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The Honourable David Krutko, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Tuesday, March 16, 2004****Members Present**

Mr. Allen, Honourable Brendan Bell, Mr. Braden, Mr. Delorey, Honourable Charles Dent, Mrs. Groenewegen, Honourable Joe Handley, Mr. Hawkins, Honourable David Krutko, Ms. Lee, Honourable Michael McLeod, Mr. Menicoche, Honourable Michael Miltenberger, Mr. Pokiak, Mr. Ramsay, Honourable Floyd Roland, Mr. Villeneuve, Mr. Yakeleya, Honourable Henry Zoe

ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. David Krutko): Reverend Williams, could you lead us in prayer?

---Prayer

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Reverend Williams. Please be seated. Mr. Clerk, would you ascertain if her Honour the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories is prepared to address this Assembly.

---Playing of O' Canada

ITEM 2: OPENING ADDRESS

COMMISSIONER (Hon. Glenna Hansen): Please be seated. Mr. Speaker, Premier Handley, Members of the 15th Legislative Assembly, it is a privilege once again to address you in this House as you prepare to begin the deliberations of this government.

It was my pleasure to see many of you two weeks ago at the Arctic Winter Games in Fort McMurray, Alberta. What an honour it was to represent the people of the Northwest Territories and to cheer on the over 350 members of this year's Team NWT.

To all of the athletes, coaches, volunteers, staff and cultural performers who represented our territory so well, I extend my most sincere congratulations.

I would like to thank the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Henry Zoe, for providing the invitation and opportunity for me to attend these games, and also Sharon Firth -- a former four-time Olympic competitor in her own right -- who accompanied me at this most memorable event.

Unfortunately, it was during my time in Fort McMurray that I, like many of you, was shocked and saddened by the passing of Chief Eddie Paul Rabesca. Chief Eddie Paul's leadership will most certainly be missed, both by the people and by this territory. His legacy will, however, live on in the many initiatives and institutions that he worked so hard to establish.

I would also like to pay tribute to the late John Bayly who passed away February 17th in Yellowknife. John's dedication and genuine love for the North and its people was evident to all who had the opportunity to meet or work with him and to share in his gentle but firm and humour-filled approach to life.

My thoughts and prayers extend to the families and friends of these two respected northerners, and to all who have recently suffered the loss of loved ones.

In January, it was my honour, as Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, to award recognitions of long service and bravery to members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police "G" Division. These men and women are present-day models of the long-standing tradition of service and dedication by the RCMP to our territory and I would like to thank each and every one of them.

In the past few months, it has also been my pleasure to visit and meet with many residents of the Northwest Territories. I can honestly say that I am always inspired and enlightened to meet and shake hands with these people who build and define our communities.

It is in this spirit that I would like to take the time to recognize five women chosen by the NWT Status of Women as this year's recipients of the annual Wise Women Awards. This honour is awarded in recognition of the dedication and service that each of these outstanding women have given to the communities in which they live.

Mary Teya for the Beaufort-Delta, Albertine Rodh for the Deh Cho, Beverly Masuzumi for the Sahtu, Beshia Blondin for the North Slave, and Marilyn Sanderson for the South Slave.

Mr. Speaker, during this session, the Government of the Northwest Territories will be introducing a bill entitled, Appropriation Act, 2004-2005 and a bill entitled, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2003-2004. Mr. Speaker, your government considers these bills essential to the good conduct of government and I recommend their passage.

As Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, I now declare open the Third Session of the 15th Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 3, Ministers' statements.

ITEM 3: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 1-15(3): Notice Of Budget Address

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will deliver the Budget Address on Wednesday, March 17, 2004. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 3, Ministers' statements. Minister of Justice, Mr. Dent.

Minister's Statement 2-15(3): First Nations Policing Funding

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that the Department of Justice has completed negotiations for a two-year agreement that will see the GNWT receiving \$1.24 million to increase the number of aboriginal RCMP officers in the Northwest Territories.

This funding, from the Government of Canada's First Nations policing program, announced last October, will support a number of projects, including: a recruitment strategy to encourage aboriginal individuals to consider joining the RCMP; an access program to help applicants meet RCMP entrance requirements; a community consultation on policing in the Northwest Territories; and, changes to the formula for funding existing aboriginal RCMP officer positions.

Mr. Speaker, the recruitment strategy and access program will ensure that aboriginal candidates have the encouragement and support they need to succeed in becoming RCMP officers. In return, the Northwest Territories will have a police force that reflects and responds to the cultural diversity of our communities. The community consultation project will help both the Department of Justice and the RCMP understand and meet the policing needs of our communities.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank officials from the aboriginal policing directorate for working with Department of Justice officials to bring this funding to the Northwest Territories. For many years, the Department of Justice has worked to help the federal government understand the unique challenges facing policing in the North. The successful negotiation of this funding shows that with hard work, the GNWT and the federal government can successfully address the unique needs of the Northwest Territories.

These projects will change policing in the Northwest Territories. By increasing the number of aboriginal officers, our police force, the RCMP, will be one that reflects and responds to the needs of our communities.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to working with our partners, RCMP "G" Division and federal officials, over the next two years and beyond to meet the unique policing needs of our communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 3, Ministers' statements. Item 4, Members' statements. Mrs. Groenewegen.

ITEM 4: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On Appreciation For Premier's And Ministers' Visits To Hay River

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, each Member elected to this Assembly first and foremost has the particular interests of their communities and region at heart. The North is very diverse and often so are the issues of priority to our constituencies. It is

important for all of us to listen, learn and understand the pan-territorial big picture and the commonality of needs related to the delivery of government programs and services. This can be accomplished, to some extent, as we listen to each other in the Assembly and in committee meetings. But it's also valuable, whenever possible, for Members and Ministers to travel in the North and see first-hand the challenges and opportunities in other regions. It may be particularly important for Ministers to familiarize themselves with our people and their issues.

To that point, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Premier for his initial visit to Hay River, accompanied by Minister Zoe, as my colleague for Hay River North and I met with the mayor and council and were briefed on issues of significance to the social and economic development of Hay River. The Premier also subsequently spoke at the annual Hay River Chamber of Commerce banquet on the topic of fueling our future.

I would also like to thank Minister McLeod for his attendance in Hay River to meet with the Hay River Seniors' Society and their support board, to hear first-hand their thoughts on how the needs of seniors, regarding housing, could be best met.

Last, but certainly not least, I would like to thank Minister Bell for his visit to Hay River, which included discussions with Patterson Enterprises regarding the sustainable harvest of timber; with representatives of the Great Slave Lake fishermen to hear the challenges that their industry is facing; and with the Territorial Farmer's Association executive to better understand their ambitions relating to the potential of agriculture in the North. He also met with two local companies, Northern Transportation and Kings Manufacturing, that are interested in pursuing opportunities to expand their capacity in the manufacturing sector.

I hope that these types of visits will continue. They are very valuable to all of us as we strive to collectively represent the interests and aspirations of all of our constituents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 4, Members' statements. Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Member's Statement On Importance Of Language And Culture

MR. YAKELEYA: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. March is Aboriginal Languages Month. In celebration of that fact, I would like to speak today on the importance of language and culture in providing a definition of who you are as a person. Mr. Speaker, I ask also just to have initiatives towards language and culture in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, as an aboriginal person, I can say that I've applied and understand the heart of the language and have close ties to the land and the laws of the Sahtu; they clearly define who I am as a person. These laws were taught to me by my elders and when you know who you are and where you're from and the history of your people, you have received a great gift. Mr. Speaker, when you have pride in your language and pride in your culture, you can have pride in everything that you do.

