



**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

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Day 6

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The Honourable **Samuel Gargan**, Speaker

MEMBERS PRESENT

Honourable Jim Antoine, Honourable Goo Arlooktoo, Mr. Barnabas, Honourable Charles Dent, Mr. Enuaraq, Mr. Erasmus, Mr. Evaloarjuk, Honourable Samuel Gargan, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Henry, Honourable Stephen Kakfwi, Mr. Krutko, Mr. Miltenberger, Honourable Don Morin, Honourable Kelvin Ng, Mr. Ningark, Mr. O'Brien, Mr. Ootes, Mr. Picco, Mr. Rabesca, Mr. Roland, Mr. Steen, Honourable John Todd

ITEM 1: PRAYER

God, may your spirit and guidance be in us as we work for the benefit of all our people, for peace and justice in our land, and for constant recognition of the dignity and aspirations of those whom we serve. Amen.

SPEAKER (Hon. Samuel Gargan):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Mr. Ng.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 23-13(4): Weedless Wednesday

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today is Weedless Wednesday. Every year during National Non-Smoking Week, people are encouraged to give up tobacco for a day on Weedless Wednesday.

We hope that, not only will people give up nicotine for the day, but that they will also take the time to think about how they are harming themselves, their family and their community by smoking. We all know about the negative effects of second hand smoke, and we are all aware of the health costs the system incurs as a result of cigarettes and other types of tobacco.

Some of the trends we see, with regard to tobacco use in the north, are very disturbing. Northerners are some of the heaviest smokers in the country, and some of the heaviest smokers in the north are our young people. The message I want to share with our youth on Weedless Wednesday, is that tobacco is harmful and it is addictive. We need to ensure that everyone understands the links between tobacco and lung disease, cancer, and other diseases.

Mr. Speaker, all of us know someone who has struggled with the burden of trying to quit smoking. Today and everyday, we should take the steps necessary to make sure our young people never start smoking, and we should continue to provide assistance and support to friends and family members who are trying to quit. Mr. Speaker, I encourage all tobacco users to take advantage of Weedless Wednesday. Stopping for one day is the first step towards giving up for good. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Ministers' statements. Mr. Kakfwi.

Minister's Statement 24-13(4): NWT Diamonds Project - Environmental Agreement

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, on January 6, the Government of the Northwest Territories, the Government of Canada and BHP Minerals Canada Ltd., signed an Environmental Agreement for the NWT Diamonds Project. Representatives of the affected Aboriginal communities were active participants in the development of this agreement, which is the first of its kind in the Northwest Territories. It is legally binding and addresses environmental issues raised during the public hearings held in Yellowknife last winter, which are not addressed by the water licence, land leases and other regulatory instruments.

I would like to highlight some of the important aspects of this Environmental Agreement. It establishes an independent monitoring agency to monitor the environmental effects of the NWT diamonds project and the regulatory performance of both governments. The monitoring agency includes four members appointed by the Dogrib Treaty 11

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Council, Yellowknives Dene First Nation and Lutselk'e First Nation, Metis Nation and Kitikmeot Inuit Association and three members jointly appointed by the GNWT, federal government and BHP.

The agreement provides for the development of environmental management plans, both during the construction and operational phases of the project. These plans will deal with air quality, wildlife management, traffic management, waste management, reclamation and closure, and environmental monitoring.

These environmental management plans and monitoring programs will be reviewed and approved by government, as well as the monitoring agency. They will ensure that there are no adverse effects to the environment through the life of this project.

The agreement also provides for the protection of archaeological sites and ensures that the traditional knowledge of Aboriginal people will be incorporated into all environmental plans and programs.

The Environmental Agreement requires that BHP provide security deposits totalling \$11 million for non-water-related obligations. In addition, there is a financial guarantee of \$20 million from the parent company. Furthermore, the water licence requires a security deposit of \$21 million. These deposits, which total \$52 million, can be used by government if BHP fails to meet its obligations under the Environmental Agreement or water licence.

Mr. Speaker, this agreement, along with the Socio-Economic Agreement signed by this government in October and the Impact Benefits Agreements with the Dogrib Treaty 11 Council, Yellowknives Dene First Nation and Lutselk'e First Nation, set a precedent for future development projects in the

Northwest Territories. They demonstrate this government's commitment to providing economic opportunities for northern residents, while maintaining the environmental quality of our land and waters. Later today, at the appropriate time, I will be tabling the Environmental Agreement. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Kakwi. Ministers' statements. Mr. Arlooktoo.

Minister's Statement 25-13(4): Rent Scale Moratorium

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to announce an important change of implementation of the social housing rent scale used by local housing organizations in the NWT.

While the rent scale has been successful in encouraging higher income tenants to become more independent through home-ownership, there is a concern about the difficulties lower income working families may still be having with rent payments.

Mr. Speaker, within the context of the overall social policy framework, the Ministers of the social envelope have agreed to work together to bring forward a proposal which will result in two things. First, it will include an equitable and consistent assessment of all income support and subsidy programs, including those for fuel, water and utilities. It will also include a proposed rental structure which provides incentives for low income earners and income support recipients to make productive choices. Officials from the Housing Corporation and Education, Culture and Employment, have already begun work on this strategy, which we will bring back to Cabinet by July 1, 1997.

Mr. Speaker, I have heard the message from the communities and my fellow MLAs that housing support needs to be better coordinated with income support and overall community wellness. I agree and have instructed the Housing Corporation to include this as part of their review.

I look forward later this year to the input from the Members of this Assembly on options which will be developed. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Arlooktoo. Ministers' statements. I would like to do my ruling today on the point of order raised by Mr. Dent. I want to provide the House with my ruling on that point of order. The point of order raised by Mr. Dent is contained on page 77 of the edited Hansard. Mr. Dent's point of order was based on a comment made by the Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Henry in his Member's Statement also made on November 29th, 1996, and contained on page 58 of the edited Hansard. Mr. Dent's point of order was that Mr. Henry, in his comments, had indicated that he had misled the public by alleging that the government had taken a particular position on a Draft Constitutional Package for the western Northwest Territories. Mr. Dent also contended, in his point of order, that Mr. Henry had labelled the government irresponsible. It was on these two points that I am basing my ruling.

It was not until the House resumed sitting yesterday, that I provided the opportunity to Mr. Henry to respond to the point of order. Mr. Henry in his comments, which are contained on Page 209 of the unedited Hansard, indicated that his comments were not intended to say the government had endorsed the proposed package. The Member also indicated, in speaking to his point of order, that and I quote, "I did

not say the government was irresponsible but instead that, if the government endorsed the current constitutional proposal, that action would be irresponsible."

I reviewed carefully Mr. Dent's interpretation of Mr. Henry's comments, and likewise Mr. Henry's comments and find, as has been the case in other rulings that have been made, that the House, on occasion, may accept two contradictory interpretations of comments made. I refer to Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms, 6th edition, Citation 494, and I quote:

"It has been formally ruled by Speakers that statements by Members respecting themselves, and particularly within their own knowledge, must be accepted. It is not unparliamentary temperately to criticize statements made by Members as being contrary to the facts but no imputation of intentional falsehood is permissible. On rare occasions, this may result in the House having to accept two contradictory accounts of the same incident."

