- Dora Duncan, Colville Lake
- Lena Gargan, Wha Ti

They will chart a course that builds on the accomplishments of the NWT Native Women's Association while maintaining their high level of commitment to the social, economic, cultural and political equality of women in the NWT. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Premier. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Antoine.

Minister's Statement 72-14(5): Kyoto Protocol

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mr. Speaker, in the Northwest Territories we are already seeing the effects of climate change. As a government we are concerned that these effects will intensify if global emissions of the gases that cause climate change are not controlled. That is why, Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories has remained actively engaged in international and national discussions on climate change for over 10 years.

To date, this government has consistently supported the Kyoto Protocol because it is the only coordinated global plan, signed by over 160 nations, to control global greenhouse gas emissions. Prime Minister Chretien stated in Johannesburg that Canada will ratify the Kyoto Protocol. Mr. Speaker, the way Canada sets out to fulfill its Kyoto obligations could impact all Canadians, the economy and the natural environment which is so important to our residents. To date, we do not know what Canada's plan is.

However, on October 26th, federal Environment Minister David Anderson and Natural Resources Minister Herb Dhaliwal, are expected to release Canada's draft climate change implementation plan to all energy and environment Ministers in Halifax. Last week Minister Anderson reconfirmed to me that a basic principle of the implementation plan will be that no one region or sector will be unduly impacted. This is critical to the Northwest Territories where unprecedented levels of economic development are resulting in increased levels of greenhouse gas production.

Our government will review Canada's plan carefully in relation to our plans for resource development. We will also look at what actions called for in Canada's plan will cost this government and northern business. We need to understand how the plan can assist the Northwest Territories in reducing our dependence on important fossil fuels through energy efficiency measures and the development of natural gas and renewable energy sources that make economic sense. We also need to see how the federal plan fits with our greenhouse gas strategy and the energy strategy that we are developing.

Mr. Speaker, our analysis of Canada's implementation plan cannot begin until we see the plan. I will report on the outcomes of the October 28th meeting with energy and environment Ministers to the Legislative Assembly and provide a copy of Canada's plan to this Legislature, which is essential before any debate takes place.

In the meantime I will table two documents today that provide the most recent information we have about what Canada is considering including in its draft climate change implementation plan. The first document is the Discussion Paper on Canada's Contribution to Addressing Climate Change that was released in May this year. This document formed the basis for consultations that took place across Canada, including Yellowknife, over the summer. The second document is the report of the discussions at the Yellowknife workshop on June 13th.

Mr. Speaker, climate change is real. It represents an unsurpassed challenge for all Canadians and Northerners. This government has, and will continue to, actively participate in the national discussions on how Canada will fulfill its Kyoto obligations. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for the Status of Women, Mr. Kakfwi.

Minister's Statement 73-14(5): Tribute to Vi Beck

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Mr. Speaker, I would also like to pay special tribute today to a strong and tireless advocate of women's equality in the Northwest Territories and an individual who has given selflessly for many years to advance issues of importance to the North's women, their families and their communities. I am speaking of Mrs. Viola Beck.

Vi's list of accomplishments, the roles she has played and the work she has done is lengthy. She served as the president of the Status of Women Council from 1999 until earlier this year. She was instrumental in the recognition of outstanding northern women through the annual Wise Women Awards. She was a valued participant in the economic development steering committee and served as chairperson of NWT Family Services. Mr. Speaker, these are just a few small examples of the many contributions Vi Beck has made to the North.

Today, however, after fighting for so many years on behalf of others in the NWT, Vi is waging her biggest battle ever -- against cancer. I would like to wish her well.

Over the years Vi's personal journey, particularly her healing and recovery from abuse, has inspired her and given her the strength to go out and help others. Two weeks ago in a News/North article she expressed her regret that this sickness was no longer allowing her the opportunity to work for others. It was a very telling comment from a woman who has spent most of her life committed to, and working for, the betterment of others.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this time today to thank Vi for her work and dedication and to wish her rest and recovery. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Premier. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The Honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

Minister's Statement 74-14(5): Minister Absent From the House

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise Members that the Honourable Roger Allen will be absent from the House today to attend the funeral of Mrs. Agnes Semmler in Inuvik. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**Member's Statement on Seniors' Fossil Fuel Subsidy**

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak today on the programs and services that we have in place to support our seniors. Mr. Speaker, the seniors' home heating subsidy program is something that our seniors look forward to, but Mr. Speaker, from the information I have received, almost 50 percent of the people in my communities are either being rejected or told to appeal the decision. In most cases, it is because of income information.

Mr. Speaker, the seniors home heat subsidy helps low-income Northerners aged 60 and over who own their own homes to offset the high cost of heating during the winter months. The criteria, Mr. Speaker, in order to receive the subsidy, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Meet the approved household income test;
- Be a homeowner and principle resident of the home;
- Must be 60 years and over and a resident of the Northwest Territories; and
- Must not be eligible for income support or social assistance.

Mr. Speaker, the problem I see with the program as it is being delivered today, is the whole concept of that information that is needed to classify yourself in regard to your income...(inaudible)...., which is to qualify for seniors heat subsidy program, the applicant's maximum allowed household income for that year, it is line 236 of the federal income tax return, will not be more than what the maximums are set at.

Mr. Speaker, everyone knows that when you file your income tax, it is for the previous year. It is not for the year that we are in. The people who apply for the fuel subsidy program is within the year that we are in. That is the injustice that I see with this program as it is being delivered today.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is appropriate as a government to clear up this injustice to ensure our seniors do enjoy their time that they have remaining with us, but also ensure that the benefit is being delivered fairly. Right now, the way it is being delivered is unjust because of having to deal with federal income tax returns. The program should be based on the year that you apply for, and the income should be based on actual income of the day that you applied for the program.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I will be asking the Minister responsible for this program questions on it later. Thank you.

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

Member's Statement on Northern Transportation Company Limited

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a company that has been plowing our

waterways throughout the North for the past 68 years. The company I am referring to, Mr. Speaker, is Northern Transportation Company Limited, or NTCL for short.

Mr. Speaker, NTCL's roots date back many years, when two Edmonton businessmen looked north and saw a business opportunity moving goods throughout the Mackenzie River watershed. Mr. Speaker, in 1931, Northern Waterways Limited opened its doors with a massive fleet of one wooden tug and two wooden barges, and offered service between Waterways, Alberta and Aklavik, Northwest Territories. In 1934, Mr. Speaker, White Eagle Mines purchased all of Northern Waterways' equipment and the infant Northern Transportation Company Limited was born.

Mr. Speaker, NTCL has witnessed many transformations, accomplishments and milestones over the years on its way to becoming the dynamic company that it is today. One such milestone was the beginning of the 1937 navigational season, when NTCL introduced the first steel hull vessels into the watershed.

Mr. Speaker, NTCL has had many ups and downs over the years and has survived competition from many other transportation companies. There have been many industrial influences that have dictated NTCL's growth and direction, such as mining, oil and gas, increase in population growth in communities, as well as pressures from the Government of Canada and the United States. In addition, World War II, the Distant Early Warning line, the CANOL project, and the movement of bulk fuels have all played a pivotal role.

Mr. Speaker, the amount of freight handled through Hay River increased dramatically in 1948 with the completion of the Mackenzie Highway to Hay River, and NTCL soon opened a terminal there. The activities of the early 1970s saw the size of the NTCL fleet increase dramatically, and its commitment to serve the exploration industry and resupply the northern communities necessitated that the company improve its retrofit facilities, and in 1973, construction began in Hay River on a massive marine maintenance building and the only in-land sinker west of the Mississippi River.

Mr. Speaker, the ownership of NTCL has also changed a number of times over the years, including becoming a Crown corporation in 1949. There was probably no more important date, Mr. Speaker, as July 15, 1985.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Delorey, the time for your Member's statement is over. Mr. Delorey.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to continue with his statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You may continue, Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, July 15, 1985, when the Government of Canada sold NTCL to the Inuvialuit Development Corporation and Nunasi Corporation. Mr. Speaker, the most important date for both myself and the residents of Hay River was June 15, 1995, when NTCL officially opened its new head office building in Hay River.

The company has been formally recognized as the NWT Business of the Year, and also received the Human Resources Canada Certificate of Merit Award for its initiatives and achievements in employment equity.