You can succeed on all levels when you know who you are, where you come from and where you're going.

The Northwest Territories, Mr. Speaker, is a vast land with many languages and cultures. Some have been here for thousands of years and some languages and cultures are newly arrived. Whatever your language, whatever your culture, celebrate it, cherish it and seek to understand it. It will keep you strong in times of trouble and free your spirit in times of joy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 4, Members' statements. The Member for Nunakput, Mr. Pokiak.

Member's Statement On Recognition Of Nunakput Athletes In Arctic Winter Games

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My statement is with regard to recognition of Nunakput athletes at the Arctic Winter Games in Fort McMurray, Alberta.

Today, I rise to recognize a number of young athletes from my riding of Nunakput who were representing the NWT in arctic sports and basketball at the recent Arctic Winter Games held in Fort McMurray, Alberta. These young athletes came from the small communities of Sachs Harbour, Paulatuk, Holman and Tuktoyaktuk. I am confident that each athlete represented the NWT professionally, competitively and with sportsmanship.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to name the following young athletes who participated in this event.

In arctic sports, from Holman, Victoria Akhiatak, Dale Kigiyyok, Bryon Okheena, Heather Okheena and Gary Okheena; from Paulatuk, Jonathan Dillon; from Sachs Harbour, Chelsey Elanik and Christine Esau; from Tuktoyaktuk, Kristy Anderson, Matthew Anikina, Craig Gruben and Steven Kotokak.

In basketball, Randal Emaghok from Tuktoyaktuk. Honourable mention should go to Logan Gruben from Tuktoyaktuk as an alternate in basketball. Thank you to Corrine Carpenter for chaperoning and Edgar Kotokak for coaching these fine athletes.

Mr. Speaker, many of these young athletes had never before competed in such a highly-recognized sports venue. Without the support of MACA, Sports and Recreation and Sport North, these young athletes would not have been able to compete. I would like to encourage Sports and Recreation, the Department of MACA and Sport North to continue to support all young athletes for future competition in events such as the Arctic Winter Games. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Members' statements. Ms. Lee.

Member's Statement On Rising Crime Rate In Yellowknife

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I'd like to speak about the alarming rates of crime being committed in the capital city of Yellowknife. Just today, the local media is reporting the latest statistics from the Yellowknife RCMP which shows that in comparison to the

first quarter of last year, the number of personal offences, including assaults, were up from 158 cases to 213. This is an increase of 35 percent. The combined offences, including property theft and others, jumped from 1,251 cases to 1,737; a whopping 28 percent increase from 2002.

Mr. Speaker, this comes on the heels of a very disturbing story in the local newspaper just yesterday, where it was reported that a very dangerous predatory youth sex offender was released on parole without sufficient safeguards, with tragic consequences. Not long after being released on parole, this youth offender found and attacked two young victims. They were sexually assaulted at knifepoint while doing the most ordinary thing during broad daylight: walking home from school, and one so very near her home.

Mr. Speaker, I have no idea what actions the Minister is considering or what mechanisms he could put in to improve the situation. I'd like to know and I will be pursuing what steps he's prepared to take to reduce the crime rates in the city and what added protection the government is proposing to make our community much safer.

Mr. Speaker, I do believe, as Minister of Justice and Solicitor General, that this should be on top of his mind and we, as the legislature, also have an obligation to take decisive and aggressive action to address the issue. I would like to reiterate that I will be pursuing this issue in the coming days and weeks. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 4, Members' statements. The Member for Inuvik-Twin Lakes, Mr. Allen.

Member's Statement On Devolution Negotiations And Attaining Provincial Status

MR. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Throughout the course of the 14th and 15th Legislative Assemblies, the Legislative Assembly and Cabinet have been working diligently on devolution, resource revenue sharing and new fiscal arrangements with the federal government. This has been an exhaustive exercise and could be classified as futile in effort.

On many occasions, we have heard the Premier make public statements to this effect. In a quote from the National Post on February 2nd he states, "This thing has been going on far too long. From a territorial and constituency perspective, I don't believe anyone in the NWT would disagree with that fact..."

Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to criticize the efforts of this government, rather, I would like to offer encouragement to take a more ambitious approach to achieving province-like powers, with the ultimate goal of achieving provincehood. Mr. Speaker, in speaking clearly on defining a process for dealing with issues related to the idea of achieving provincehood, we have to take a look at history. A history lesson happened only 100 short years ago south of our border, to Saskatchewan and Alberta who became provinces in 1905.

Excerpts taken from their entry into provincehood are very similar to ours in this modern day. If I can quote these similarities, Mr. Speaker, they are as follows:

"For a government which possesses almost all the powers and responsibilities of a province in its own right, but which did not have the financial resources to act, the situation began to become difficult. The territories could not borrow money, could not obtain revenues from public lands, as an example."

Final quote, Mr. Speaker:

"It seems that only granting of provincial status would fulfill the politicians' request."

Mr. Speaker, I did not include the full text, but the essence of my message to the 15th Assembly today is to move towards provincehood since we are a responsible government. Mr. Speaker, what we need to do is request the Premier develop a bill of intent which would outline the steps that would be taken to secure support for province formation and include a draft of a bill for federal legislation so that it would not be found ultra vires outside of territorial jurisdiction.

Mr. Speaker, we, as a territory, have experienced the very same constitutional problems that Alberta and Saskatchewan experienced out of the Northwest Territories Act, 1875. My constituents in Inuvik Twin Lakes now seek a full commitment from this Assembly to begin the process of achieving provincehood and we see this as a good way to start. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 4, Members' statements. The Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Member's Statement On Small Business Challenges In The NWT

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know from personal experience that running a small business can be a very rewarding and a very satisfying occupation. It can also be very challenging and very risky. In the Northwest Territories, if you're running a small business -- especially in the service sector -- I don't think you can be blamed if you're feeling just a little under siege these days.

Mr. Speaker, at the end of last year, this Assembly increased the minimum wage in the Northwest Territories from \$6.50 to \$8.25; almost a 30 percent increase. Housing shortages, especially in the Yellowknife area, Mr. Speaker, have made finding employees, especially in the service sector, a real challenge.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we're advised that the Workers' Compensation Board is set to impose another round of increases on the coverage for workers. Four years ago, as I'm to understand, we had the lowest assessment rate in Canada at \$1 per \$100 of insurable earnings. Then by 2003 that skyrocketed -- those are the words of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, Mr. Speaker -- to \$1.65. Now we're looking at an average assessment rate for 2004 that's going to be \$2.39, an increase of 2.5 times in four years. The impact of this on one fast food restaurant in Yellowknife looks like this: Last year, they paid \$4,000; this year it's going to be \$6,747. The assessment rate in his sector is going from \$1.30 per \$100 to \$1.90; a 46 percent increase.