Based on my review of the comments made by both Members, I do not find that there is a point of order and I am sure both Members accept and respect each other's interpretation and views on this matter.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Picco.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On Publication of a Negotiated and Sole-Sourced Contract Listing

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, over the past 15 months and as per my motion of May 13th, I have been continually pressing the government on disclosure of sole-sourced and negotiated contracts. Mr. Speaker, as I said before, this is not a vendetta or a witch hunt, but a mechanism, as it were, to make the government accountable for public money spent for the public good. Mr. Speaker, as a result of repeated requests, the Chairman of the Financial Management Board has initiated modifications to the production of the quarterly contract report, which has been published for the past year. To date, information contained in the quarterly report has included the contractor name, service provided and the contract cost. I understand that the reports are now being modified to indicate whether contracts are awarded as

negotiated, tendered or sole-sourced. It is also, I understand, anticipated that required programming with the computer programs to facilitate this will be completed later this month. Mr. Speaker, needless to say, I am quite pleased by

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this development and would like to congratulate the Chairman of the FMBS for initiating this procedure.

-- Applause

MR. PICCO:

There is a caveat to this, Mr. Speaker. In the meantime, an updated list of negotiated contracts of the first three quarters has been provided to me. Until such time as the report modifications are completed, similar information on sole-sourced contracts cannot be made available without an inordinate amount of time being expended by the staff. Thus, I still wait for the aforementioned computer programmers to develop the program so that the sole-sourced contracts will be similarly treated. Mr. Speaker, the accountability factor, the issuance of knowledge-based sources, the provided logistic, as well as administrative information that is available on the information highway, has finally seen fit to stop at the GNWT. I will continue to monitor these developments and I will be navigating this information highway to occasionally drop in on the sole-sourced and negotiated contracts domestic abodes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Picco. Members' statements. Mr. Krutko.

Member's Statement On Child Custody Matter Involving Removal from Canada

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My statement today reads, Bring my children home. You and your husband separate and you get legal custody of your two children. You agree that your husband can take the children to his homeland, which is the Czech Republic, for a year to visit his mom, who is sick. After a year is up he refuses to bring your children home. You contact the RCMP, who lay charges of abduction and the only legal standing is in Canada. You contact the politicians to see if they can help, only to be told that it is a civil matter. You write to your children and

they say we want to come home. Roberta Vaneltsi is a Gwich'in from Fort McPherson who resides in Whitehorse. She is the daughter of William and Joanne Snowshoe of Fort McPherson.

In 1994, she and her former spouse, Peter Currey, were awarded joint custody of their two children, Oman and Pierre, by the Order of the Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories. The Order also contained a special provision to allow Mr. Currey to take his children to the Czech Republic for one year. He was required under Canadian law to return the children to their mother as of July 15th, 1995. He has informed Roberta that he is not intending to bring the children back to Canada. The children are Canadian citizens and Roberta is also a status Indian who has not seen her children for three years. Oman is 11 and Pierre is eight. I would like to note that his birthday is January 20, basically, his birthday was two days ago. He just turned 11.

The Czech Republic does not fully recognize the legal -- under the International Child Abduction act and the Canadian Court Order to the Czech authorities. The Yukon Department of Justice has intervened. Mr. Speaker, can I have unanimous consent to conclude my statement?

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member for Mackenzie Delta is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Do I have any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Krutko, you have unanimous consent.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Yukon government, Department of Justice has intervened by implementing a Canadian-wide warrant on Mr. Peter Currey's arrest. They contacted the Czech politicians to intervene and contact Mr. Currey to attempt to ask him to return the children to their mother. Also, Roberta is trying to acquire funds to acquire a lawyer in the Czech Republic to represent her in that country. In the meantime, she is waiting to hear back from the different jurisdictions. She has written letters to the Prime Minister of Canada, acquired letters from all the parties in Ottawa and also from the Yukon government leader. At the opportune time I will ask the Premier and the Minister of Justice a question on this matter.

In closing, if anyone can help make cash contributions to Roberta, they can contact Robert Alexi, at the

Gwich'in office in Fort McPherson, (403) 952-2330, or fax him at (403) 952-2112. Your help would be greatly appreciated. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Members' statements. Mr. Roland.

Member's Statement on Proposed Closure of the Delta House Alcohol and Drug Rehabilitation Centre

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, honourable Members, yesterday I spoke on the issue of the closure of Delta House. Should I say proposed? Mr. Speaker, Delta House was the result of many concerned citizens of Inuvik and the area. For 20 years it has provided a much needed service to the residents of the Inuvik region. Mr. Speaker, as I stated yesterday, I am very concerned with the proposed closure of this facility, especially when we look at the statistics that come from the area, of drugs and alcohol. Mr. Speaker, in the Northwest Territories, we consume alcohol at a very high rate compared to the rest of Canada. The people that do drink, 15 years and over, that drink five or more drinks when they do sit down for a drink, is 25 percent, compared to the rest of Canada which is 8.8 percent.

When we take this into consideration, I am concerned that we would be considering a reduction in funding in this area. When research shows for every dollar we spend on chemical addictions, we save \$2 to \$10 in health care costs. Mr. Speaker, yesterday we heard the Premier say, effective leadership sometimes means bringing change and making hard decisions. Decisions, that in the short term, may seem to hurt more than they help, but in the long run, will change lives for the better. Mr. Speaker, the same could be said, that decisions made in the short term could have long lasting negative impacts. I believe that we, as Members of this Assembly, need to be sure that the decisions we make are truly going to have a long lasting, positive impact. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Members' statements. Mr. Ootes.

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Member's Statement on Civil Servants Affected by Division

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to commend the government for its recent work on our response to the NIC report, Footprints in the Snow 2. In our last sitting, I

pressed for assurances that the government reply would contain statements of support for civil servants affected by division. Draft versions of the document were circulated to us shortly before Christmas, and I was glad to see my concerns had been adequately addressed. The final version of the report was released a couple of weeks ago, the statements of support were adopted unchanged. Mr. Speaker, this government is now on record saying all civil servants in the eastern Arctic should be automatically transferred to the Nunavut government upon division, with no changes to the terms and conditions of employment. It has also said the Nunavut government should give hiring priority to qualified headquarters staff who will lose their jobs during the creation of the new territory.

Finally, this government has said it should work with the interim commissioner of Nunavut to create a staff transition plan as well as protocols for dealing with labour relations and personnel issues. These statements are reasonable, fair, and firm. They address the issues that are close to me and many of my constituents. They are consistent with the points I argued during our last sitting. As a side note, I would like to thank the Chairman of the Division Secretariat for sending an e-mail message to all government employees outlining sections of the Footprints 2 response that deal with the civil service. The briefing went out early in the new year, several days before the report was released. Steps like this are important at a time when government workers face uncertainty in job security due to deficit reduction and division. It shows we do not take staff for granted, and will do our best to inform them of developments at the earliest possible opportunity. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Members' statements. Mr. O'Brien.

Members' Statement on Passing of Arviat Resident Jasper Gibbons

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is with regret and sadness that I announce the sudden death of Mr. Jasper Gibbons, of Arviat. Mr. Gibbons was working in Baker Lake as an airport mechanic. He passed away last evening. My sincere condolences to his wife Rosie, the family, friends. Mr. Speaker, Jasper was not only a constituent, but also a good friend of mine. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. O'Brien. Members' statements. Mr. Miltenberger.