Mr. Speaker, NTCL is a vital part of Hay River's economy, employing in excess of 300 employees at peak times, and NTCL is a terrific corporate citizen.

Mr. Speaker, NTCL is Canada's only pan-Arctic marine operator with a transportation system that covers 11,000 kilometres. NTCL is now an international company with global dimensions and is continually looking for new opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, Hay River is very proud to be at the centre of NTCL's operations and I would like to wish them every success in their quest for a bright and prosperous future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Lafferty.

Member's Statement on Highway No. 3 Maintenance and Repairs

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, over the past few years, I have continually raised concerns about the maintenance, the repairs and the departmental priorities with regard to Highway No. 3. Mr. Speaker, I have repeatedly written the Minister responsible for Transportation over the last few months with specific suggestions on effective maintenance and their priorities. In his responses, the Minister lists reasons why the condition of Highway No. 3 has declined. The two main reasons include the decline of permafrost, which makes the road buckle, and an increase in traffic along this road.

He rightly points out that there is a greater need for maintenance along this road but resources made available to the department have not correspondingly increased.

What must also be considered is that the amount of gravel surface has decreased and maintenance dollars have remained at the same level. Still, the road condition continues to deteriorate. In his letter to me, the Minister stated that the maintenance methods used for the past 15 years by the department are effective. If this is the case, Mr. Speaker, then these are very low standards that are being used for Highway No. 3.

In the past, I have suggested more effective ways of maintaining this section of road because the conditions of the road have changed and it needed more attention.

Mr. Speaker, it has continually appeared to me that the department's priorities are on Highway No. 4 and the city streets over Highway No. 3 in the North Slave region. Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, I witnessed work being done on roads into the city and also on the Ingraham Trail, but there were no crews on Highway No. 3.

Although I have been assured by the Minister that all highways have the same priorities, this is not reflected in actual practice. Mr. Speaker, I will have questions on these issues later today. Thank you.

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

Member's Statement on Breast Health Awareness Week

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the Members are probably already aware by the pink ribbons they are wearing and the wonderful display set up in the Great Hall, October is Breast Health Awareness Month. The start of the campaign is marked annually by the hugely successful CIBC Run for the Cure, which this year, with the help of six other communities in the North, the city of Yellowknife may reach the \$200,000 mark in money raised for the first time.

Mr. Speaker, I believe this tremendous community generosity comes from our growing understanding of the unflinching grasp of this disease, which continues to touch each and every one of us. While still less than in the provinces, the number of incidents of breast cancer in the North is on the rise.

Mr. Speaker, fortunately for all of us, early detection and advances in treatment through education and research, are helping to keep the rate of survival on the rise as well. When breast cancer enters a woman's life, it causes long-reaching effects into the lives of families, friends, and communities. More than anything else, the woman and her family reach out and rely on the help of those who understand the full characteristics and implications of this disease in all of its manifestations, physically and emotionally.

Two organizations in the North in particular worked very closely to provide information and support in this way. NWT Breast Health/Breast Cancer Action Group and the Canadian Cancer Society. The action group began their organized activities in 1997. This is a dedicated group made up of those who had been affected by breast cancer, either directly or through a loved one. With funding from Health Canada, which will last until March, 2003, their work is in development and dissemination of materials for youth by northern women and health care professionals in every community.

Their written, oral and visual and very unique materials created specifically for the northern women by northern women are being used by groups across Canada and as far away as Africa.

The action group also works in conjunction with many organizations that have an interest in breast health and breast cancer. One example is the development of guidelines and protocols for clinical breast exams and breast self-examinations developed by the Department of Health and Social Services in consultation with the action group.

The Canadian Cancer Society, whose work includes breast health and breast cancer began their work in the Northwest Territories eight years ago. Mr. Speaker, may I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, you most certainly may. The honourable 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: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and colleagues. Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Cancer Society, whose work includes breast health and breast cancer began their work in the

Northwest Territories eight years ago. In addition to providing materials to every community in the North, the society provides all-important peer support training whereby recovered Northwest Territories cancer patients are taught how to give one-to-one emotional support to a newly diagnosed person.

The society has also just launched the Cancer Connection, a toll-free service whereby trained volunteers can provide emotional support by telephone to cancer patients in any community in the Territories.

Mr. Speaker, together these two organizations are addressing the information and the emotional needs created by the devastating disease of breast cancer. In honour of the Breast Health Awareness Month, and on behalf of everyone in this House, I would like to express my appreciation and recognize these organizations for the tremendously important contribution they make on a daily basis, for every woman and family and friends touched by breast cancer.

In particular, Ruby Trudell of the action group and Arlene Yaeeyko of the Cancer Society. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Retirement of Anglican Bishop of the Arctic Chris Williams

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a significant event in the history of the Anglican diocese in the Arctic happened in September. I am speaking of course of the retirement of the Bishop of the Arctic and the new Bishop of the Arctic being appointed, Andrew Atagotaaluk, who was installed as the first Canadian born and first Inuk Bishop of the Arctic.

This move was made possible by the retirement of long-time Northerner, Bishop Christopher Williams. He is a resident of Yellowknife, he and his family. Bishop Chris has been instrumental in the evolution of the Anglican Church in the North and I am sure if asked, he would agree that Bishop Atagotaaluk's installation was the culmination of this evolution.

Chris Williams interest in the North was peaked in college when he saw a little ceramic igloo in his friend's dorm room. It was in fact a bank, one of many sent by the diocese of the Arctic to supporters in England in an attempt to raise money for the mission's work in the Arctic.

Chris Williams left his home near Manchester, England and travelled to Canada in 1960 when he began his ministry under then Anglican Minister John Sperry of Coppermine. Chris Williams went to Spence Bay and then to Salluit, Nunavik. It was in Salluit that Chris met and married Rona Aitken, a Scottish nurse posted to the tiny Inuit community.

Over the next few years the family grew to include son Andrew and daughter Judy. Chris was soon spearheading the translation of the Bible's Old Testament into syllabics so that Inuit could read the Bible for the first time. This huge undertaking had another happy result; one of the many translators working on the project was Andrew Atagotaaluk who found God while working on the translations.

He felt the calling to become a minister himself, enrolled in Arthur Turner Training School in Pangnirtung, the first step in the journey which led to him becoming the first Inuk Bishop of the Arctic. Now that he has retired, Bishop Chris and Rona Williams will continue to live in Yellowknife, and now that he has the time he is taking up interests he never could do before because of his heavy travel schedule. He is taking up gliding and has joined the Choral Society. He is active in the Seniors' Society and will be appearing as an actor in a play called the Christmas Journey which will be on the NACC stage in November. Please help me send congratulations to both people, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Certainly, congratulations to Bishop Atagotaaluk. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Antoine.

Member's Statement on Results of the Jean Marie River Elections for Chief and Council

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as MLA for Nahendeh, I have six communities that I represent. From time to time, some of the small communities, their community leadership is the chief and council, so today I would like to speak about Sakalee, better known as Jean Marie River.

They went through an election for chief and council last month and their new chief is Fred Norwegian. As a new chief, Mr. Norwegian had set some priorities. He had said from the outset he wants to concentrate on restoring strong local leadership and maintaining more of a presence in the community. He is interested in strengthening the local leadership at all levels, and the priority for Chief Norwegian and his council is for talking about wanting to arrange training for their band members.

He also wants to make the council more effective at their job. He wants to address strengthening the band's relationship with the government departments and other service agencies.

I would like to congratulate Chief Fred Norwegian. Along with him are councillors Derek Norwegian, Raymond Minoza, Gail Sanquez, Yvonne Norwegian, Angus Sanquez and Ernest Hardisty. I would like to congratulate this new chief and council and I look forward to working with them as their representative here in the Legislative Assembly in areas and issues that involve this government as well as this Legislature. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Antoine. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Member's Statement on Breast Cancer Awareness and Fundraising Efforts

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to follow up on the comments by my colleague, Ms. Lee, on the actions that came out of Yellowknife residents and the efforts of volunteers across the Northwest Territories, almost 1,000 I understand, who ran for the cause of breast cancer awareness.

In Yellowknife, the event has been going for a number of years and I want to compliment a constituent, Mr. Speaker, Mrs. Terry Chang who is one of the founders and pioneers and great promoters of this event and fitness causes in general.