Mr. Speaker, the impact of wages and housing and Workers' Compensation Board premiums all have their

own merits, but the cumulative effect, the combined effect, even in a booming economy such as we have in Yellowknife, is one that's putting the small business sector under pressure. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business said in a survey last year that 58 percent of NWT businesses who responded said that this government's understanding of entrepreneurship was poor. I think we may have another demonstration of that coming up with these Workers' Compensation Board increases. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 4, Members' statements. The Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

Member's Statement On Recognition Of Hay River Athletes In Arctic Winter Games

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to be back in this wonderful Chamber with yourself and the rest of my colleagues as we embark on what promises to be a very busy and interesting session. At this time, Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the accomplishments of the 25 athletes and one coach from Hay River who represented us extremely well at the Arctic Winter Games held from February 28th to March 6th in Fort McMurray, Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, I would especially like to recognize those athletes from my riding of Hay River North. They are: Trista Nault in basketball; AJ Norberg in snowshoe biathlon; Marc Leblanc and Matthew Davies in cross-country skiing; Jared Monkman in curling; Meagan Cook in female hockey; Corey Coady in midget hockey; and, Michelle Cook in women's volleyball.

Mr. Speaker, the NWT contingent of athletes fared very well at the Arctic Winter Games, garnering a total of 104 medals. I would also like to bestow special recognition on Pat Bobinski, the coach of the snowshoe biathlon team, who has been an extremely dedicated coach to numerous Hay River athletes over the years. Pat has coached all ranks of athletes from beginners to nationally-ranked athletes. In addition, he donates literally hundreds of hours each year to sports and is a prime example of what volunteering can do for sports and the community.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to offer my sincere congratulations to all the Team NWT athletes. I would also like to encourage all of our youth to set their sights on the Arctic Winter Games so they may recognize the benefits of an active lifestyle. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 4, Members' statements. The Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Member's Statement On Recognition Of Yellowknife Centre Athletes In Arctic Winter Games

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I would like to acknowledge the Arctic Winter Games participants from my riding of Yellowknife Centre. Marie Christien Auger, a speed skater, gave an outstanding performance, bringing home two gold and three silver medals. Michelle Bourgois, a speed skater, also the proud winner of one gold, two silver and one bronze. Stephanie Bourgois, also in speed skating, took home three gold and one silver.

Brendan Callas participated in basketball with his brother, Michael Callas. Margo Cooper participated in snowboarding. Derek Graff brought home a bronze in badminton. Kelsey MacDougall landed herself a gold in speed skating. Ian MacDougall, also in speed skating, had a performance with one gold and one bronze. Chi Nguyen participated in soccer. Cleo Stinson participated in cross-country skiing and Evie Varelas in soccer.

Not only did these athletes, Mr. Speaker, have fun -- I was there to watch them -- they all played very well. They cultivated the spirit of the games through sportsmanship, hard work and determination. Also, a big hand goes out to the parents, the coaches and the volunteers at these games.

Mr. Speaker, this is truly a worthwhile northern tradition that could only be made possible with help from all those involved. Congratulations, again, to all the participants. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 4, Members' statements. The Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

Member's Statement On Changes In Nahendeh Constituency

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. (Translation) Today I'd like to send a message to the elders and youth of my riding. I'd also like to mention... (Translation ends)

...to be gathered with my colleagues. It's an honour to be part of the Third Session of the 15th Legislative Assembly.

Today, I would like to take time to reflect on time and change. Sometimes you wonder where time has gone, it can pass by so quickly. With time comes change. When people come and go, things change along the way and these changes can either be joyful or sad.

Since the Second Session of the Legislative Assembly, there have been a few changes within my riding of Nahendeh. Not only were there a few new constituents born, but also a few who passed away. Some did something special to receive recognition and I would like to take this time to acknowledge the ones that I am aware of. I would like to congratulate Lisa Lafferty, Tina Cournellie, Crystal Gaule and Barbara Bertrand on the birth of their new babies. I would also like to remember those that passed on. The elders are: Flora Sibbeston; Moise Antoine; my good friend, Albert Tonka; and, Lucas Saya of Fort Liard.

I would also like to take this opportunity to say a special congratulations to elder Albertine Rodh of Fort Simpson for receiving the 2004 Wise Woman Award.

---Ring of fire alarm

MR. SPEAKER: We'll take a short break at this point for a fire drill. Can I ask the people in the gallery...

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Could the members in the gallery please make their way to the side of the building, please, in an orderly fashion.

---SHORT RECESS

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. I'll call the House back to order. At this time I would like to allow Mr. Menicoche to conclude his Member's statement. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mahsi Cho, Mr. Speaker. Dene ke ku'e deh koe gehdi. It means set the house on fire.

---Laughter

Just a special recognition to Albertine Rodh for receiving the Wise Woman Award from the Deh Cho and also a constituent from the Nahendeh riding. As well as to Taylor Speed and David Shaw of Fort Simpson who are recipients of the Apprenticeship and Occupation Awards. As well as the participants from Nahendeh who attended the Arctic Winter Games: Jeff Cressman, Alexa Tsetso, Paul Stepdonk, Val Gendron, Leon Hardisty, Morgan LeBlanc, Kerry Ann Loutit, Jessie Loutit, Sarah Simons, Krista Tong, Jennifer Thistle, Jody Thompson, my daughter Deirdra Villeneuve, and Andrew Wright. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to take this time to remember and acknowledge my constituents of Nahendeh. Mahsi.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 4, Members' statements. The Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

Member's Statement On Recognition Of Tu Nedhe Pages And Athletes

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am grateful once again to be here with my fellow MLAs and look forward to the work that we will be carrying out in this Third Session. I would also like to recognize four Grade 8 students from Tu Nedhe who will be working as Pages in the session for the remainder of the week. They are Nakita Enzoe and Jared Marlowe of Lutselk'e, and Robyn Balsille and Tyler Delorme of Deninu K'ue.

I would also like to recognize the following Tu Nedhe students who also attended the 2004 Arctic Winter Games in Fort McMurray. They are Vanessa Sanderson, Glen Collins and Jody Miersch of Deninu K'ue; and, Rocky Catholique and Damien Kailek of Lutselk'e.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, I would also like to extend my congratulations to Ms. Marilyn Sanderson of Deninu K'ue who received the 2004 Wise Woman Award for the South Slave region. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. I would just like to remind Members that your statement should be on one subject, not three. So just so you know for next time. Item 4, Members' statements. The Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

Member's Statement On Recognition Of The Importance Of Sport

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to use my Member's statement today to acknowledge all the hard work of everyone involved in sending Team NWT to the Arctic Winter Games which were held recently in Fort McMurray. The athletes are to be commended for their outstanding sportsmanship, athleticism and dedication to their chosen sports. We can all be very proud of the way our athletes carried themselves.

I had the opportunity to attend the games and was overwhelmed by how they were accepted and hosted by the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. I wanted to thank the organizing committee from Wood Buffalo for doing such a terrific job, especially the mayor of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, Mr. Doug Faulkner, and Guy Boutilier, the MLA for Fort McMurray.

Sport recreation plays a vital role in the physical, emotional and mental well-being of our people, especially our children. Today I wanted to acknowledge this fact and recognize how important it is to life in the Northwest Territories. In closing I would also like to recognize the hard work put in by our staff, Mr. Ian Legaree, director of sport and recreation with MACA; the Minister, Henry Zoe; and, Mr. Gary Schauerte, the manager of sport and recreation, for all of their hard work in putting this together. I also wanted to thank Sport North, Mr. Bill Othmer, and all of the mission staff for doing a wonderful job in putting all of the pieces together to make the 2004 Arctic Winter Games a successful one for Team NWT.