Member's Statement on Role of the GNWT in Monitoring NWT Water Quality

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the last year, I have made a number of statements in this House regarding the issue of water, things like the Northern Basin River study and most recently the effects of high water, contributed to in a major way by the Bennett Dam. In the

course of becoming involved in this particular issue, I have become concerned about the role the GNWT plays in how our waters are regulated, monitored and cared for.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of bodies, mainly within the federal government, which meet to discuss issues related to

NWT waters. However, the Government of the Northwest Territories is usually not represented. We rely, it seems, on federal DIAND staff to protect our interests. Even when there is a seat available for the GNWT on some of the technical committees, we still tend to rely on DIAND to protect our interests.

Mr. Speaker, I see two major problems with relying on the federal department to take care of our waters. First, the waters are important to all northerners, and policies and decisions made surrounding the water should be made based on the direction of the NWT government, who are elected to take care of the people's interests.

Secondly, the department currently looking after our interests, DIAND, is actively cutting its resources in this area. My understanding is, they used to contribute about \$750,000 a year to the water survey people. This has been cut by half, with more possible cuts coming. In addition, when you add these cuts to

the cuts made by NTPC no longer funding the monitoring stations, the overall service provided by water survey has been cut in the neighbourhood of 35 to 50 percent.

The water survey offices, the people at the grass roots who deal with this issue, do the monitoring, work in the communities, have themselves been affected. There have been two offices closed Canada-wide. One of them was in Fort Smith. In addition to these, further cuts, I understand, are projected for the communities that still have these services, places like Simpson, Inuvik, and Yellowknife.

Mr. Speaker, I spoke yesterday on the problems of the Bennett Dam facing the people of Thebacha and the western Arctic. The GNWT cannot continue to rely on the federal government to take care of our water and our interests. As a government, we need to be directly involved in issues relating to water and be an active voice on behalf of all the people of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Rabesca.

Member's Statement on Loss of Power Generation in Rae Lakes

MR. RABESCA:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, you may have seen in Monday's edition of News/North, as well as heard on the radio, Rae Lakes suffered from having both of their large power generators stop working. By losing both generators within a day or two, this meant that the community had to rely on a third smaller one to provide power for the whole community. The community was restricted to their power usage and the Northwest Territories Power Corporation worked hard to find replacement parts and then repair the units. During the same period, Treaty 11 Council was scheduled to meet in Rae Lakes. This meeting was cancelled and relocated to Rae and all delegates were able to fly there and proceed with a very good informative week of meetings.

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The end result was that very little, if any, damage was done due to the restricted power in Rae Lakes. Thanks to the hard work and dedication of the Power Corporation's staff, everything is back to normal again. At this time I would like to thank the Minister and his staff that worked hard to ensure no danger,

suffering, or damage occurred during this crucial time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Rabesca. Members' statements. Mr. Henry.

Member's Statement on Search and Rescue Equipment for Adventure Tourists

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the strongest selling points for the NWT tourism is our miles of untamed wilderness. In small but growing numbers people are coming from around the world to experience our clean air and open spaces, from the challenge of the Nahanni to the splendour of the Pangnirtung Pass. Some come in organized tours and stick to the beaten path. We also attract many adventurers looking for a new challenge.

Most of the time, there are no problems, however, each year people get stuck in the bush and/or out on the land. They get lost, hit bad weather, or have trouble with their equipment. Eventually, most people are found and recover from their experience. But when people get into trouble on the land, there are costs associated with finding them. A single search and rescue can cost thousands of dollars. As more tourists come north, the potential liability for search and rescue will increase.

Recently, I noticed an ad for a gadget called a Stat Find 406. This is a pocket-sized personal locator beacon. It is designed to work in the arctic conditions and sends a strong signal for accurate position location. Mr. Speaker, as a service this government could make these locators available for tourists to rent. They could be provided through our parks operators or through local RCMP detachments where many tourists already file their travel plans.

For a small fee we could provide tourists with a bit of insurance against this possible trouble. This small expenditure would give individuals some peace of mind about their personal safety if problems do come up. It would make it easier for us to locate those who do not come back when they are expected to. More importantly, this little gadget could reap savings in human lives and in reduced search and rescue costs. The pocket locator is a little thing which could be set off and be of great benefit to tourists and government alike. I hope the capable staff of the RWED

department will take a look at this type of innovation which can make the NWT a more attractive place for tourism. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Henry. Members' statements. Mr. Erasmus.

Member's Statement on Impact of Misdiagnosed Eyeglass Prescriptions

MR. ERASMUS:

I would like to make a statement on the state of eyecare in Yellowknife. Mr. Speaker, a few years ago I got a prescription and a new pair of glasses here in Yellowknife. Soon after that when I started reading, after about five or ten minutes I started getting headaches. At this time, I was in school in Saskatoon. I had all kinds of specialists there, and I was getting all kinds of tests done. And luckily enough, since I was status, the federal government was paying for it, otherwise the territorial government would have had a huge bill. The long and the short of it is, finally I got a new pair of glasses and, low and behold, I could read again without getting headaches.

Last year, at this time I got a new pair of glasses. I was here this time and I started getting dizzy as soon as I looked down or looked sideways and things like that. I thought it was because my eyes were changing, you know when you have to hold your paper like this. A couple months later, I broke my glasses and told the optometrist this, so he checked out my prescription on his little machine there, and checked it with the one from my old pair of glasses, which I had to wear because I was getting my glasses fixed. What he told me was that I had better go to the ophthalmologist right away, because I had a stigmatism or something in my eye and my new prescription changed it so instead of looking this way, I was looking sideways, which was what was making me dizzy. Sure enough I went back, got my eyes checked again, and I had to get a new right lens because it was the wrong diagnosis.

We were discussing it upstairs and there are a couple of other Yellowknife MLAs who had similar problems. One of them had such a bad problem, not this time, but the previous time, that he was getting worried about going back to the ophthalmologist here. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. The Member for Yellowknife North is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Do we have any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Erasmus, you have unanimous consent.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I personally know an elder who was misdiagnosed. We know that she was misdiagnosed because she was told here that there was no hope for her eye sight, that she would have to slowly go blind. When she was down south for something, I think she went to Lac St. Anne, or something, she was in Edmonton, so she stopped in and saw a doctor and she got a pair of glasses. Lo and behold she could see. We are not talking miracles here, Mr. Speaker. This elder now refuses to go to the ophthalmologist here. Her children have to pay to send her down south to get her eyes checked.

Another person I know quite well, got three pairs of glasses here because each successive pair of glasses did not work properly. He thought he had to have corrective surgery, this new laser thing, you know. He was kind of worried about that so he thought he would try one last thing. He went to the West Edmonton Mall, and saw the ophthalmologist there. In an hour and half, he had his eyes checked, he had a new pair of glasses and he has had no problems ever since.

Mr. Speaker, talking to other people, I have heard a lot of other complaints, which I will not talk about here. I do not think that the people of the Northwest Territories should be afraid to go get their eyes checked here and get a pair of glasses, and

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not have to go down south to get glasses. Something should be done about this.