The money that we raised through this event and I understand it is something in excess of \$175 per participant, which is one of the best rates in Canada, Mr. Speaker, goes to benefit a number of projects in the Northwest Territories. One of them is a video that is in wide circulation now on breast cancer awareness. It features a number of self-help bits of information and stories from survivors that I think is especially important in helping people to deal with this devastating disease.

Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to be a part of the Run for the Cure along with 20 Members of this Assembly. There were I think nine MLAs and 11 staff members who were out there. It felt good to be able to do something positive in relation to this.

It is a disease, Mr. Speaker, that affects a number of us every year. I have a personal understanding of this, because my father was first diagnosed with this disease and a few years later he ultimately succumbed to cancer. We all understand the work that goes behind making a difference and we are all pleased to participate in it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

Member's Statement on Firearms Registration Deadline

MR. MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, January 1st, 2003 is quickly approaching. A date that should be of interest and concern to all Northerners who possess guns, as all guns must be registered by January 1st. To add to the concern, the offices of the Canadian Firearm Centres both in Yellowknife and Hay River have closed. What does this say about the federal government's commitment to ensuring timely access to information and services?

The Canadian Firearm Centre has indicated that it is preparing to send out reminder letters to hundreds of thousands of gun owners who have yet to register their firearms. They are encouraging gun owners to register via the telephone or Internet. Mr. Speaker, not all residents have access to telephones or to the Internet. Not all residents understand what consequences of not registering their guns might be. Not all residents retain English or French as their first language. Not all residents can read or write, and not all residents have access to someone who will assist them with the registration of their guns.

Penalties for not acquiring a licence can result in fines, imprisonment and seizure of guns. Possession of non-registered guns can lead to charges under the Firearms Act or the Criminal Code. Our correctional institutions are already filled. Are we willing to build more jails? Maybe this would serve as an opportunity to argue for more infrastructure dollars from the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, this whole process directly contravenes both Treaty 8 and Treaty 11 where the government promised that ammunition would be distributed annually to the Dene. The

Firearms Act itself states that nothing in the Act shall be construed as to abrogate or derogate from any existing aboriginal or treaty rights of the aboriginal people of Canada under Section 35 of the Constitutional Act, 1982. These arguments are important to many of our constituents, yet we allow them to be slowly eroded.

Mr. Speaker, during question period I will ask this government this question -- what action and support is this government willing to provide to those aboriginal people and all the residents of the Northwest Territories to ensure they do not start the New Year as criminals due to failure to register their guns. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Member's Statement on Repairs to the Hay River Centennial Library

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to speak about the critical state of repair of the Hay River Centennial Library. The Hay River library was built in 1967 and serves as the literary centre of our community, along with housing the territorial library services branch providing cataloguing, storing and circulation of territorial books and records.

The government released a technical status evaluation report in September 1998 and again in November 2001. In both of these documents, the building was identified as being in drastic need of repair. There are items identified for maintenance and repair that were rated as unsatisfactory, requiring a priority action with service life of zero years. The priority item I am most concerned with is the roof and the roofing membrane which was reported in 1998 with a zero year's service life.

The summary of the evaluation report indicates that the roof has reached the end of its duty cycle and should be retrofitted in the very near future before leaking begins to deteriorate the structure and finishes. Low levels of insulation and the absence of continuous air and vapour barriers are resulting in poor thermal efficiency and uncomfortable conditions for the building's occupants. In the Minister's response to my recent correspondence he confirms that limited service life was found in the roof system, which urgently requires upgrading and membrane replacement. It is also noted that there have been zero capital dollars spent on this building during the past five years.

I understand that these repairs will be identified in the 2004 capital funding list which I believe will delay these upgrades and repairs until 2005 or 2006. The 1998 technical status evaluation report clearly indicates that the repairs were rated as mandatory at that time. That was over four years ago. My constituents are impatient with the government's lack of action and intention given the condition of the library building and I will be referring to the issue of the aforementioned repairs in my questions to the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment in question period today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

Member's Statement on Obligations of the Federal Government for Infrastructure Funding

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our Territory last year saw economic growth of more than 20 percent. The diamond industry, together with exploration for natural gas, has largely driven this impressive growth. We are now poised to see tremendous economic impact from the development of our petroleum resources, but we must act now.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud Premier Kakfwi and Mr. Handley's continued efforts to convince the federal government that our need for infrastructure funding of the full \$133 million is critical to our viability and unquestionably beneficial to the whole of Canada's economic well-being. The Corridors for Canada proposal that the Premier presented to the federal government showed the Northwest Territories could contribute an estimated \$65 billion to the national gross domestic product. The federal government, on top of that, would also retain most of the \$17 billion that would accrue from royalties and taxes.

Mr. Speaker, the federal government has clearly failed to recognize the critical juncture the Northwest Territories is at.

AN HON. MEMBER: Agreed.

MR. DENT: By doing so, they are dooming us to fewer jobs for Northerners and are dealing self-reliance for the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, I also applaud the Premier and Minister Antoine's efforts, first in continuing to put pressure on the federal government to support pipeline development in the Northwest Territories and, second, for their efforts in Washington opposing the Energy Bill. We need a level playing field. We need security for the partners and for producers. It was good news indeed to hear that the bill that would have subsidized Alaskan gas has failed for now.

However, Mr. Speaker, we still have some serious challenges. The Intergovernmental Forum has not progressed as quickly as we had originally expected, and now we hear that the federal negotiator has no mandate to negotiate fiscal issues.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Shame.

MR. DENT: Mr. Speaker, the Aboriginal Pipeline Group has told producers that they are in danger of rescinding support for the pipeline if they cannot get the loan guarantees. We cannot hope for further progress by these groups unless there is security in their plan. The Government of Canada must come forward with the loan guarantees they so critically need. Everything that can be done on our part, on the part of the partners and producers, is in place. It is up to the Government of Canada to do their part.

Mr. Speaker, I support the government's position that the future of development in the Northwest Territories rests with our success in funding our infrastructure and offering security to producers and partners in the pipeline process. We must maintain our position and continue to pressure the federal government to respond. Our economic future depends on it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Eleventh Annual CIBC Run for the Cure

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like today to join my colleagues, Ms. Lee and Mr. Braden, in recognizing the efforts of the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation. I refer specifically to the October 6th Eleventh Annual CIBC Run for the Cure this year, Mr. Speaker -- good weather, great turn out. As Mr. Braden indicated. I think all of the local MLAs were in attendance and also present were the Premier, Minister Allen and a lot of staff from the building. Eight hundred and fifty participants in Yellowknife, Mr. Speaker, and an additional 200 in Hay River, Fort Smith, Fort Simpson, Norman Wells and Inuvik, as well as Iqaluit and Rankin Inlet.

Mr. Speaker, indeed breast cancer affects all of our lives because it affects our mothers, our sisters, our daughters and our friends. An estimated 20,500 women in Canada will develop breast cancer in 2002, Mr. Speaker, and that is a seriously staggering number.

I would like to take this time, Mr. Speaker, to recognize the top fundraisers for this year's Run for the Cure. In the team challenge the Ecole St. Joseph School Huskies raised well over \$7,000. In the women's challenge the Girl Power team raised over \$6,000. In the community challenge the NWT Reps 2002 Team raised over \$3,000 and we should be especially proud of the corporate team challenge, the GNWT Department of Health and Social Services, Mr. Speaker, raised over \$11,000. We will have to make sure that the Assembly gives them a run for their money next year. The top two individual fundraisers in Yellowknife were Dale Sooley who raised \$10,550 -- an amazing amount of money -- and Kathy Wind who raised \$4,816.

Mr. Speaker, when you compare us to other jurisdictions and other cities of similar size, it really is amazing per capital the amount of money we raised. I think Ms. Lee said that the total is coming in near \$200,000. That compares to cities like Regina that were under \$200,000 or Kelowna in and around the same amount of money and that is really great to see, Mr. Speaker.

I think that because of the number of participants in this event, the number of volunteers and indeed the entire amount of money raised we can tell that this is a very important issue to all Northerners, so I would like to ask my colleagues to join me in thanking the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation and all of the participants and volunteers who took part in this year's Run for the Cure. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, indeed. Thank you, Mr. Bell. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Steen.