The NWT will host the 2008 Arctic Winter Games and we should all be very excited at bringing the games back home to the Northwest Territories and showcasing our territory to our friends from around the world. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 4, Members' statements. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

Colleagues, I would like to direct your attention to the presence of Ms. Jean Storr in the visitors' gallery who is a constituent of mine from Aklavik and she is also the mother of the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, Ms. Glenna Hansen.

---Applause

In the gallery we also have interns visiting from the Ontario Legislative Assembly: director of the program, Dr. Greg Inwood; Michael Acedo; Sarah Baker; Holly Bondy; David Myles; Amanda Mayer; Chris Shantz-Smiley; Melanie Francis; and, Kate Mulligan. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly. I hope you enjoy your stay here and I hope you have a chance to see how our consensus government works, and hopefully you take some good advice and direction for how we proceed in this House. For my colleagues and the rest of the House, welcome to the Northwest Territories, enjoy your stay.

---Applause

Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Ramsay. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with your indulgence I would like to recognize in the gallery students from Central Arctic Baptist Academy, all from Yellowknife. Mr. Speaker, we have up there Pastor Frank Siemens, the principal; his wife, Mrs. Jessie Siemens; Melinda Myers, supervisor; Alicia Adair, Grade 7 student; James Adair, Grade 9 student; Alexandra Budgell, Grade 11 student; Albert Castro, Grade 6; Melissa Castro, Grade 7; Kristin Hansen, Grade 11, I believe the daughter of our

Commissioner; Felicia Skiffington, Grade 10; and, Justin Skiffington, Grade 9. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it has been a while since I had this opportunity to recognize my family who is down visiting myself here in the city. My wife Shawna; my youngest son beside her, Mitchell; my daughter Courtney; my son Justin; my other son Quincey; and my next son, hockey player Samuel. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Welcome to the House. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to recognize my CA that came down from Fort Simpson, Eliza Jane Lafferty. Thank you very much.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two people I would like to recognize in the gallery. Mr. Ed Jeske is a very respected yet feisty senior here in Yellowknife.

---Applause

The second, I am not sure if she is still up there but Ms. Julie Sorel. She is my constituency assistant, which I want to point out if I look good, the credit is solely due to her, and if I don't look good, obviously I didn't pay attention to her. Thank you.

---Laughter

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Premier.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, once again it is my pleasure to introduce my good constituent, Major Karen Hoeft, a tireless worker on social issues and especially the issue of homelessness. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize my wife, Lucille Pokiak, my oldest son Bertram, and my youngest son Darren. Also my CA, Marilyn Cockney and her husband Archie Chicksi. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. At this time I would like to recognize the people that haven't gotten recognized and thank you for being here at the opening of the House. Welcome.

---Applause

Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Allen.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 1-15(3): Bill Of Intent To Seek Provincial Status

MR. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement I encouraged the Premier to draft a bill of intent that would give rise to the creation of the Northwest Territories to a province. I am now going to ask the Premier if he will produce such a bill of intent within this 15th Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Premier, Mr. Handley

Return To Question 1-15(3): Bill Of Intent To Seek Provincial Status

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on January 20th, the Aboriginal Summit and the GNWT signed a framework agreement on the process for negotiating devolution of resource revenue sharing. I hope the federal government will sign it this week and, if that is the case, then that document will outline the process and mandate and may some day result in legislation. But we want to move this ahead step by step. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Allen.

Supplementary To Question 1-15(3): Bill Of Intent To Seek Provincial Status

MR. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No disrespect to the Premier's answer, however, I still feel that the people of the Northwest Territories, especially in my riding of Inuvik Twin Lakes, lost confidence in that document and any subsequent documents thereafter. So I am going to again ask the Premier if he is willing to bring forth this process to discuss further with the western and northern Premiers in the conference in Inuvik in July. So I would ask him if he would begin this work, the political work to start generating support for this process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Premier.

Further Return To Question 1-15(3): Bill Of Intent To Seek Provincial Status

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, this has certainly been an issue of interest to my colleagues across the country. All of the Premiers have asked me about devolution and where we are at. Mr. Speaker, this is a process that is trilateral, it involves aboriginal governments, our government and the federal government. The framework agreement I referred to is a first step. Second, we hope to have an agreement-in-principle and we commit to working toward that by this summer, and a final agreement by 2005 with implementation in 2006. That is a pretty ambitious schedule. I hope constituents across the North don't lose confidence in the process, but I really believe we have to take it step by step and I fully intend to do everything we can to bring this to a conclusion during the life of this government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Allen.

Supplementary To Question 1-15(3): Bill Of Intent To Seek Provincial Status

MR. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think we all recognize the difficulty in trying to persuade the federal government to acknowledge that we are an emerging territory. So I am going to ask the Premier again, failing his undertaking on a trilateral level, if he would call upon the chief electoral office to conduct a referendum on the question of the creation of the Northwest Territories as a province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Premier.

Further Return To Question 1-15(3): Bill Of Intent To Seek Provincial Status

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, that is something that will most likely get discussed at some point by our partners, the aboriginal governments, and it may be something that we want to do at some point here, but I would certainly have to talk to the partner governments, the aboriginal governments in particular, before we would do it. I wouldn't want to try and do it unilaterally or people will feel we are stepping out too far ahead. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Your final supplementary, Mr. Allen.

Supplementary To Question 1-15(3): Bill Of Intent To Seek Provincial Status

MR. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't see the relevancy in the discussion with a third party in terms of the constitutional relationship between the federal and territorial governments. I am going to ask the Premier again if he is willing to bring a bill of intent to the Prime Minister's office through the normal process. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Premier.

Further Return To Question 1-15(3): Bill Of Intent To Seek Provincial Status

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I've certainly made this issue known to the Prime Minister; that this is an issue that is at the top of the agenda for our government as well as for aboriginal governments. I will continue to do that. I think we also have to keep in mind that all of these processes take time, they are not things that you can do overnight. In fact, the Member made reference to Alberta and Saskatchewan. They got provincehood in 1905 and they didn't get control over the resources and land until 1930 or shortly after that. So it is a long process. We have been at it a long time, but I believe that we can make a lot of progress by working together rather than trying to move it too fast and having the other partners feel that we are moving ahead of them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Ramsay.

Question 2-15(3): Trades And Apprenticeship Challenges

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to today ask the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment some questions around a comment that he made in an article that appeared in the Yellowknifer on Wednesday, February 4, 2004. The Minister comments on how the opportunity for all people in the North is at an unprecedented high rate with the demands for qualified, skilled trades people increasing here and throughout

Canada. During that first week of February, Mr. Speaker, I had the honour of attending the Apprenticeship and Certification Week Awards ceremony here in the Great Hall of the Legislative Assembly, where the Minister once again spoke of these opportunities. I am wondering today, Mr. Speaker, if I can get a commitment from the Minister that he will address the dire financial reality that the average person has in getting into and staying with the trades program. It's a question that I have for the Minister, and I have some supplementary questions, as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 2-15(3): Trades And Apprenticeship Challenges

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories program provides a wage subsidy for employers to take apprentices on, so that a significant portion of a first-year apprentice's salary is, in fact, paid by the Government of the Northwest Territories, through the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, in order to facilitate the young people getting into the trades. The government also provides funding for the school training that is required to be taken by all apprentices, so there is support for the books and that sort of training. I think that what we're providing for apprentices meets a fairly good standard, and I would be interested in hearing from the Member exactly where he thinks our program is deficient in comparison to others in Canada.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

Supplementary To Question 2-15(3): Trades And Apprenticeship Challenges

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Minister for the response. The first thing I'd like to say is that folks who are in the trades program have to leave the North and go to school. Maybe sometimes it's Fort Smith and other times it's Edmonton or Calgary. When they leave the North, they're on their own for the two months while they're away. They don't get paid for the two months while they're away.