I am also asking if there are other people out there who have had similar problems, their own personal problems -- I do not want to hear about rumours -- would you please contact me. My phone number is 669-2295, and talk to Vi. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Members' statements. Are there any further Members' statements? Mrs. Groenewegen.

Member's Statement On Confidentiality of Budget
Related Documents

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to speak on a subject that is very, very secretive. That is the issue of confidentiality. As Members of this House, we are admonished to respect the sacred trust placed on us by being involved in the business plans and participating in budget preparations. Is it okay to say budget, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, it has occurred to me recently that many people are party to this highly confidential information. People such as mayors, municipalities who are consulted about capital plans, capital budgets, contracts which are placed in newspapers subject to budget approval, prior to the budget even being released. We have our Minister of Health and Social Services on CBC Northbeat talking about the closure of a facility subject to a budget that has not been released yet.

I just wanted to bring this issue of confidentiality up today, and report to our constituents that we are bound by confidentiality as MLAs. However, you might hear much more than you would be able to get from us, because we respect this, by talking to just about anybody in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Krutko.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE
GALLERY

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize at this time Chief Morris Blake of the Tsiigehtchic Charter Community and also his CEO Brian Kelly.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Welcome to the Assembly. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Roland.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 77-13(4): Concerns with Proposed Closure of Delta House

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question will be directed to the Minister of Health and Social Services. In my Member's Statement, I have stated I am concerned with the proposed closure of Delta House. I would like to ask the Minister, what numbers he used to base the closure of a facility on? When we look at cost of alcohol and drug dollars to all the facilities in the Northwest Territories and a savings at the end of the day when it comes to health care dollars. Right now we spend, I am not sure exactly of the amount we spend on it, but for every dollar we spend, and research has stated, we save \$2 to \$10 in health care dollars. I would like to know what the Minister thinks when we are reducing funding to alcohol and drug, are we truly going to save money at the end of the day? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Ng.

Return To Question 77-13(4): Concerns with
Proposed Closure of Delta House

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the savings in this case will be from the anticipated savings from the financing that we give to Delta House as it stands at this time. There would be incremental costs as a result of possible additional travel costs to other residential treatment facilities if clients were to choose facilities outside of the Inuvik area, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Roland.

Supplementary To Question 77-13(4): Concerns with
Proposed Closure of Delta House

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the decision put forward as the proposed closure of Delta House, was the cost of treatment looked at in comparison to the savings that would be done, or otherwise saved, by helping

people to be less dependent on the system when they become ill and so on? For every dollar, we spend, we save money when it comes to health care costs. So, the closure of a facility reduces the amount of treatment available. Did the department look at savings there, or impacted savings, for the long term? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 77-13(4): Concerns with Proposed Closure of Delta House

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, no, we did not look at that because of the fact that we were not eliminating the availability of treatment that would result from the Delta House closure because of the fact that we would still provide treatment, as I indicated earlier, for residential type of treatment if it was required in other facilities which we finance. We would still provide treatment and programming, whether at the local or regional level, through some of the funding that

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would still be going into communities in the Inuvik region, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Roland.

Supplementary To Question 77-13(4): Concerns with Proposed Closure of Delta House

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When you look at savings, that is what we are trying to do. In the budget reduction area, research states that we save a lot of money when it comes to the affected families that go through treatment and receive help, four times the average family that is affected by alcohol. Could the Minister tell me, when it comes to the proposed closure of Delta House, what kind of time-line are we looking at when it comes to people trying to access treatment? Will there be waiting periods? Has that been looked at? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 77-13(4): Concerns with Proposed Closure of Delta House

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that was a factor in the overall review of some of the alcohol and drug reform initiatives that we are going under currently. We do not anticipate, initially, that the 12 beds that will be unavailable as a result of the Delta House closure, that there will be significant backlog created from that because of the fact there are empty spaces available currently in the other residential treatment facilities, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Supplementary. Final supplementary, Mr. Roland.

Final Supplementary To Question 77-13(4): Concerns with Proposed Closure of Delta House

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On the topic of the waiting period. As a result of the closure of any facility, could the Minister inform me that once the facility is closed, is there available space to take up the demand for space as of April, if this goes ahead? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Final Return To Question 77-13(4): Concerns with Proposed Closure of Delta House

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, I believe that yes, there will be space available on April 1st in other residential treatment facilities to accommodate any of the needs arising from the Inuvik area, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Picco.

Question 78-13(4): Concerns with Fuel Fungus

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as usual, I have a few questions today. I will start off today with a question to the Minister. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I questioned the Minister for the Power Corporation about fuel that had been infected with a fungus or bacterial growth. This fungus or bacterial growth was found to be present in the Iqaluit fuel system. Mr. Speaker, I would like to address some questions to the Minister responsible for petroleum services, Mr. Arlooktoo. Can the Minister inform this House that, on the tender call for fuels in the specs we had requested, and by we I mean the Government of the Northwest Territories, we had requested in those specs prior treatment of this fuel for high bacteria as part of the tender for the purchase of said fuel. The point being, Mr. Speaker, so that the Minister understands where I am coming from here, is that the fuel purchased, I am led to believe, is a cheaper grade fuel not on the world market, and this could result in contamination of all fuel that has come to the eastern Arctic on the past sea lift, which could result in the contamination and problems with not only the generators in the NTPC plant, as demonstrated, in people's home furnaces, and that could be a major problem. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation, Mr. Arlooktoo.

Return To Question 78-13(4): Concerns with Fuel Fungus

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, as the Minister responsible for the Power Corporation explained yesterday, the bacteria that is now manifesting itself in Iqaluit, at that particular plant, is present in all fuels. It is present in every fuel in Yellowknife, Iqaluit and everywhere. It is not a unique thing. What has happened, as I understand it, in this power plant there is a unique system of reheating or warming the fuel for the power plant. That has caused the bacteria to wake up from its dormancy and to multiply and cause problems. That is my understanding of it. Just to make sure, what we have done is taken samples from other tanks in Iqaluit, and we will be getting results next week. I can give that to the Member at the same time I give him details on what we require on the tender call.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Just to correct myself, that was the Minister responsible for Public Works and Services. Oral questions. Mr. Picco, supplementary.

Supplementary To Question 78-13(4): Concerns with Fuel Fungus

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that was a recapitulation of everything that was said yesterday with the Minister for the Power Corporation. My question was, and I will repeat it again. Will, POL, tell me, tell the House, tell the people of the Northwest Territories, in the specs that we asked for the tender call, for the fuel that was purchased for the sea lift in the eastern Arctic, did we specify that there would be treatment for high bacteria as part of the spec, the bioside is the technical term, treated fuel in the spec? This seems to be the problem. I am trying to get this out here in the open for the people of the Northwest Territories and for the eastern Arctic to understand. My question was not answered. I am asking the same question again, and I just repeated it.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arlooktoo.