Member's Statement on Additional Participants in the "Letter to the Queen" Literacy Contest

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon. Today I wish to mention in this Assembly the names of the other students from Mangilaluk School in Tuktoyaktuk

who took part in the literacy contest last spring by writing letters to Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth. All of these students were in the grade 4 to 6 categories. Mr. Speaker, third place went to Ryland Anderson, and Nolan Felix qualified for an honourable mention as well. Other students who had their stories featured were Kristen Lucas, Samantha Adam, John Taylor, Travis Anderson, and Chantell Nogasak.

Mr. Speaker, it is important that we continue to promote literacy in the NWT schools, and I wish to commend those students who took part in this contest. I also wish to pass on my sincere thanks to the teachers and staff of Mangilaluk School in Tuktoyaktuk, and especially the parents for their support in making this project a success. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Steen. Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, today I would like to recognize Melanie Simba, who is here as a chaperone for our two pages from Kakisa. I would like to thank her and welcome her to the House.

-- 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, at this time, I would like to recognize my constituency assistant, Sherry Landry-Braun, and I would like to welcome her aboard.

-- 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 Ruby Trudell, who I hope is still up there. I saw her earlier. She is the coordinator of the Breast Health/Breast Cancer Action Group in Yellowknife, and also my neighbour. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Any further recognitions of visitors in the gallery? Thank you. I will just say welcome to everyone who is here to watch their Assembly in their debates of today. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 360-14(5): Cabinet Direction to the NWT Power Corporation

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on Friday, I said I had hoped not to have to bring up the issue of the NWT Power Corporation again, but unfortunately, I was unable to ask my last set of questions, which I believe may go to the crux of the issue of confusion and fallout from the sequence of events from the past few months,

which have led to the resignation of the board of directors of the Power Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, my question today is for Minister Handley. A comment attributed to Mr. Handley states that there was some confusion in what the Executive Council minutes meant. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask Mr. Handley, was he confused about what the Executive Council minutes meant? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation, Mr. Handley.

Return to Question 360-14(5): Cabinet Direction to the NWT Power Corporation

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there was some lack of clarity in it. As a result, the Premier had lawyers in the Department of Justice provide clarification. That clarification was provided early in October and settled the matter. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 360-14(5): Cabinet Direction to the NWT Power Corporation

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when did Minister Handley become aware that the NTPC board of directors was confused about the Executive Council minutes and what they meant? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 360-14(5): Cabinet Direction to the NWT Power Corporation

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I do not think the Power Corporation board of directors felt there was any confusion in their minds until they received direction from Cabinet sometime around October 8th, I believe it was. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 360-14(5): Cabinet Direction to the NWT Power Corporation

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Obviously there was some confusion in the minds of the NWT Power Corporation board of directors because they have clearly and public stated that they firmly believe they have the support of the Minister and of Cabinet in applying for the rate zone. My question again is when Minister Handley became aware of this confusion, what did he do? What steps did he take to clarify the confusion about what the Cabinet decision meant? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 360-14(5): Cabinet Direction to the NWT Power Corporation

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When the issue of what the wording actually meant was relayed to me, then I immediately directed the Power Corporation to withdraw their single-zone application. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 360-14(5): Cabinet Direction to the NWT Power Corporation

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is probably a very key question, because I believe that the public has a right to know the answer to my last question in order to understand Mr. Stewart's resignation and his comments in the media. My question is, what did Minister Handley tell the chairman of NTPC when he approached him in July to say that they wanted to proceed with a single-rate zone. What did the Minister tell him at that time? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 360-14(5): Cabinet Direction to the NWT Power Corporation

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I believe it was actually at the end of September, or sorry, the end of June, following a Power Corporation board of directors meeting, that Mr. Stewart informed me that they intended to file a single-rate zone application. My feedback to them was that they have the authority to file the application that they were choosing to file. I was not going to argue with him. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

Question 361-14(5): GNWT Support for Firearms Owners

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Premier. I indicated in my Member's statement that the deadline to register guns is January 1, 2003, a date that is quickly approaching. In the Northwest Territories, we have many hunters and trappers who depend on guns. Also, at the same time, we have in our communities very little access to phones, and there are not too many trappers who have access to the Internet.

I would like to ask the Premier if he can tell me, prior to January 1, 2003, what action and support is this government willing to provide to those aboriginal people and all the residents of the Northwest Territories to ensure that their guns are registered? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 361-14(5): GNWT Support for Firearms Owners

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as Members are aware, the federal legislation passed some years ago. It is federal legislation. It is the responsibility

of the federal government to make information available and provide assistance, so that all people across Canada are aware of the law, the requirements to be in compliance with the legislation and assistance that may be required. There were special provisions, I think, that were provided for aboriginal people. Some years ago, the Government of the Northwest Territories had offered to work with the federal officials to make sure that our people were not unduly burdened with this draconian piece of legislation. The specific assistance that we provide at this time, I am not aware of. I will be passing this on to the Minister of Justice so that we can get proper briefing from the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 361-14(5): GNWT Support for Firearms Owners

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think we are all in the same situation as the Premier. We do not have a lot of information on this proposal because the firearms centres in both Hay River and Yellowknife are closed. It is very difficult to get access to information.

Most of our communities, the smaller communities, have limited access to phones and Internet. I would like to ask the Premier if he could tell me if we could at least provide some assistance through this government to have people gain access to phones or the Internet system in the communities.

We do have government offices. Currently they are not mandated to allow people to use their phones to make calls to the firearms centres in the south. I would like to ask the Premier to answer my question.

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

Further Return to Question 361-14(5): GNWT Support for Firearms Owners

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Mr. Speaker, many Members of this Legislature, previous Premiers and Ministers, for many years they have lobbied very, very hard against this piece of legislation. We said many, many times to then-Minister of Justice Allen Rock, do not do it. It is a bad piece of legislation. It is going to create an enormous burden on the tax payers. It is going to be cumbersome, hard to implement and very costly and provide very little benefit to the people of Canada.

The legislation went anyway. We did offer on a couple of occasions to find ways to work with firearms testing and to date I am advised that our government is no longer assisting in any aspect of this legislation. It costs a lot of money to register guns, to issue licenses, to set up this registry.

The costs, we knew, are going to be much higher than the federal government led people to believe and we know the last figures that came out a year ago were proving that point.

This government is not spending any money or any resources to assist the federal government in getting people to comply with their legislation. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 361-14(5): GNWT Support for Firearms Owners

MR. MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I do not know that I agree with the Premier's comment that this is a bad piece of legislation. I do not think that is something that is debatable anymore, but the process is very clear. The methodology that is set out to register guns is practically non-existent, even people that have access to phones, people that are well-educated, are having problems.

I cannot understand why this government would sit back and allow our people in the communities, especially the trappers and the people that depend on the land for existence, to supplement their food, to end up in a situation where they have a criminal record.

I will ask again if the Premier would consider appointing a department or some personnel to provide assistance. I do not believe we can sit back and stand idle while our people are getting in trouble. We had planned to intervene, we have time and we have the resources. Why can we not assist the people in the communities?

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

Further Return to Question 361-14(5): GNWT Support for Firearms Owners

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do recognize the tremendous difficulty people are going to have in registering their guns and acquiring licenses. Many of our people are now having difficulties getting ammunition to go hunting.

I have gone through the problem of registering the firearms I have, as well. And the paperwork that is made is not adequate, I think for many of us, because many, many people in the Northwest Territories have more than just three or four firearms in the house. The paperwork does not even provide for that.

Again, as you know our government is not getting much assistance from the federal government to meet the needs we have on roads and infrastructure and training to get ready for oil and gas and more diamond mines. We have been lobbying for two years. You add on the burden that we are facing of trying to get our people ready to meet the requirements of firearms legislation and it is just another cost that is going to be added on.

Right now, we are not cooperating with the federal government in trying to overcome the difficulties that this creates. At some point or other they have to be accountable and they have to accept full responsibility of this piece of legislation that all of us, as law-abiding citizens, have to comply with.

It is unfortunate. I agree it is not a northern attitude, to walk away from our people and deny responsibility. At the same time there is no half measure. Either we are going to help all our people register their firearms, do their paperwork and accept that responsibility; there is really no other measure to take. I do not think at this time we are prepared to accept that responsibility. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 361-14(5): GNWT Support for Firearms Owners

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I cannot believe I am hearing the Premier that he will allow a lot of people in the North because this government is unwilling to deal with a situation that they did not have a lot of say in.