Mr. Speaker, I'm wondering why the trades are different. Why can't apprentices in the Northwest Territories access our student financial assistance program to make sure that they have the resources and the financial wherewithal to see the trades through to completion? We're losing a great number of individuals who can't afford it. During the first two or three years of an apprenticeship program, the average apprentice is making \$12 to \$15 an hour. It's not a great deal of money, and if you have responsibilities at home, a family and what not, it's a tremendous burden.

I'm wondering, Mr. Speaker, will there be a resource available to those in the first years of the trades program to help them financially to get them through this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 2-15(3): Trades And Apprenticeship Challenges

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, NWT apprentices do qualify for financial assistance for books, for travel if they need to travel to take their training, and for living expenses. So there is funding available to support apprentices in those areas already. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

Supplementary To Question 2-15(3): Trades And Apprenticeship Challenges

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess the final supplementary that I have is can I get a commitment from the Minister that he will look at putting trades on par with other post-secondary pursuits of individuals in the Northwest Territories so that everybody is on an equal footing in terms of access to financial resources? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 2-15(3): Trades And Apprenticeship Challenges

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I suspect that there is overall equity right now, if you take into account the amount of subsidy that is paid to support the apprentices through their work throughout the year. This government contributes a significant amount of money to providing salaries to the apprentices while they're working. One of the advantages you have in the apprenticeship program is that generally you get through that program without thousands and thousands of dollars of student debt, which is unlike post-secondary programs for university students. Right now somebody can come out after four years of university and owe this government \$40,000 to \$60,000 that they have to pay back over a number of years. For apprentices that's not usually the case, and that is a big difference. I think that has to be factored in as to whether or not there is equity in the current program.

I would certainly be willing to take a look at the program and work with my colleagues on the Standing Committee on Social Programs to ensure that there is, in fact, equity between post-secondary supports and apprenticeship. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

Supplementary To Question 2-15(3): Trades And Apprenticeship Challenges

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wasn't going to ask this one additional question, but I'll rise and ask one more question. How many apprenticeship officers does this government have to service the residents of the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 2-15(3): Trades And Apprenticeship Challenges

HON. CHARLES DENT: Mr. Speaker, I can't answer that question at this time. I don't know exactly how many staff, but I know that, for instance, in the North Slave region, there is one officer supported by five staff in the career centre, who can also provide services to people in apprenticeship programs. That's typically the way it is done; the support is provided through the career centres in the Northwest Territories. I will have to commit to getting the Member the specific numbers at a later date. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Hawkins.

Question 3-15(3): Registry Of Sex Offenders

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Ontario was the first province in Canada to create and implement legislation that established and maintained a sex offender registry. The act, named Christopher's Law, was proclaimed on April 23, 2001; named after an 11-year-old boy, Christopher Stevens, who was killed by a previously-convicted pedophile. Since there was no sign of a federal strategy to implement such a program, Ontario proactively and independently, to protect their citizens, developed their own registry.

Headlining in the territorial News/North paper, there was a story of a girl who was attacked in Yellowknife by a convicted sex offender. The attacker was on probation for only 11 days before his next assault. Six days later, he was picked up by the RCMP for being drunk in public, and released. Three days later, the offender sexually assaulted someone else. He only was later identified to police by someone who knew him.

Mr. Speaker, this leads me to my question for the Honourable Minister of Justice, Charles Dent. Does the Minister agree that a sex offender registry could have helped and played a role in this particular case to aid the RCMP to flag this person as a previous sex offender, to help solve sex crimes in Yellowknife and all of the communities in the NWT?

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Justice, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 3-15(3): Registry Of Sex Offenders

HON. CHARLES DENT: Mr. Speaker, that's a hypothetical question that I'm having trouble answering. I'm not sure if it would have helped. It's clearly a regrettable situation that happened, but I'm not sure whether or not a sex offender registry in the Northwest Territories would have helped to identify this person. In this situation, the question as to whether or not to identify this person would have been made, I think, by the parole system as to whether or not he was qualified to be released. The situation was that under the terms and conditions of his release order, there was no specific order about how he should be supervised. The parole staff were, in fact, going above and beyond what had been ordered to supervise the person, but there wasn't really anything that had been set out by the parole board or the courts in terms of what should have been done to supervise him. So I'm not sure how that necessarily would have worked. I can certainly take a look at what the options are for setting up such a registry. I'm not certain

how the NWT would be able to operate such a service, but I would be prepared to look into it. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Supplementary To Question 3-15(3): Registry Of Sex Offenders

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Minister for answering that question. Then in this case, Mr. Speaker, I would like to further draw attention that on September 6, 2001, the Ontario Conservative Government offered their \$2 million software at no cost to any other government in Canada that wished to use it. Noting that this software is free from Ontario, would the Minister be willing to investigate the potential of accessing this free software database program for the Northwest Territories?

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Justice, Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 3-15(3): Registry Of Sex Offenders

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would certainly take a look at it.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Supplementary To Question 3-15(3): Registry Of Sex Offenders

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you again, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Mr. Minister, for offering that. Mr. Minister, would you also be further willing to supply information to all Members of the Legislative Assembly, noting reoffender rates of sex crimes for the last 10 years in the NWT, and if this could be linked to offence locations in correlation to their home location, and further out-of-province offenders who commit crimes in the Northwest Territories, and would you bring that forward to all Members of the Legislative Assembly?

MR. SPEAKER: The question is sort of bordering on another question. It sounds like you're beyond the original question that you raised, but I will ask the Minister if he would like to respond. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 3-15(3): Registry Of Sex Offenders

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure that I really understand what the Member is looking for and maybe I could ask him to restate it, if that would be acceptable.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplementary.

Supplementary To Question 3-15(3): Registry Of Sex Offenders

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just a point, due to shortness, I tried to summarize my preamble into my next question. Essentially, I'm asking if the Minister would supply us with information, a database that we could work with to see offences committed in the Northwest Territories, so we could recognize the potential usefulness of a database that would note sex offenders. Therefore, we would note reoccurrence of sex offenders in the Northwest Territories, as well as potential offenders who have offended in the Northwest Territories who are

not Northwest Territories citizens. Therefore, I'm looking for 10 years of data of offenders who reoffend. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Justice.

Further Return To Question 3-15(3): Registry Of Sex Offenders

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't know how you identify potential offenders in a document. I would certainly be prepared to examine what information is available on charges that have been laid and on convictions that have been laid, and provide that sort of numerical data. But in terms of privacy concerns, until somebody is convicted I can't see how we can provide much information.

Again, I am prepared to work with Members here to provide them what we can, but there will be some limitations on what is publicly available.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 6, oral questions. Ms. Lee.

Question 4-15(3): Rising Crime Rate And Public Protection

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are following up on the Member's statement that I made, and they also relate to the questions that have been asked by Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Speaker, as I'm listening to the Minister, I'm going to say I'm very surprised by the apparent lack of consideration that the Minister has given to this issue. I would think that, as Minister of Justice and as the Solicitor General in charge of crime prevention or safety, he would have given more thought to how this could have happened and what we could do to prevent that from happening.