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Further Return To Question 78-13(4): Concerns with Fuel Fungus

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, as said, I will try to find out that information and give it to the Member. As Minister, we have fairly broad information on some of these contracts and not the specifics. This is one detail I will find out from the department and pass it on to the Member.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 78-13(4): Concerns with Fuel Fungus

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is getting to be *deja vu*. Mr. Speaker, in this instance where the fuel was found to be contaminated with this fungus, I understand from technical people who informed me

that the fuel purchased for Iqaluit in this instance, has turned up in Iqaluit, I understand, that this could be in Coral Harbour, it could be in Rankin, it could be anywhere else in the eastern Arctic because of the same fuel purchase. So, my question again to the Minister now is, if this is the case, and we have already uncovered one instance, what is the liability to the Government of the Northwest Territories in respect to the purchase of this fungus-bacteria infected fuel?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arlooktoo.

Further Return To Question 78-13(4): Concerns with Fuel Fungus

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker. I think that a lot of that question is hypothetical. What I said earlier was the bacteria is in a dormant state in all fuels, but in Iqaluit, at this particular plant, at that particular generator, there is a unique system that preheats the fuel to be used on the generator. Because the fuel is heated, that is what we believe caused the bacteria to multiply. If that is the case, it would be an isolated matter, which we think it is. Just to make sure it is an isolated matter, we have taken samples from other tanks. Until we have that, I cannot answer any more of the Member's questions.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Final supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Final Supplementary To Question 78-13(4): Concerns with Fuel Fungus

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the Minister has indicated in this instance, it is speculation right now on what caused the fungus growth. It could have been the reheating, it could be the allegation that I am trying to make here, that the fuel has been tainted because we purchased cheap fuel. My supplementary question then to the Minister would be, because of this instance, will the GNWT, on future purchases of fuel, specify in the specs that we request bioside treated fuel so that this does not happen again? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arlooktoo.

Final Return To Question 78-13(4): Concerns with Fuel Fungus

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, I am unsure at this time whether the purchase or the quality of the fuel had anything to do with this problem. I cannot answer, negatively or affirmatively, that question.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. A point of privilege. Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Mr. Speaker, the Minister answered the questions by saying that he could not answer the question. Do I take it from your reading, because you did not say, does that mean that the Minister was taking my last supplementary question as notice? He was not answering it.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. No, the question was not taken as notice, nor do you have a point of privilege. Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Krutko.

Question 79-13(4): GNWT Intervention into Child Custody Matter

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Premier. It is in regard to my opening statement, in regards to Roberta Vanelsi and the case that she finds herself in, regarding her children being abducted and taken to the Czech Republic. If there is anyway that the Premier can intervene in this matter on behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories. Also, my constituency and my riding feel that it is an important issue, because the court order was issued in the Northwest Territories, which should be followed up by this government. Would the Premier tell me if he is willing to look into this matter? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Premier.

Return To Question 79-13(4): GNWT Intervention into Child Custody Matter

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would be pleased to take this issue up with the Minister of Justice, and I will discuss it with him, and I will get back to the Member.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 79-13(4): GNWT Intervention into Child Custody Matter

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Maybe, the Premier could, while he is talking to the Minister of Justice, possibly write a letter on behalf of the members of my constituency, because there have been letters sent from Piers McDonald, government leader of the Yukon, the former government leader of the Yukon, John Ostashek, and Audrey McLaughlin, the MP for the Yukon. I believe Mr. Ovide Mercredi is involved, and the Prime Minister's office has been notified of this. Could he possibly send letters on behalf of this government on this issue?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

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Further Return To Question 79-13(4): GNWT Intervention into Child Custody Matter

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not fully aware of the issue the Member has raised today, about the lady whose husband took their children to the Czech Republic. I will raise the issue with the Minister of Justice, get briefed on the whole issue, and then, if possible, we can do that as a government, we would be pleased to do that. I will let the Member know, one way or the other, by Friday if we can write this letter or not. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Miltenberger.

Question 80-13(4): Enhancement of GNWT Role in Water Management

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister responsible for Renewable Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. Could the Minister indicate whether he thinks there is a need to enhance the GNWT's involvement in issues relating to water as I raised in my Member's statement today in this House? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister responsible for Resource, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Kakfwi.

Return To Question 80-13(4): Enhancement of GNWT Role in Water Management

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, it has always been the view of the Government of the Northwest Territories that the people of the north, particularly the aboriginal people, should be, in the first instance, the decision makers in regard to the way in which water is used and managed in the Northwest Territories. There should be some assurance given by neighbouring jurisdictions about the water that flows into our water systems, that some assurance be given as to the quality, and that there is good management upstream from us.

Unfortunately, it is true that it is the federal government residing in Ottawa that is still, for all intents and purposes, the owners and the managers of land and water in the Northwest Territories. Yes, it is our view that, at the earliest occasion, we should, with the support of aboriginal people, seek to have the jurisdiction for inland waters transferred to the Government of the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary To Question 80-13(4): Enhancement of GNWT Role in Water Management

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very glad to hear the Minister's response. Could the Minister indicate how he anticipates or envisions that happening? What sort of time frame? Given the critical nature of this issue that without water, we are a desert, and things are happening to us as we speak. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return To Question 80-13(4): Enhancement of GNWT Role in Water Management

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, the obstacle right now is the fact that, in the southern part of the territories with the Deh Cho, the Dogrib Treaty 11 Council, the Metis, the South Slave, as well as Treaty 8, there are no land claim settlements reached, nor is there any substantive progress in negotiations of the self-government agreements. There is opposition at this time, or at least a reluctance, by certain aboriginal groups to support the transfer of any further responsibilities from Ottawa to the Government of the Northwest Territories. Somehow, the logic is that it is better to leave the controls outside of the Northwest Territories in Ottawa, than it is to support an arrangement where a government that is accountable and answerable to the people of the communities, including the constituents of the aboriginal organizations themselves, is not an attractive option at this time.

That is the obstacle. If we had our way, we would push to work out an agreement, at the earliest instance, with the aboriginal peoples of the Northwest Territories, to see successful conclusion of transfer talks, devolution talks, and jurisdiction over inland waters, all lands in the Northwest Territories, management, ownership of oil and gas and minerals, and the administration of that regime, would be transferred to this government at the earliest occasion. That is what we will strive to do. However, there are certain obstacles in the way at this time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary To Question 80-13(4): Enhancement of GNWT Role in Water Management

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we attempt to deal with this fairly political issue, and the complication as outlined by the Minister, there are, by my understanding, various tables even with the technical level, where there is space for the GNWT where we can at least have a voice and be part of the decision-making to make our concerns known. Would the Minister concur that it may be in our benefit to start having representatives wherever it is possible? To in

fact further our concerns and be aware of what is happening, so that we are in front of the parade and not under it on the water issues? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return To Question 80-13(4): Enhancement of GNWT Role in Water Management

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, it is true that, although we have no responsibility for water, that all responsibility for water primarily resides with different federal departments at this time.

We do have a responsibility to work on behalf of our people to ensure that everything is done to ensure water quality, and to maintain a healthy and viable ecosystem in the different water basins that exist in the Northwest Territories. We have worked, for instance, with the federal government on setting

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up several monitoring systems. We have worked with the federal government in Alberta, doing a study that would look at how we can work co-operatively to look at the type of research and monitoring that should be in place in dealing with water systems that we share with Alberta.