I guess at the very least I would like to ask the Premier if he would meet with the representatives from the federal government to encourage them to provide these services, to either open up their firearms centres in Hay River and Yellowknife, if he would meet with them. Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 361-14(5): GNWT Support for Firearms Owners

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe it is our duty to pass on the concerns of the Members on behalf of their constituents to our Member of Parliament, to the Prime Minister and to the federal government to make them aware of the hardship and the difficulty that they are creating, because they will potentially make a criminal, even out of my mother, who is almost 84 years old and still has a 22. I do not believe she intends to register it, but she needs it every time she goes out and she has had that since she was quite a young girl.

We do have a looming difficulty that is coming up in our communities and in our families. We certainly will draw the attention of the federal government to this major concern that is developing in our communities. Thank you.

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

Question 362-14(5): Improving Conditions of Highway No. 3

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Transportation, the Honourable Joe Handley. As I mentioned in my Member's statement, I have made specific suggestions for improving the condition of Highway No. 3 and the concerns about the priorities of the department.

Recently the Minister responded to a letter of mine that stated that I was welcome to contact the maintenance staff to discuss these issues. As an MLA I have no authority over departmental staff. I am puzzled as to why I would be directed to talk with staff when they rely on ministerial direction.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister, why did he direct me to talk to the staff about my concern when he is responsible for that department? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 362-14(5): Improving Conditions of Highway No. 3

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have a lot of very experienced operators in road maintenance and road repair working out of our office and our garage facility here in Yellowknife for Highway No. 4 and Highway No. 3. I have offered the Member a number of times to go down with him to the garage and let's have he and I sit down and talk with these people who have that expertise and experience and who are working on that road almost every day.

The offer is open and I would enjoy listening to the debate between the operators and Mr. Lafferty. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 362-14(5): Improving Conditions of Highway No. 3

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am glad the Minister is willing to come along with me, but it is not my job to go and give direction to his staff. That is his job. I would like to ask the Minister, all the correspondence that we have shared back and forth, has he ever at least once given direction to his staff to deal with it? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 362-14(5): Improving Conditions of Highway No. 3

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, certainly I take all correspondence, all suggestions that we get from MLAs and from other people very seriously. With regard to how to grade a road, for example, I choose not to try to use my expertise for that one, but rely on the guys out there who have a lot of that expertise. I do not know that I have ever directed them to grade the road this way or that way. They know their business. If there is a difference with others, I would enjoy hearing both sides and would make a decision or give directions following that. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 362-14(5): Improving Conditions of Highway No. 3

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister failed to answer the question, but I will let him go with that one and go on to another line of questioning. The Minister said 15 years of effective maintenance. It depends on how you look at it. There are potholes on that road that have been there maybe six to 10 years. If it was effective maintenance, then those potholes would not be there, so if it is not working, you should be changing how you are going to do the work. I know there are a lot of ways we can sit in the maintenance shop all day long, but that is not going to achieve anything, because they will not take direction from me.

I would like to ask the Minister once again, is there any direction he has given to his staff to change the way they do things? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 362-14(5): Improving Conditions of Highway No. 3

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, again I make the offer to the Member to come with me sometime, we will go over to the garage, talk to the guys, I will listen to the debate back and forth -- because Mr. Lafferty has more expertise on how to grade roads than I do. I have guys out there who know it very well. Following that discussion, I will give direction, but up until now, I have not directed them grade the road differently, other than to do it the best way they know how. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Lafferty.

Supplementary to Question 362-14(5): Improving Conditions of Highway No. 3

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will do a different line of questioning here. Maybe I will get some answers. I would like to ask the Minister if there is any documentation of the correspondence between the Ministers and staff regarding the issues that I have continuously raised over the last three years? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 362-14(5): Improving Conditions of Highway No. 3

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, yes, we would have copies of all the correspondence. Thank you.

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

Question 363-14(5): Seniors' Fossil Fuel Subsidy Program

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes. It is regarding my Member's statement. Mr. Speaker, right now, there are roughly 30 elders who reside in their own homes in Fort McPherson. Yet, Mr. Speaker, the information that I was able to get from the department is that 15 people have applied on the program. Mr. Speaker, that is less than half the people eligible. Out of that, 50 percent of the people who did apply were denied, and basically asked to require them to appeal. The appeals process, Mr. Speaker, is 30 days. Yet, Mr. Speaker, under the existing legislation, it requires that in order to determine the household income, you must use tax returns or pay stubs as the means of getting that information.

Mr. Speaker, the program that is at hand allows a person to apply to the household income test, which means you have to file under the Income Tax Act, line 236, which, Mr. Speaker, as we all know, the income tax is filed for the previous year. The program we are talking about with regard to the seniors' home heating subsidy is for this fiscal year.

I would like to ask the Minister, in regard to this injustice, what is the department doing to ensure that the program is being delivered on the year that it is basically implemented?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Return to Question 363-14(5): Seniors' Fossil Fuel Subsidy Program

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the question. The Member raises an area of some concern. I understand that concern. We are doing our best to address it. Mr. Speaker, I would like to comment that the number of applications in Fort McPherson, my records indicate that there are 20, eight were approved, five were denied, six were incomplete applications, and one was in progress. However, with regard to the question that the Member has raised, what we try to do with the Income Support Program, and what we do do across the Territory, of course, is to apply it consistently. An issue has been raised with regard to individuals living within the homes of seniors. Our assessment, of course, is based on the total family or home income, not just for the seniors. That is how we do the assessment at the moment, Mr. Speaker. We do that through the income tax returns.

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

Supplementary to Question 363-14(5): Seniors' Fossil Fuel Subsidy Program

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the problem at hand, the way I see it, is that the federal income tax, the information that is being required right now, is the federal income tax returns. In most communities, a lot of that information is usually sent out to Revenue Canada and basically, once it is processed, you get it back. In most cases, because of the information that is required from his department to someone who may be a family member, a niece, a nephew who may be living with their grandparents, is always being questioned. Yet the income that they may have earned may have been earned in Alberta, out in a camp, or out of the community, but that is not taken into question.

I would like to ask the Minister exactly, will you do a review of the program, ensure that the assessment is only done on the household income for the year that basically the applicant is applying on?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return to Question 363-14(5): Seniors' Fossil Fuel Subsidy Program

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member is correct. The assessment for the household income is based upon tax returns, and those tax returns may be out of date. It could happen, Mr. Speaker, that we have situations where children, nieces, nephews move in with elders into their home, and yet this particular year, they do not have any income. I agree with the Member, that the assessments need to be done on the basis of current information, not one year ago when

these individuals may not have any money left, in any event, or it may have been spent for other purposes, because we do not track the expenditures, so I do agree with the Member on that. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 363-14(5): Seniors' Fossil Fuel Subsidy Program

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, under the program, it requires that receipts must be immediately notified to the department if there is any change with regard to the status in regard to the income of the household. We are already covered under that section, so I would like to ask the Minister, will we look at a different approach of assessing income based on, say, a six-month requirement, where every six months you have to go in and update your income based on a new process than depending on Revenue Canada tax returns?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return to Question 363-14(5): Seniors' Fossil Fuel Subsidy Program

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the application process needs to be more timely, Mr. Speaker, because fuel subsidies, no doubt individuals apply at the beginning of the year, hypothetically September or August, perhaps even as early as July, so I think we need to use a narrow time period in order to do the assessment, rather than every six months, because individuals may move in after...I think when the application is done, that is when the household assessment needs to be done, in my opinion.

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

Supplementary to Question 363-14(5): Seniors' Fossil Fuel Subsidy Program

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister if he can do a thorough review to ensure that this injustice has not turned away seniors in our communities from applying on this program because of the problems they have seen with the amount of information that is required just to fill out an application.

Could the Minister have his department do a thorough review on the number of people who may have applied who may not be applying today because of the problems they are seeing with the application process?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return to Question 363-14(5): Seniors' Fossil Fuel Subsidy Program

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will have our department look at this issue immediately so we can make some changes in this. I totally agree with the Member that

income for a family should be current information, not outdated information. That is my first step and we will look at seeing how we can address it for those individuals who may not have applied, but that is a little more difficult other than through the process of perhaps making it known we are concerned about this and advising our staff regionally, community-wide and so forth that we are looking at changes in this process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

Question 364-14(5): GNWT Staff Retention Policy

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister responsible for the Public Service. Mr. Speaker, recognizing the importance of maintaining a strong, confident public service, this government some time ago adopted a staff retention policy. This committed the government to the retention, retraining and development of existing staff as required to provide job security, career development and to maintain a skilled, stable and confident public service.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the staff retention policy is still in effect. I found it on our Government of the Northwest Territories web site, dated November 1, 2000.