Mr. Speaker, that predatory youth sex offender, I'm sure, is an exception rather than the rule, but this young man is a very dangerous guy. He's had a long record of sexual offences and he's had reports from probation officers that said clearly that he was likely to offend and that he is calculating and predatory. So I would like to know what the Minister has done in terms of learning about this case, and has he given any thought as to what he could do within his power to make sure that this doesn't happen again. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Justice.

Return To Question 4-15(3): Rising Crime Rate And Public Protection

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the issue of the two young people is a very incredible situation, and it's certainly horrible for the young people and their families. I am terribly sympathetic to that, but I have an issue here where there's a person who has been charged with an offence. It's an alleged offence and for the Minister of Justice to be talking about a case while it's before the courts is completely wrong.

So I can speak in general about the issue of what we're trying to do about crime in the Northwest Territories. I have met with the chief superintendent of the RCMP and discussed with him the issues that we face with crime in the Northwest Territories. The Member raised some of the issues about the increase in the amount of crime. It's not just in Yellowknife; it's all across the Northwest

Territories. We have the second-highest crime rate in Canada. It is an issue of concern to me.

One of the ways we're hoping to address that is to respond to the RCMP's business plan which called for an increase in the number of officers, and hopefully we will be able to see through that some way to address it. Not only that, but the department has funded one RCMP position to work in the city of Yellowknife with agencies like the Community Wellness Coalition to help deal with issues of public safety. There are a number of different programs that are active in the community. The Citizens on Patrol program is going to be in operation fairly soon; there are a number of other ones.

Members can be assured that I am very concerned about the crime rates in the Northwest Territories. I can't speak specifically about any one case that's currently before the courts though. I will do my best to make sure that we can address the issue of the rising crime rate.

MR. SPEAKER: Just to remind Members, as we all know, we are not allowed to touch on issues which are before the courts, and also not to name names in the House. So just to caution the Members that if you're talking about particular programs and services privy to the department I have no problem with that, but just to caution you that you're not allowed to raise issues which are before the courts. Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 4-15(3): Rising Crime Rate And Public Protection

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't know if we're talking about the same case, because as far as I know this case has been tried and this young man has been charged and sent to jail for seven years, and this is his third time before the court and it has been done and dealt with.

I do believe that we have to show more than regret in knowing that our young girls are being sexually assaulted at knifepoint near a school and near a home. This is in our backyard. I have a very specific question to the Minister. Why is it that we don't have any communication plan? Why is it the RCMP cannot let the community know that we have a dangerous sexual offender on the loose? In extreme cases, why can't we do that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Justice.

Further Return To Question 4-15(3): Rising Crime Rate And Public Protection

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The RCMP can do that and have done that in the past, but it is entirely the RCMP's decision as to when they should make that sort of announcement.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 4-15(3): Rising Crime Rate And Public Protection

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's good to know that they can do that, and I would suggest that the Minister let them know that they ought to do that in situations like this. My follow-up question, Mr. Speaker, is in this offender's case there are reports that clearly state that he's at high risk, that it is mostly likely that he will reoffend. There

were reports on him saying that on the previous two occasions. Now he has gone to jail for another seven years. Would he look into whether or not in cases like this -- where there are professional assessments, where there are mental health treatment programs and assessments show that he's likely to offend -- there is something that we can do as a government? Could the Minister do anything to make a note of that and to make sure that that sort of offender who goes on probation is watched and supervised and the community is properly notified? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Justice, Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 4-15(3): Rising Crime Rate And Public Protection

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can certainly, as I said I would to Mr. Hawkins, take a look at the issue of a registry and see whether or not that would work in the Northwest Territories. In this sort of situation, the new Youth Criminal Justice Act would allow a different approach, and that is an intensive supervision program. So in the future with this kind of offender, it's likely that there would be a more intensive supervision program in place that would reduce the chances of this kind of offence happening again. Unfortunately, that wasn't in place when he was released the last time. I'm referring to the individual in this case, Mr. Speaker, because the Member is right; the sentence has been issued in this case that she's referring to. I do think that in the future with that kind of support, there's less chance that this sort of reoffence would happen. But the federal law has changed in the interim since his previous release. So I've already answered the first part of her question and to the second part, the federal law has changed to allow a different kind of supervision to ensure this sort of thing doesn't happen again.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 4-15(3): Rising Crime Rate And Public Protection

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could I ask the Minister to provide us with his precise action plan as to what he plans on doing, a very specific implementation plan as to what he is prepared to do or what he's putting into place for situations like this kind of offender? I realize we don't have a lot of them, I hope, but in cases as precise and dangerous as this, what specific steps is he putting into place so that if he comes out into the open or anybody else of similar criminality that they will be supervised and monitored? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Justice.

Further Return To Question 4-15(3): Rising Crime Rate And Public Protection

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd be happy to provide that to the Member. I'm not sure if she wants me to provide that in writing so that she's got it in a lot of detail. As I've said earlier, one of the first steps is to try and respond to the RCMP business plan to make sure we have adequate policing here in the Northwest Territories. We are supporting community programs like the Wellness Coalition and the Citizens on Patrol program, which again should help to reduce the opportunities for this sort of offence to ever take place.

Under the Youth Criminal Justice Act there is a new sentence that allows for intensive supervision of offenders, which again is another opportunity that would make sure that the offence does not get repeated. Those are just some of the steps, but I would be happy to follow up with the Member in terms of other steps, if she would like. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 6, oral questions. Mrs. Groenewegen.

Question 5-15(3): Plans To Divide RWED Department

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. Mr. Speaker, everybody seems to be referring to newspaper articles today. I have an article here from the Yellowknifer, November 12th, 2003, and the headline reads, "Handley says RWED will be Split in Two: Potential Premier Provides Commitment to Upgrade Tourism." I'd like to ask the Minister, Mr. Bell, what is the status of any kind of a plan or a study or anything to undertake such a thing as splitting RWED? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Bell.

Return To Question 5-15(3): Plans To Divide RWED Department

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to assure the Member that no decisions have been made at this point. We're simply reviewing options internally. I've asked the department to have a look at a number of options and come back and discuss them with me on a continuum to help us more effectively deliver services and programs which would isolate both the environmental and wildlife aspects of the department from economic development.