We have worked for a number of years with the governments of Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, Yukon and the federal government to come up with a transboundary water agreement that would have everyone commit, along with aboriginal peoples, to work in a cooperative fashion to ensure that everything is done to share information and to share the responsibility for managing and monitoring the waters that we all share in this particular part of Canada. Yes, we do not have any direct responsibility, but we have been active in taking every opportunity given to us in the last few years to actively lobby and take part in studies and programs that involve waters. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Final Supplementary To Question 80-13(4): Enhancement of GNWT Role in Water Management

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government is to be applauded for its efforts in that area. However, my information is, for example, that currently there are technical committees that meet on a regular basis that have a space for the territorial government. While we respond to issues, we do not seem to be at the table on a regular basis for the day-to-day network that is so important on this kind of issue. Would the Minister check to see if there are other possible avenues that have not yet been explored, in terms of enhancing our presence in this critical area, while we are trying to resolve the other more political issues he referred to earlier? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Kakfwi.

Final Return To Question 80-13(4): Enhancement of GNWT Role in Water Management

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, we would be very pleased to do that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Ootes.

Question 81-13(4): Transfer of Inmates from Southern Institutions

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Justice. Last fall, I received a report from a group of inmates in a southern institution and I spoke on that the last session, with regard to concerns those inmates have with respect to their incarceration in the south. I understand that the territorial government has signed a service agreement with the federal government covering northern inmates now in southern institutions, and according to my information, this program will see 15 inmates transferred to the Salvation Army for programs to help them prepare for full parole. My question to the Minister is can he provide an update on this program for us?

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Justice, Mr. Kelvin Ng.

Return To Question 81-13(4): Transfer of Inmates from Southern Institutions

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we do have an exchange services agreement with Correctional Services Canada, primarily where we take on some of the federal inmates in our institutions. Also, in that agreement that was signed off for this current fiscal year, Mr. Speaker, is a cost sharing program for a sexual offender/relapse prevention program, which both federal and territorial inmates have access to, for inmates that are serving time here in the Northwest Territories, primarily at the Yellowknife Correctional Centre, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 81-13(4): Transfer of Inmates from Southern Institutions

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the Minister could tell us if he is pursuing other agreements with the federal government that will create an opportunity for northern offenders to serve their time here in the Territories?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 81-13(4): Transfer of Inmates from Southern Institutions

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, It may not necessarily be a new agreement. I am looking at the possibility of trying to expand on our current arrangement with Correctional Services Canada, to look at the possibility of upping the amount of Federal inmates that we can take into our correctional facilities in the Northwest Territories, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 81-13(4): Transfer of Inmates from Southern Institutions

MR. OOTES:

Yes. Could the Minister perhaps clarify that a little more for me? Is he working on a long term plan to have inmates serve here in the Territories, but also look at the possibility of establishing an institution here in the Territories, since we are dealing with upwards of 80 or 100 inmates in southern institutions?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 81-13(4): Transfer of Inmates from Southern Institutions

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the primary goal, as it stands now, is to try to repatriate some of the northern inmates who are in southern institutions. They are federal inmates because they have a sentence of two years or more. It would have to be with the agreement of the federal government, Correctional Services Canada. With

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respect to whether or not those individuals, if they were to be productive, these discussions, whether or not they would be housed in a federal institution in the north is another matter. Of course, there are significant costs to that type of an initiative.

At this time, the federal government from our understanding, is not interested in looking at that. However, it is an area that I will certainly discuss more, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mrs. Groenewegen.

Question 82-13(4): Changes to the NWT Highways Load Limit

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Transportation. As everyone knows, we have invested millions, if not billions of dollars, in highway infrastructure in the Northwest Territories, particularly in the southwest corner there are a lot of

highways. I do have frequent occasion to drive on those highways. Quite often I drive back and forth from Hay River. I would like to compliment the Minister's department on the wonderful condition the roads are generally in. The stretch from Rae to Yellowknife would be an exception to that. But I was wondering, has the load limit for NWT highways been altered or reduced recently?

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Transportation, Mr. Antoine.

Return To Question 82-13(4): Changes to the NWT Highways Load Limit

HON. JAMES ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to thank the honourable Member on behalf of the people that work for Department of Transportation for the compliment that she has given them in the way they maintain the highway. Secondly, no the road limit has not been altered on the highway. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 82-13(4): Changes to the NWT Highways Load Limit

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I could not help but notice the recent increase in transport truck traffic on this road, even to Edmonton and back, over the holidays. The truck loads of cement coming this way looked like very heavy loads. What, I am wondering if any, precautions or measures have been taken to ensure that we preserve the investment we have in the condition of our roads, given the mining companies increased volumes of traffic?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 82-13(4): Changes to the NWT Highways Load Limit

HON. JAMES ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, this year I am told that the amount of traffic is going to increase substantially as a result of the building up of the diamond mine infrastructure north of Yellowknife. As a

result of that, we are going to see a lot of traffic and a lot of tonnage being hauled over our existing highway system. Mr. Speaker, I am told by the people in the department that during the winter months when the roads are frozen, it is the best condition ever in the north. As a result of that, once the roads are in good condition and are frozen, they will not be subject to any increased damage. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 82-13(4): Changes to the NWT Highways Load Limit

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just one more question and I was curious, do the load limits and restrictions in the Northwest Territories coincide with those in the adjoining provinces of British Columbia and Alberta? Once you cross over the territorial border is there a difference in load limits because of the different conditions here, landscape, topography with muskeg and so on? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 82-13(4): Changes to the NWT Highways Load Limit

HON. JAMES ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the north here our roads are not yet up to the level of development as they are in the provinces south of us in Alberta and BC. So, as a result of that we have our load limit which is lower than surrounding jurisdiction but not that much lower and I could get back to the honourable Member with the exact differences in the load limits. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. O'Brien.

Question 83-13(4): Need for a Back-up Generator in Arviat

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister responsible for Arctic Airports. Mr. Speaker, a week or so ago my community of Arviat experienced a power failure during blizzard conditions. Approximately 60 families were left in the dark, in the cold for two days. The Power Corporation tried in vain to fly in a linesman to rectify the problem but unfortunately the plane could not land. The plane could not find the runway because the runway lights could not be turned on due to the power failure. Mr. Speaker, my question is or my concern is, there could have been a number of serious situations occur here, whether it be a medevac or whatever. As a result of not having a backup generator, the lights could not be put on therefore the plane could not land. The linesman had to travel by bombardier from Rankin, which took another eight hours.

For most of the weekend these 60 families were left without heat, lights and so on. My question to the Minister is, will the Minister review with the hamlet the possibilities of installing a backup generator for the airport to avoid further serious conditions, such as these? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Transportation, Mr. Antoine.

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Return To Question 83-13(4): Need for a Back-up Generator in Arviat

HON. JAMES ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, I will look into the situation that the honourable Member is very concerned about. I agree it is a very serious condition. If there is no backup system then you could run into a lot of serious problems. Yes we will look into it. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Henry.

QUESTION 84-13(4): Infant Mortality Rates in the NWT

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Late last year the Edmonton Journal ran an article regarding infant mortality rates

across Canada. Figures for the NWT were double that of the national average. My question is to the Minister of Health, Mr. Ng. Is he aware of the rates for infant mortality in the Northwest Territories? If, in fact, the rates as quoted by the Edmonton Journal of 12 percent or 6.3 percent higher than the national average, which would be 12.9 are accurate? Is the Minister aware of these figures?

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Ng.