Can the Minister confirm that the staff retention policy is still in force as shown on the web site?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat, Mr. Handley.

Return to Question 364-14(5): GNWT Staff Retention Policy

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, yes. The staff retention policy is still in effect. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 364-14(5): GNWT Staff Retention Policy

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, does the Minister and his department have a program to ensure that deputy ministers of all departments are aware of all the provisions of the policy?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 364-14(5): GNWT Staff Retention Policy

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, all of the deputy ministers have been briefed on the expectations of each of them with regard to implementing the staff retention policy.

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

Supplementary to Question 364-14(5): GNWT Staff Retention Policy

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Knowing that that briefing is taking place, is the Minister satisfied that all departments are in compliance with the policy?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 364-14(5): GNWT Staff Retention Policy

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I have not checked, and I do not check each day to make sure that everybody is in compliance. Certainly now that the Member has raised this issue I will find out if there are some situations where they may not have understood or for some reason are not in compliance.

They know what the policy is, they should be following it. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Final supplementary, Mr. Dent.

Supplementary to Question 364-14(5): GNWT Staff Retention Policy

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, section 20 of the policy sets out the requirements for annual reports to this Assembly, yet I have been unable to find any such report. Can the Minister, while he is looking into whether or not deputy ministers are in compliance with the policy, also look into and tell me when any department has complied with section 20 of the policy?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 364-14(5): GNWT Staff Retention Policy

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, yes I will check on that one while I am taking a look at the compliance. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

Question 365-14(5): Co-Payments for Medical Travel

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on Friday, October 18th my Member's statement was on the issue of copayment. This issue, Mr. Speaker, has been a hardship for Hay River residents for far too long. I feel that it is bad enough when certain simple medical procedures cannot be provided in Hay River, never mind making residents of Hay River pay \$250 to fly to Yellowknife so that they can be treated.

As I stated in my Member's statement, there is no physiotherapist in Hay River. This is a government-funded position. Will the Minister consider waiving the copayment for residents of Hay River who have to fly to Yellowknife to receive physiotherapist treatment? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 365-14(5): Co-Payments for Medical Travel

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I indicated to this House in the last session, we have a review of supplementary health programs currently underway. I have looked at the first draft. I recognize the issue that my colleague for Hay River North raises and we are struggling to look at how we can accommodate that specific segment of the population that is not covered, either by the federal government or other insurance policies.

We are looking at that particular issue. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 365-14(5): Co-Payments for Medical Travel

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is money provided to the Hay River Community Health Board for a physiotherapist. Would the Minister please advise this House, what happens with that money when the physiotherapist position remains unstaffed for a period of time? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 365-14(5): Co-Payments for Medical Travel

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the authorities are given budgets that they are expected to operate within. They have the latitude to move funds accordingly. We do not normally deal with them on a position by position basis. We want to ensure that all the statutory and legal requirements are met and that hopefully through good, prudent management that there are no deficits run on a yearly basis.

They have the obligation to operate within that block fund. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 365-14(5): Co-Payments for Medical Travel

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the Minister indicate whether he would be willing to agree to use that money that is for that physiotherapist position, to cover costs for medical travel for Hay River residents that have to come to Yellowknife to receive the service? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 365-14(5): Co-Payments for Medical Travel

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, the issue of copayments is one where it is a program across the North. It gains us about \$1 million back from the federal government through our non-insured health benefits, so we have to be very careful. If we change the program and absolve a certain segment of the population of paying it, then the federal government will as well walk away from that payment.

We are trying to come up with creative ways to make sure no particular segment of the population because they are not covered by other insurance programs. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Final supplementary, Mr. Delorey.

Supplementary to Question 365-14(5): Co-Payments for Medical Travel

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, it all comes down to money I guess, as long as the residents are paying we are fine with that. I would like to ask the Minister, it is my understanding that there is more than one physiotherapist in Yellowknife that are seeing residents from outside, especially from Hay River.

Would the Minister be willing to transfer a physiotherapist to Hay River until Hay River is successful in recruiting one for Hay River? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return to Question 365-14(5): Co-Payments for Medical Travel

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that would be an issue that I would be prepared to bring to the table to discuss with the other members of the Joint Leadership Council which is all the board chairs, myself and the deputy minister.

That would be something I would not just make a unilateral decision on in the confines of this House, but I will make sure that it does get passed on.

The key is to make sure that we try to provide the appropriate services to all people in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

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

Question 366-14(5): Contract for Fire Suppression Air Tanker Services

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the RWED Minister. There are references in the local media today to RWED's water bombing contract. I would like to ask the Minister if indeed it was a Cabinet decision to enter into a negotiated contract with the current operator instead of going with public tender? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 366-14(5): Contract for Fire Suppression Air Tanker Services

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is true, the Cabinet has authorized me as the RWED Minister to enter into a negotiated contract with Buffalo Airways for doing the water bombing.

The negotiations are ongoing, they are not concluded. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 366-14(5): Contract for Fire Suppression Air Tanker Services

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe seven years ago when this contract was originated it was tendered out. I am wondering why, if it was tendered at that time, we are choosing to go with a negotiated contract this time. Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 366-14(5): Contract for Fire Suppression Air Tanker Services

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, seven years ago there was a request for proposals I believe, I can stand corrected. I was not involved at that time, but at this time here we looked at the operation of Buffalo. Back in 1995 this government began the process of further developing a northern capacity for the aviation industry related to forest fire management and since that time Buffalo Airways has made significant progress in developing the service needed by RWED. They have the ability to provide a level of service needed in forest fire management and as such I moved a decision paper forward to Cabinet and Cabinet agreed to give me permission as Minister of RWED to enter into negotiations. We have entered into negotiations and we are currently negotiating, and the result of the negotiations should be coming forward soon. Based on that, we will decide on what we are going to do. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 366-14(5): Contract for Fire Suppression Air Tanker Services

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand that the government and the Minister possibly were concerned that a southern outfit might get the contract which would affect northern jobs and northern business, but I am wondering why the department -- if that is the case -- would not choose to go with an invitational tender and just look for capable northern companies and invite them to tender? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 366-14(5): Contract for Fire Suppression Air Tanker Services

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I guess the reason for that is cost. I think if we award the contract, depending on the success of these negotiations, is still subject to it. We have not decided what we are going to do yet, but some of the arguments are based upon trying to negotiate a better cost, and we think it will provide the most cost effective solution to meeting the requirements for air tanker service. The infrastructure is in place. The human resources are in place. The company also has the required financial resources. I think that if we go for the public tendering process -- we are trying to negotiate a lower cost of operation.

Since all the infrastructure and human resources are in place I am told by departmental officials that if we do go public tendering the costs might be higher than what we are trying to negotiate at this point in time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Your final supplementary, Mr. Bell.

Supplementary to Question 366-14(5): Contract for Fire Suppression Air Tanker Services

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a number of concerns about this but I would just like to ask the Minister, given that this government recently waived the BIP in an effort to find a cost-effective solution theoretically for the phase 2 of the jail and now it has decided to sole-source a negotiated contract in order to find a cost-effective solution for water bombing, can the Minister not see the hypocrisy here, Mr. Speaker?

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

Further Return to Question 366-14(5): Contract for Fire Suppression Air Tanker Services

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am only concerned about the water tanker contract at this point in time, and upon extensive review with the department -- I know it is a tough decision some of us have to make -- the decision here is to try to get a better price by negotiating. If that is not the case -- as I said earlier we are negotiating and if we do not get that then we will have to decide at that point in time which way we are going to go. Thank you.

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

Question 367-14(5): Stanton Regional Health Authority Operational Review

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question this afternoon to the Minister for Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger, and it is about the operational review that was ordered last month into the Stanton Regional Health Authority. Mr. Speaker, the call for this came under some criticism from myself and my colleagues, particularly in the area of whether it would be able to offer an independent assessment of the situation at Stanton.