The Member knows that there are many things that are driving this discussion, not the least of which is the immense development going on in the Northwest Territories at this point. As all Members know, I'm working on this internally and once those range of options have been presented to me I'll be coming back to all 19 Members so that we can have a discussion. Certainly nothing will be done prior to that discussion with all 19 Members. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 5-15(3): Plans To Divide RWED Department

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm aware that there may be some very real merits to something like this being undertaken, that there will be a lot of considerations of things such as costs. Can the Minister just perhaps summarize some of benefits? He made reference to wildlife and environment versus the economic development side. Could he just articulate some of the benefits that might be achieved by seeing these two activities separated? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 5-15(3): Plans To Divide RWED Department

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you. As the Member has indicated, cost will be a factor. I think we'll need to strike a balance. Obviously if we're going to make any substantial change, it may cost money initially. I believe it will cost money initially, but this has to be about improving program and service delivery. I think this government has always said that one of our priorities is the protection of the environment, the protection of our wildlife. I think what may inevitably happen is that as a government we've been so focused on economic development, the need to train people, the need to make sure that northerners are able to take advantage of economic development, I think that is of critical importance. But we can't lose sight of the need to also protect the environment, protect our wildlife and make sure that this pristine North is here for future generations. Will this cost money? Potentially it will, but we'll have some discussion about that and I hope Members will be prepared to sit down and look at a range of options. I think we need to strike a balance that's going to be about the most effective program and service delivery at the end of the day. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 5-15(3): Plans To Divide RWED Department

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister has made reference to consulting the 19 Members of this House and I very much appreciate that and would look forward to having a look at those options once they've been generated. He did mention that these options were coming from within the department, so they're internal options that are being brought forward and I'd just like to know if he's had any early responses from any of the stakeholders in these areas as to how they would receive this change. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 5-15(3): Plans To Divide RWED Department

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you. As the Member indicates, there are a number of stakeholders and many people who will be concerned and will want to know what we're proposing to do, not the least of which are employees of this government who may be affected. We will certainly keep all of these stakeholders and all of these folks in the loop, but as preliminary at this point we've simply asked, I've asked the department to go back and have a look at a number of these considerations and discuss a range of options so that we can sit down with the Members of this House, all 19 Members. At that point, after getting some sense from the Members as to what their priorities are, we are proposing that we'll then engage the various stakeholders and make sure that everybody understands where we're proposing to go. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Delorey.

Question 6-15(3): Bidding Process For The Arctic Winter Games

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement today I made reference to the

Arctic Winter Games and for myself, Mr. Speaker, the Arctic Winter Games are very important both to the North and to the residents of the Northwest Territories. Apart from athletes participating in the games, there's also an awful lot of interest generated in who is going to host the games and where they're going to be hosted from year to year. As the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs may be aware, there are competing interests right now as to where the next Arctic Winter Games would be held. I know a lot of this rests with the international committee, but I was wondering if the Minister could inform the House as to whether he's met with the international committee during the Arctic Winter Games this year and how this meeting went. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Zoe.

Return To Question 6-15(3): Bidding Process For The Arctic Winter Games

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I did have an opportunity to meet with the Arctic Winter Games International Committee. There was concern raised by a group of people south of the lake in regards to the bidding process. The policy that the international committee has does not really comply to the needs of the people that want to put a bid forward. I did raise that concern with the Arctic Winter Games Corporation International Committee and I've asked them to see the possibility of amending the policy so that other members across the Territories can have a fair chance of bidding for the 2008 Arctic Winter Games here in the Northwest Territories. I did raise that concern with them and they will be replying to me in writing in the near future. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Delorey.

Supplementary To Question 6-15(3): Bidding Process For The Arctic Winter Games

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if this government doesn't agree with the decisions or the policy that comes forward from the international committee, what avenues do we have to object to any of their decisions or influence a decision that they're making in policy or any other decision as far as the international committee is concerned? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of MACA, Mr. Zoe.

Further Return To Question 6-15(3): Bidding Process For The Arctic Winter Games

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated, I did raise that issue with the international committee. I've ultimately suggested to them that this was a big concern for some residents in certain regions of the Territories that want to put forward their bid. I asked to see the possibility. As you know, 2008 is quite a ways away from now and I've already had an opportunity also to talk to the people from south of the lake regarding my discussions that I had with the international committee. We are waiting for a formal response from them and I've made a commitment to the people south of the lake that once I receive that correspondence I will share it with them and we'll proceed to the next step. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Delorey.

Supplementary To Question 6-15(3): Bidding Process For The Arctic Winter Games

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I acknowledge the fact that the Minister says the next games are not until 2008, which is quite a ways away. In actual fact, when you're planning for the games and make commitments to host the games, four years is not that long a period of time. I would like to get a commitment from the Minister though that the international committee did not close the door on another proponent. I was under the impression that they had said pretty well flat no, that they weren't willing to change the policy. Is the Minister committing that they are willing to look at the policy again, possibly making changes as to who can host the games? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of MACA, Mr. Zoe.

Further Return To Question 6-15(3): Bidding Process For The Arctic Winter Games

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm making a commitment to the honourable Member for Hay River North that I am going to pursue this further. As soon as I receive the formal response, as I've said, I'll share it with the people from south of the lake to see what avenues we can take to continue to try to convince the Arctic Winter Games International Committee to change their policy. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplementary, Mr. Delorey.

Supplementary To Question 6-15(3): Bidding Process For The Arctic Winter Games

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that answer and I look forward to that information coming forward. Maybe when that information comes forward -- or maybe the Minister can tell me right now -- when the Arctic Winter Games were first established, who made the decisions on where the games were held and when was the international committee established? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Zoe.

Further Return To Question 6-15(3): Bidding Process For The Arctic Winter Games

HON. HENRY ZOE: My recollection is way back in 1970 when the Arctic Winter Games were first introduced it was with Commissioner Hodgson, the Governor of Alaska and the Premier of Yukon who originated these games. In terms of your other question on the international committee, the international committee is a separate corporation that was set up so that it's an arms-length away from all governments. We wanted them to undertake these games so that it's all fairly done in all regions in the three, when it was initially started, Alaska, Yukon and Northwest Territories. Now, in that each jurisdiction appoints two members to the international committee, in our case, today, the government appoints one for the Government of the Northwest Territories and we also have one from the private sector. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Yakeleya.

Question 7-15(3): Access To Aboriginal Language Services

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned in my statement about March being the month to recognize aboriginal languages, my question is to the Premier, the leader of the Government of the Northwest Territories. I'd like to know what the Premier is doing in terms of the government in the direction of all the departments that he works with in terms of strengthening and respecting our languages in the Northwest Territories, especially in the Sahtu where our older people have the access to speak freely in their languages, rather than to run around and look for translators here and there. In all departments our people, it seems, have to always wait for a translator. I guess the question for the Premier is what are you doing to direct your Ministers to ensure that all the aboriginal languages are easily used in the communities?

MR. SPEAKER: Premier, Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'll refer that question to the Minister responsible for official languages. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 7-15(3): Access To Aboriginal Language Services

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the previous government responded to the 65 recommendations of the Special Committee on Official Languages in 2003 and one of the responses was the passing of the new Official Languages Act. One of the things that will be happening by July 1st of this year is there will be an aboriginal languages revitalization board established and the purpose of that board will be to maintain, promote and revitalize NWT aboriginal languages. I will also, by July 1st, be announcing the establishment of an official languages board which would advise myself on issues related to the provision and administration of the Official Languages Act. We are also right now in the process of developing a framework for the creation of an official languages secretariat to support the two boards.

We're moving this year to set up these two boards to provide advice to this government on how we can better revitalize and protect aboriginal languages. That's in terms of an overall, government-wide response to official languages.

The Member talked in his statement today about the importance of understanding your own culture and language in order to be successful, and that is certainly reflected in the philosophy of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment as well. One of the goals is to make sure that schooling is available in all the communities in the first language of that region. So we are working with the divisional educational councils and ECE to help provide resources to make sure that can happen. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

Supplementary To Question 7-15(3): Access To Aboriginal Language Services

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I ask the question again to the Premier. He may refer me to the Minister. However, Mr. Speaker, the other part of my Member's statement has to do with the culture and we have a lot of people from outside the Sahtu that come into the Sahtu from the southern parts of Canada to work in their profession such as policing, nursing, teachers, social workers and other workers that come into the Sahtu region. I want to know what the government is doing to support those workers in terms of doing some cross-cultural training. There are some agencies doing it voluntarily, some doing it in terms of it being good for the people. Is there any policy or mandate that people who come into a small community do a cross-cultural training or is it done just on a voluntary basis? I wanted to ask the Premier that question in terms of what this government is doing to support cross-cultural training.