Return To Question 84-13(4): Infant Mortality Rates in the NWT

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I cannot say definitively that I have full knowledge of what those rates are right now. I can say that, in line with some of our other status indicators that are historically well above national averages, it would not surprise me if our infant mortality rates were over that of other jurisdictions, and over the national average as well, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Henry.

Supplementary To Question 84-13(4): Infant Mortality Rates in the NWT

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that the Minister may not have that information available at his fingertips. Could I ask if the Minister would, through his department, assess the numbers of infant mortality rates in the Northwest Territories compared to the rest of Canada, and report back to the House, along with actions that his department are taking to try and reduce these figures? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 84-13(4): Infant Mortality Rates in the NWT

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would be glad to report that back to the honourable Member and all

the Members of this House. I can say that, with respect to some of the initiatives to try address generally, not just infant mortality rates, but some of the poorer health status indicators that we have, the Department of Health along with our partners in the social envelope are working on a number of initiatives and one of the major ones being early childhood intervention into trying to develop programs to provide funding at the community level to promote preventative measures that will hopefully lead to better overall health status indicators and better overall health of our constituents, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Erasmus.

Question 85-13(4): Quality of Eyecare in the NWT

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is also to the Minister of Health and Social Services. It is concerning eye care in the NWT. Mr. Speaker, in my statement earlier, I forgot to mention that the only place to get your eyes checked in the north is Yellowknife. So, in other words we are servicing all NWT residents through our ophthalmology department here. I know the Minister does not wear glasses himself, so he has not had to go through this hair raising experience of getting a wrong diagnosis. I would like to ask the Minister if he could check into why there are so many people having wrong prescriptions, and if he could report back to this House. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Ng.

Return To Question 85-13(4): Quality of Eyecare in the NWT

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if there are concerns out there, and I agree with the honourable Member, if they are of that nature that he is alluding to, and there are specific complaints or concerns, I would be more than willing to take that up, and look into the matter and advise the honourable Member and the House accordingly of those problems and some corrective measures, if it were found that there were problems in dealing with issue, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Erasmus.

Supplementary To Question 85-13(4): Quality of Eyecare in the NWT

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be getting people to submit the experiences they have gone through, just as information.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 85-13(4): Quality of Eyecare in the NWT

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will look forward to receiving those complaints and dealing with

them accordingly, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Roland.

Question 86-13(4): Possible Alternatives to Closure of Delta House

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MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The question, once again, will be directed to the Minister of Health and Social Services. Mr. Speaker, with all the information that we, as a government, have tallied up ourselves, in the area of alcohol and drugs, I question why we seem to be heading in the direction we are. Right now with our research, it states that 43 percent of 15 to 24 year olds in the western NWT are heavy drinkers.

As a government, we are looking at decreasing our funding towards alcohol and drug. I know that we have to be responsible with the way we spend our money, but I think the future of the NWT, the western Arctic and Nunavut, rely on the upcoming youth. If we have that high rate of heavy drinkers, I would dare to say that we are going to have significant problems in the future. Once again, that goes towards my questioning the closure of Delta House. Will the Minister work with myself and the community at

looking at whatever possibilities might be available to Delta House staff and board, instead of totally closing the facility down? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Ng.

Return To Question 86-13(4): Possible Alternatives to Closure of Delta House

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I have indicated, we are proposing to withdraw the funds from the Alcohol and Drug Residential Treatment Program that is Delta House. I would repeat what I have said already, and I will say it again. If the Delta House board, or the community, finds some alternative arrangements that would be able to meet the funding that is currently within existing programs that we provide, whether it is through Health and Social Services or through other departments of this government, that I would be more than willing to assist them to finalize those arrangements, to try and meet the needs of trying to offset some of the impact of the withdrawal of funds from Delta House, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Roland.

Supplementary To Question 86-13(4): Possible Alternatives to Closure of Delta House

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have been contacted by the board and staff of Delta House, as well as many organizations and concerned people of Inuvik, of the possible negative impact of the closure, not only to the people working there, to the availability of service. They would like to know if the Minister would take part in a public forum on the closure of Delta House and when can this be done? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 86-13(4): Possible Alternatives to Closure of Delta House

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, once again, I would like to reiterate, for the record, that we are

not denying an accessibility of service to individuals that would need alcohol and drug treatment. I would say that the honourable Member has spoken to me about the possibility of holding a public meeting in the community of Inuvik to speak to the residents, and I am more than willing to do that. It is a matter of finding a suitable time that can accommodate myself and the honourable Member, given that, with the House sitting, there are a lot of commitments here and with other activities that go on in respect to Nunavut leaders' meetings, and other leadership meetings, that take place over the course of the next few weeks, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Roland.

Supplementary To Question 86-13(4): Possible Alternatives to Closure of Delta House

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So the Minister is open to that idea. Will you work with me on a date then? It sounds like you will, but you have not committed to that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 86-13(4): Possible Alternatives to Closure of Delta House

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will commit to attending a public meeting in Inuvik, and working with the honourable Member to try to find a suitable date. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Krutko.

Question 87-13(4): Use of TI'oondih Healing Centre for Alcohol and Drug Treatment

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank my colleague from Inuvik for jumping on the band wagon.

I believe I have made the same argument for a year now, and nothing has happened with my program, the TI'oondih Healing Centre. My question to the Minister of Social Services, Kelvin Ng, I hope you have a good new year. 96 was fun, maybe 97 will get better. My question is, and the question asked by Mr. Roland, in regards to the services that will be available to its residents of the Inuvik region, you mentioned the Yellowknife Centre in regards to Northern Addiction Services, and you mentioned the Hay River Reserve, but I do not believe I heard anything on the TI'oondih Healing Centre that we have in Fort McPherson, which is in the region. Do you have any plans for that facility to be used to carry out this treatment?

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Ng.

Return To Question 87-13(4): Use of TI'oondih Healing Centre for Alcohol and Drug Treatment

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it would be up to the referral process that is being established and, of course, the client who would want the treatment to determine and work on what facility and what programs that would best suit their needs, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 87-13(4): Use of TI'oondih Healing Centre for Alcohol and Drug Treatment

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question was, do you have any plans to use that facility in regards to the treatment of alcohol and drug care? My question was, are you going to use that facility in the upcoming months and years to come as a treatment facility?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 87-13(4): Use of TI'oondih Healing Centre for Alcohol and Drug Treatment

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, it would be up to the regional referral team that would be put in place. As I will be indicating, some of the alcohol and drug referral reforms and the alcohol and drug reforms which we will get into a bit more detail once the departmental budget comes forward, what we are anticipating and proposing is that some of the referral dollars be shifted to the regional level. So, there will be more regional and local input into the referral so that would give people in the regions the opportunity to best assess where the needs are in talking with their clients who they would be dealing with. I would not totally rule it out, Mr. Speaker, but it would not be in my control as the Minister, to direct what facility to send clients to, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 87-13(4): Use of TI'oondih Healing Centre for Alcohol and Drug Treatment

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just with regards to your answer, has your department decided who is going to refer these individuals to recognize the TI'oondih Healing Centre as a designated facility to be used by this government? Since it is government resources that will be spent by the referral people.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 87-13(4): Use of TI'oondih Healing Centre for Alcohol and Drug Treatment