My question is, given that there is one deputy minister, the secretary of the Financial Management Board, and two of the authority board members on this, what assurance can the Minister give that the review will indeed offer objective advice and solutions? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Return to Question 367-14(5): Stanton Regional Health Authority Operational Review

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the proof will be, as they say, in the pudding. The contractor hired to assist to bring the skills necessary to do this job has no vested interest in the operation one way or the other. The work will be done. I will be looking at the final results and I will be bringing them forward to the public, to Cabinet and to this House when they are completed and then we will see what has been recommended and what has been discovered through the extensive work and interviews that have been undertaken. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 367-14(5): Stanton Regional Health Authority Operational Review

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Okay so those are answers that we have heard before and the Minister has stated his position, but a number of areas were outlined for examination. I would like to ask, Mr. Speaker, why a couple of significant areas -- and I will list them as governance and the accountability of the authority and its relationship with the government -- why were those areas not specifically outlined for examination in the review? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return to Question 367-14(5): Stanton Regional Health Authority Operational Review

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have just completed a rather extensive review of the whole governance issue when I first became Minister with the establishment of the Joint Leadership Council, the establishment of the Joint...(inaudible)...Committee and how we were in fact going to do business as a system. This particular review is an operational review of the day to day operations and management operations at the Stanton Territorial Hospital and that was the focus of the operational review. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 367-14(5): Stanton Regional Health Authority Operational Review

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, what is the schedule for the reports, progress and delivery? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return to Question 367-14(5): Stanton Regional Health Authority Operational Review

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the planned time frame is that I should have a report on my desk in the very first part of November. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Your final supplementary, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary to Question 367-14(5): Stanton Regional Health Authority Operational Review

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Finally then, when will the public and especially the staff and management at Stanton get the opportunity to see this report? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return to Question 367-14(5): Stanton Regional Health Authority Operational Review

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are going to be dealing with this with considerable dispatch. We want to do it carefully and in the right way. We want to make sure that people are duly informed. I want a chance to look at it. I want a chance to look at it with the department. I want a chance to look at it with the Stanton board, as well as Cabinet. Once we get the report we will lay out a plan and hopefully it will not take very long to do this, Mr. Speaker, so I would assume some time in November we would be moving forward on the recommendations. Thank you.

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

Question 368-14(5): Staff Shortage at Stanton Regional Hospital

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today goes to the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services and it is with regard to the shortage of staff at the Stanton hospital. Mr. Speaker, back in September when I raised the question with the Minister regarding the shortage at the hospital, the first response from the department and the authorities was a denial of the existence of a problem. I believe that, as I stated elsewhere, the way in which the Minister has gone about addressing this issue has been as much of a problem as the difficulty in finding a solution.

Mr. Speaker, at that time the hospital had about 16 shifts over 10 days not filled for October -- this was back in September -- and there were about 13 shifts not filled for November. It is my understanding that they have been filled at least for October, I do not know what is happening in November.

I would like to know from the Minister, how has he been able to fill these shifts? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Return to Question 368-14(5): Staff Shortage at Stanton Regional Hospital

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there has never been a denial that there are staff shortages affecting the health and social services system in the Northwest Territories. What was said is that we are maintaining service levels and providing services so that no Northerner is without appropriate health and social services.

Mr. Speaker, the board and the staff at the Stanton authority work on a daily basis to ensure that all shifts are covered. They use overtime, they bring in casuals, they use locums. There is a constant review being done to make sure that all those shifts are covered and being provided.

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

Supplementary to Question 368-14(5): Staff Shortage at Stanton Regional Hospital

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe the record will show that the Minister has denied that there were... but I do not want to get into the debate about who said what and where.

What I am concerned about is the extra costs of the tax payers that the government is incurring as a result of a lack of hiring and long-term planning that should have taken place and the government has ignored for many, many years.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister just mentioned that these shifts are being filled by overtime, casuals and locums. I would like to know if the Minister knows how much this is costing, what the dollar figure is in the accommodation and extra wages being paid, and travel for all these additional staff that are being brought into the Territories to fill these shifts. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return to Question 368-14(5): Staff Shortage at Stanton Regional Hospital

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Stanton Board and the Stanton staff are working within the budget they have allocated.

If there are extraordinary costs, they will be considered forced growth and we will look at those costs to make sure we are providing the services necessary to the people of the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 368-14(5): Staff Shortage at Stanton Regional Hospital

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the Minister's response to me, regarding the same issue of shortage of staff, he has

written to me to say that he is expecting that 26 new nurses will be put into the system; 26 new graduates from the college. Does he have a plan as to how these new nurses are going to be incorporated into the specialized area of ICU or emergency responses that are highly specialized? What is his plan to incorporate these nurses? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return to Question 368-14(5): Staff Shortage at Stanton Regional Hospital

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is our intention to hopefully sign return of service agreements with the graduates. We recognize that experience will be a factor in some cases so we want to look at mentorships, we want to make sure that we have the offer open for those who want to work in Yellowknife but we are also trying to recruit outside of Yellowknife, those communities that are short nurses there as well.

We want to make use of specifically mentorships, and we want to make sure that we at least have a job offer for the graduates. I know many are from Yellowknife and the requirement for 26 nurses is not there right now, but there is a constant need as we have seen for casuals, so they will be part of a casual pool that will help give them experience. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 368-14(5): Staff Shortage at Stanton Regional Hospital

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if the Minister talks to those who are actually in the front line, they would tell him that these extra measures that are being taken by the Minister will not be the answer in the short term or in the long term.

Mr. Speaker, they would also tell him that this review is nothing but an exercise in vain. Mr. Speaker, the Minister indicated that he will have this report of the review by the end of October. Now it is conveniently in November.

Why is it that we cannot have any kind of debate by this delay tactic?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return to Question 368-14(5): Staff Shortage at Stanton Regional Hospital

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of the main reasons is that we have ended up interviewing far more people than was initially planned for and we do not want to deny anybody the opportunity to come forward and provide their feedback.

So we are taking the little bit of extra time that is necessary to make sure that we do not deny anybody that access. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Question 369-14(5): Repairs to Hay River Centennial Library

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement today I expressed my concerns regarding the lack of attention being given to the Hay River Centennial Library building maintenance and repairs.

I would like to ask the Minister, why were these essential repairs not embarked on in the previous year's budget? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Return to Question 369-14(5): Repairs to Hay River Centennial Library

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we had to do an assessment because the assessment that was done previously was dated, so we had Public Works and Services go in and deal with the issue of the condition of the building.

That report was received. Basically it said that the building was in good shape other than the roof and the air circulation system, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 369-14(5): Repairs to Hay River Centennial Library

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if the roof was no good five years ago and was in urgent need of being repaired, it kind of stands to reason that five years later it is still going to need to be repaired because nobody did anything to it in the last five years. That is a brilliant deduction.

Mr. Speaker, would the Minister now be in a position to seek this work on the Hay River Centennial Library to commence immediately, in order to maintain the condition of this very valuable asset? This is a real key centerpiece in the downtown core of Hay River.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return to Question 369-14(5): Repairs to Hay River Centennial Library

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was not a brilliant deduction, Mr. Speaker, it was brought to my attention about a year, year and a half ago. The report was there but there was never any action taken on it. I am being a good Minister, I am always interested in acting on things that need to be acted upon.

So, when I met with the library people and the honourable Member was there at the time, there were a number of issues. We are dealing with those issues, including some administrative issues. We put new curtain up to address the whole issue of the heat in the building, so that happened. We addressed the issue of providing another office space for the local librarian for Hay River. Now we are addressing the issue of the roof. The roof is of concern to us, Mr. Speaker, but because of the capital monies that that will require, we have to follow a process and I am following that process.

We did the assessment on it, we are trying to get a handle on the amount of money it will take. We cannot start this tomorrow, but I assure you I am very concerned about it because it is a valuable asset. We need to ensure that we protect that asset so we are moving forward, Mr. Speaker, in terms of trying to identify the funding for it. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 369-14(5): Repairs to Hay River Centennial Library

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, this government puts tremendous amount of emphasis in its capital planning process on the protection of assets, and I just do not think that this asset is going to be protected and I do not think this is good stewardship of the assets of the territorial government to allow something like a roof to go unrepaired because it can affect the entire structure of the building, as we all know.

I do not think that the projected date for working on this roof is satisfactory. When would the Minister commit to having this work commence? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return to Question 369-14(5): Repairs to Hay River Centennial Library

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have to follow the budgetary process, the business planning and then the budget process in the House, so depending upon the decisions made by this House with respect to money allocation, that is the time we can address the issue, Mr. Speaker. I have placed some urgency on this. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 369-14(5): Repairs to Hay River Centennial Library

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, by the time this roof gets repaired it will probably need to be replaced. I will ask the Minister then, will he compare the cost of replacing this roof to the cost of building a second floor on the building, to see if it is economically viable?