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, once again, I think a lot of that input would have to come from the discussions in establishing the referral process and refining the referral system that we are anticipating putting in place by April 1, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Final supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 87-13(4): Use of TI'oondih Healing Centre for Alcohol and Drug Treatment

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you. Mr. Speaker, my final supplementary is that the whole idea of institutionalizing people, either in treatment or jail, is a costly economic opportunity to the south of the Northwest Territories. With all the correctional facilities in the south in regards to the Young Offender's Facilities, the YCI in Yellowknife and also the treatment facilities being established in the south end of the Mackenzie Valley, maybe your department should also look at economic opportunities that are being lost in the Inuvik Region, especially in relation to institutionalizing people using social dollars in when there are facilities we did consider which have been turned down, in regards to the Lancap, Aklavik, and now Delta House. Maybe you can get your department to consider looking at the economic opportunities that are being lost in my region, and also in the Inuvik region, because of these decisions made by your department. Could you seriously look at economic loss to my region because of this?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Return To Question 87-13(4): Use of TI'oondih Healing Centre for Alcohol and Drug

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will take a look at the issue that the honourable Member has brought forward, and report back to him. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Miltenberger.

Question 88-13(4): Responses to Footprints 2 from NTI and the Federal Government

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Finance and Division. The government has put forward its timely response to Footprints 2. My understanding is that the federal government and NTI have yet to respond. My question to the Minister is, as we try to enter negotiations in terms of formula funding arrangements and the structure of the

government, how can we do that, if in fact the three parties at the table have not responded to a key document?

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 88-13(4): Responses to Footprints 2 from NTI and the Federal Government

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and thank you, my honourable colleague. I think that is the issue and the dilemma that is facing us right now. We, in fact, took the time to respond in an orderly and timely way to Footprints in the Snow 2, to the basic structure that they are suggesting. We gave what we believe are some constructive alternatives and some constructive criticism on the issue. However, I think it is important to point out, we are only one party at the table. The decision on the basic framework for a Nunavut government, hopefully, will be made through consensus of the three parties. NTI, which has got a role because of the Nunavut Act, the federal government, of course, because its primary role is to rule, particularly on the fiscal side, and ourselves. So we are pushing very hard. The Premier is, the Division Committee is, and the Nunavut Caucus is, to try to accelerate the response from the two other parties so that consensus can be reached on the kind of basic framework for a new Nunavut government, that is affordable and practical. Thank you.

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MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary To Question 88-13(4): Responses to Footprints 2 from NTI and the Federal Government

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The two new territories, east and west, are like siamese twins in this operation, and we are joined at the pocket book. I am concerned, as we go through the delicate process of separating, that we need this kind of information. We have less than 800 days. Are there ways that the Minister can see to, in fact, pursue this with even more vigour and enthusiasm

than he has to date? To press upon the other two major players that they have an obligation to act with some alacrity and speed?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 88-13(4): Responses to Footprints 2 from NTI and the Federal

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to assure my honourable colleague that I think steps are in place right now by all parties, on this side of the table, anyway, to try to accelerate a comprehensive and full response from the federal government. We are hoping that we will get a comprehensive response. One of the charges levelled against us in the previous report was our inability to respond in a timely and effective manner. It took us almost 12 months to do that. One of the concerns now being expressed by some, is that we have responded in a timely and effective manner, but we do not like what you have said. I think that it is equally important to find out what the other two parties feel before an appropriate consensus is reached, as to what form of government we require. We can then work towards costing it, both east and west, and move onward to the negotiations which, hopefully, will get started sometime time in March with the federal government. There is a concerted effort on our part to explain the urgent need for a response to Footprints in the Snow 2, from the two other parties, and that once these responses are provided, we can sit down, collectively, and try to reach a consensus on the core framework of the new Nunavut government. Assuming consensus can be reached, it would provide us with the vehicle and the tool to move forward with our negotiations on the form of financing and, as I said yesterday, more importantly, the incremental costs. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary To Question 88-13(4): Responses to Footprints 2 from NTI and the Federal Government

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Minister is engaging in this onerous task, will he also ensure that, at least with our people at the table, he ask them to keep in mind not to create false expectations? That we do not

want to start designing governments with a cadillac frame when all we are going to have is a chevrolet budget possibly, so that what we can do what is achievable, east and west, and sustain it. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 88-13(4): Responses to Footprints 2 from NTI and the Federal

HON. JOHN TODD:

Yes, Mr. Speaker. I think one of the things that, certainly I have been saying and others have, Mr. Arlooktoo said, in his press conference in Iqaluit, is the whole question of affordability of the new government and the ability for it to function in an efficient way is going to be critical. If we consider the kinds of steps that we have had to take, with the fiscal changes to our formula and the strain on our services that we are providing, clearly there is going to be a need for affordability and the design of the government to go hand in hand. I really want to stress to my colleague, and the public at large that is listening, if any are, that this will be a paramount priority of the Premier and others. We will try to urge the other two parties to the table in responding to the Footprints in the Snow 2 report. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Picco.

Question 89-13(4): Language Difficulties in Filing Tax Returns

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my Member's statement yesterday, I had a question to ask, but because the clock ran out and I could not get unanimous consent, I could not ask my question, I see now that I have a minute left again. I am going to try to get my question in. Mr. Speaker, my Member's statement yesterday, to refresh the Minister of Finance, I talked about the situation regarding income tax, the procedure from Revenue Canada, and the forms that are hard to decipher because they are not translated, and the residents of the Northwest Territories having to pay back several thousands of dollars because of that. My question to the Minister of Finance is, has he had any discussions at this time with Revenue Canada, on the problem that has not only come up in this Assembly, but has come up in

the previous Assembly. When I refer to some of the Hansards in my reading, I see that this is true. Mr. Todd.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 89-13(4): Language Difficulties in Filing Tax Returns

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No discussions have been undertaken by my officials with respect to the concern raised by my honourable colleague from Iqaluit, on the clear need, as he perceives it, for bilingual services on the income tax situation. Income tax is a federal responsibility. However, I am prepared to, if he so wishes, draft some kind of correspondence indicating the problems that we have where many of our constituents are of a unilingual nature and, unfortunately, due to the remoteness of our constituencies, do not have the ability to access the necessary expertise to assist them in their filling out their income tax forms at the end of each fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Question period is now over. 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, report of

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committees on the review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents. Mr. Krutko.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table a document from the Prime Minister's Office, recognizing funding for the Ti'oondih Healing Society, Tabled Document 22-13(4).

MR. SPEAKER:

Tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in

committee of the whole of bills and other matters. Item 20, report of committee of the whole. Item 21, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, item 22, orders of the day.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):

Mr. Speaker, there will be a meeting at 9 a.m. tomorrow morning of the Ordinary Members' Caucus. Also, at 9 a.m., there will be a meeting of the Standing Committee on Social Programs. And at 10:30 a.m. there will be a meeting of the Standing Committee on Infrastructure.

Orders of the day for Thursday, January 23rd.

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 7
17. First Reading of Bills
18. Second Reading of Bills

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

20. Report of Committee of the Whole

21. Third Reading of Bills

22. Orders of the Day.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This house stands adjourned to Thursday, January 23 at 1:30 p.m.

-- ADJOURNMENT