-- Laughter

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return to Question 369-14(5): Repairs to Hay River Centennial Library

HON. JAKE OOTES: I must say, the honourable Member for Hay River certainly likes to ensure her projects get done and I congratulate her on that. To add a second storey onto this building is a totally new project, Mr. Speaker. As the Member...

-- Interjection

... to replace the roof, but you also have to put walls around the building and heating and ducting systems and electrical. So it is not as simple as just replacing the roof, Mr. Speaker.

The roof is an issue and I understand the Member and yes, I am concerned and we are we are, hopefully will be able to move forward within the next half-year. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

Question 370-14(5): Income Exemptions Under Income Support Guidelines

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for several years now, I have heard my colleagues ask questions to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment regarding the exemption for the impact benefit agreement payments. I am happy to hear that the Minister is considering it. I wanted to know if he could tell us what else is being considered as exemptions for income support?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Return to Question 370-14(5): Income Exemptions Under Income Support Guidelines

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the IBAs have been pointed out by some of the Members. They may have relationship beyond what is evident, and extra intrinsic information is one of some concern to me, so that is what I am looking at, but it is restricted to the IBAs, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 370-14(5): Income Exemptions Under Income Support Guidelines

MR. MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, we are all aware that the residential school issue, the victims of residential school abuse are being considered for compensation. I would like to ask the Minister if any payment or compensation is made to these victims, will that also be subject to clawback from his department? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return to Question 370-14(5): Income Exemptions Under Income Support Guidelines

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was asked that question by way of a letter from the social

envelope committee, I believe, and how we would treat that. We did respond to that letter. I believe the process is that we will not claw back or deduct the amount for pain and suffering, but lost wages, I believe, is being considered. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 370-14(5): Income Exemptions Under Income Support Guidelines

MR. MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, will the Minister make that letter available to the rest of the Members of this House?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return to Question 370-14(5): Income Exemptions Under Income Support Guidelines

HON. JAKE OOTES: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I will get the Member a copy of that letter by tomorrow or the next day. Thank you.

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

Question 371-14(5): Negotiated Contract for Air Tanker Services

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. It is in regard to the water bomber negotiated contract that is presently being looked at by Cabinet.

Mr. Speaker, under the existing policy of this government, one of the assessment processes that it has to follow is to ensure that the MLA or the affected MLAs are notified or support letters are given to support such an initiative. I would like to ask the Minister exactly, has he received any support letters from any MLAs on this negotiated contract?

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

Return to Question 371-14(5): Negotiated Contract for Air Tanker Services

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, like I said, we are now in negotiations with the company. To this date, I have not received any support from the MLAs, or any MLAs, to this process. Like I said, we are still in the process of negotiating at this point in time. We have not finalized any decisions. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 371-14(5): Negotiated Contract for Air Tanker Services

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, my understanding is before any negotiations proceed, you have to follow the policy. The policy is clear that you have to have certain support letters in regard to a municipality, a Member of the Legislative Assembly, or the

affected communities. I would like to ask the Minister, are you not following policy in regard to this negotiation?

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

Further Return to Question 371-14(5): Negotiated Contract for Air Tanker Services

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are still in negotiations at this point in time. I have not approached any of the MLAs for any of their support at this point in time since we are still negotiating. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 371-14(5): Negotiated Contract for Air Tanker Services

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister again, knowing that there is a policy in place that clearly identifies the process that is laid out to allow for negotiated contracts, that one of the processes, before the assessment even takes place, you have to allow for MLA input, Members' input from this House, to ensure they support the initiative or they disagree with the initiative, and in order for it to proceed, you must receive that support.

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

Further Return to Question 371-14(5): Negotiated Contract for Air Tanker Services

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the honourable Member is right. One of the processes is that MLAs in the respected area where this contract is going to operate from should have support for this initiative. I have not approached the MLAs yet. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 371-14(5): Negotiated Contract for Air Tanker Services

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as we all know, there are a lot of aviation companies in the North. A lot of them have been around for some time. They too should have an opportunity to consider this area of interest. I would like to ask the Minister, has he also required information from the affected airline companies who may be affected by this negotiated contract?

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

Further Return to Question 371-14(5): Negotiated Contract for Air Tanker Services

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Buffalo had approached us to see what the possibilities are to get into the negotiated contract. We looked at what they had to

offer and worked with the department and we moved forward from there. At that point in time, there was no interest from any other aviation. Since this was an unsolicited approach, since that time, I have received one e-mail from one of the operators, inquiring about what we are doing.

Like I indicated before, we are still negotiating. We have not come to a final decision on this, and it is still subject to what sort of conditions we are able to reach.

I did not know what exactly the financial arrangements are going to be at this point in time, so I still need to see this, and also need to know if there are any other aviation companies out there who are still interested in pursuing this. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. The time for question period has ended. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to opening address. Item 10, petitions. Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

ITEM 12: REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON THE REVIEW OF BILLS

Bill 22: An Act to Amend the Child and Family Services Act

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Standing Committee on Social Programs has reviewed Bill 22, An Act to Amend the Child and Family Services Act, and wishes to report that Bill 22 is ready for consideration in committee of the whole as amended and reprinted. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Antoine.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 61-14(5): A Discussion Paper on Canada's Contribution to Addressing Climate Change

Tabled Document 62-14(5): National Stakeholders Workshop on Climate Change, Report on the Yellowknife Workshop Held on June 13, 2002

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mr. Speaker, I have two documents I would like to table today. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document, entitled "A Discussion Paper on Canada's Contribution to Addressing Climate Change."

Mr. Speaker, I also wish to table the following document, entitled "National Stakeholders Workshop on Climate Change Report on the Yellowknife Workshop Held on June 13, 2002." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Item 13, tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Motion 12-14(5) will stay on the order paper until tomorrow, at least tomorrow. Item 17, first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 17: FIRST READING OF BILLS**Bill 27: An Act to Amend the Elections Act, No. 2**

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker,

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that Bill 27, An Act to Amend the Elections Act, No. 2, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. We have a motion on the floor. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour, please signify. Thank you. All those opposed? Thank you. Bill 27 has had first reading. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 18: SECOND READING OF BILLS**Bill 24: An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act**

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker,

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, that Bill 24, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill amends the Workers' Compensation Act to increase the amount of a yearly maximum insurable remuneration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. We have a motion. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill. Question has been called. All those in favour? Thank you. All those opposed? The motion is carried. Bill 24 has had second reading. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to a committee. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters; Tabled Document 35-14(5), Bill 1, with Mr. Krutko in the chair.

ITEM 19: CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): I would like to call committee of the whole to order. We are considering Tabled Document 35-14(5) and Bill 1. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move we report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): We have a motion on the floor to report progress. The motion is not debatable. All those in favour? Those against? The motion is carried. We will rise and report progress.

MR. SPEAKER: The House will come back to order. Item 20, report of committee of the whole. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, your committee would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the committee of the whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. We have a motion on the floor. Do we have a seconder for the motion? The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre seconds the motion. All those in favour?

Thank you. All those opposed? Thank you. The motion is carried. Item 21, third reading of bills. Item 22, orders of the day. Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Mr. Speaker, meetings for the rest of today of the Standing Committee Accountability and Oversight, followed by a meeting of the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development, and for tomorrow at 9:00 a.m. of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight, Caucus at 10:30 and again of Accountability and Oversight at 12:00 p.m.

Orders of the day for Tuesday, October 22, 2002:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motion
15. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
 - Motion 12-14(5), Appointment of Directors to the Northwest Territories Power Corporation
17. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 20, Legal Registries Statutes Amendment Act
 - Bill 25, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2001-2002
 - Bill 26, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2002-2003

- Bill 28, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, No. 2

18. Second Reading of Bills

- Bill 27, An Act to Amend the Elections Act, No. 2

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

- Tabled Document 35-14(5), Social Agenda: A Draft for People of the Northwest Territories
- Bill 1, Human Rights Act

20. Report of Committee of the Whole

21. Third Reading of Bills

22. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Tuesday, October 22, at 1:30 p.m.

-- ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 3:30 p.m.