MR. SPEAKER: Again, I'd just like to remind Mr. Yakeleya, you're dealing with a different subject. You started off with languages, now you're talking about cross-cultural matters. It is sort of a new question, but I will allow the Premier to take the question. Mr. Premier.

Further Return To Question 7-15(3): Access To Aboriginal Language Services

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, without doing a survey of all of the departments in the government and all the boards and agencies that carry out work on our behalf, I can't be 100 percent accurate. But most of the government departments, for example, Health and Social Services, Education, Culture and Employment and so on, do have their own cross-cultural training programs. For example, the Dogrib Community Services Board or education board takes the teachers out on the land and they spend a number of days out. I think the same is true with the Department of Health and Social Services. They do training with their employees that are going to small communities. With the RCMP there is a lot of training that goes on. I'm not sure if it's required or if it's one that they do voluntarily. The private sector is another matter. I think there it's up to a decision that's made by each employer. Our government would not have the authority to require everyone to provide cross-cultural training. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

Supplementary To Question 7-15(3): Access To Aboriginal Language Services

MR. YAKELEYA: I apologize, Mr. Speaker, for using my questions up. I will keep it to language this time. Mr. Speaker, the language programs are key to the survival of the aboriginal people in our communities and I want to let the Minister responsible for language know that I want to keep in close contact in terms of the availability of our languages in the Sahtu region and in other small communities. I am not too sure if I am going to end up with a question here, Mr. Speaker, I think it is just a comment so I apologize.

MR. SPEAKER: The question is directed to the Premier, Mr. Handley.

---Applause

Further Return To Question 7-15(3): Access To Aboriginal Language Services

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I didn't hear a question so I can't answer when there is no question. Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Ohhhh.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Braden.

Question 8-15(3): Rising WCB Assessment Rates

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions this afternoon are in follow-up to my statement. I would direct them to the Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board. It is a well-known fact, Mr. Speaker, that the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, under a joint board, have enjoyed among the lowest assessment rates in Canada, but what is alarming is the rate of increase. From four years ago to now, we are looking at rates that are going from a \$1 to about \$2.40. It is this rate of increase, Mr. Speaker, that I would like to address. My question to the Minister is what are the principle drivers behind WCB assessment rates rising almost two-and-a-half times in just four years? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board, Mr. Bell.

Return To Question 8-15(3): Rising WCB Assessment Rates

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are a number of factors at play here and I think the Members may be aware of a number of them. I have been receiving a number of queries on the 2004 assessment rates in my office, so what I have done is sent a letter to all Members of the Assembly to try to give them some background and some explanation as to why rates are increasing. For 2004, the rates are based on actual 2002 claims experience for that year and the average assessment rate will be \$2.39 per \$100 of assessable payroll. The board, though, will continue to subsidize by 20 percent those rates. So the average assessment rate will, in effect, the rate that employers will pay will be \$1.91. I think it is important to keep that in mind, but obviously we know that the returns from investments over the past five years have not been what they were prior, and so the surplus has been diminished. As well as the 2002 claims experience, obviously the cost of claims has been going up as the cost of delivering health care across the country has been going up. So I suppose that is really no surprise, but there are a couple of factors here at work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary To Question 8-15(3): Rising WCB Assessment Rates

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So we have a poor market and an increase in the cost of claims and health care coverage. I was interested in finding out really, you know related to the shared jurisdiction that we have here, have the incidents of accidents and the cost of claims been more or less consistent between Nunavut and the NWT? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 8-15(3): Rising WCB Assessment Rates

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is a very good question and one that I will undertake to get some more detail on. I do believe that the incidence of claims has been higher in the Northwest Territories, but I will confirm that and get back to the Member. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary To Question 8-15(3): Rising WCB Assessment Rates

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, I look forward to getting that information. A bit more specific in the area of the recent increase in assessments in the fast food restaurant; this would, I think, apply perhaps largely to the service sector. The one business that I know of is experiencing a 69 percent increase in assessment rates from one year to the next. The information that I have, Mr. Speaker, indicates that there is a policy or guideline that wants to keep rates, if rates are going to increase, to no more than 25 percent. Could the Minister explain the discrepancy between that threshold or that cap and the 69 percent that this sector is experiencing? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board, Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 8-15(3): Rising WCB Assessment Rates

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you. It is difficult to address this question concisely. It probably does require some background. In order to determine what various industries or subclasses will pay, the WCB analyzes the claims experience for those industries. I think there are 29 subclasses or industries. Now, some of these industries have very few employees. So if there happen to be claims in one year it can quite drastically skew the claims experience for that subclass or industry and if we go with the philosophy that each industry should pay its own way, this can be very difficult for an industry with fewer employees in a year. So there is a smoothing effect that takes place and there is a cross-subsidization. The WCB has been looking into this and believes that it is necessary to do a review to ensure that industries are bearing the full cost of that claims experience by industry and that it is not spread over or shared among other industries. I know that a consultant has been hired to analyze this and look at this and make sure that when they come back in the summer and have some discussion with the various different stakeholders and employers, there is more accurate information as to what goes on between subclasses.

As to a 60 percent increase, I don't have that data in front of me to know if in fact that is the case. I will take the Member's word for it; it does seem very high. I will go back and look at it and see if in fact that is the case, but the attempt here is to make sure that industries pay their own way and that there isn't subsidization from other industries. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Your final supplementary, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary To Question 8-15(3): Rising WCB Assessment Rates

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business and the surveys that it did last year indicates that with the low rates that we have, we should be looking at this as a significant advantage. The CFIB points out that this is a competitive advantage for the NWT and Nunavut when it comes to setting up business and employing workers in the NWT. It even goes so far as to credit the board here as being a low cost and well managed board. What steps are we taking to protect that advantage especially in light, Mr. Speaker, of the indication that we have here that rates have increased by more than two-and-a-half times in only four years? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 8-15(3): Rising WCB Assessment Rates

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Workplace safety is obviously paramount and the WCB makes many efforts to ensure that safety training is offered and provided and carried out where employers are concerned, and that we do our utmost to conduct safety inspections at worksites. I think the most important thing here to remember is that we need to keep the incidents of workplace injuries to an absolute minimum, and the WCB is striving to do that. I think it is also important to keep in mind that I would acknowledge that this is a competitive advantage. At one point, I believe we had the lowest assessment rates in the country and I still believe that we are one of the lowest, certainly in the top five. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Menicoche.

Question 9-15(3): NWT Housing Needs Survey

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My questions will be directed to the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation. I am well aware that the needs survey is going to be tabled with us here today. However, I was getting some feedback from residents in Fort Liard that there was going to be no new allocations, there will be no new mortgage clients this year for 2004. I am wondering how these needs are assessed and want to know if the Minister can comment on that for me.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. McLeod.

Return To Question 9-15(3): NWT Housing Needs Survey

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the arrangement in Fort Liard is with the community's cooperative arrangement. The core needs assessment the Member has referred to is currently being finalized. We don't have that information before us and ready for the House at this point. We will be tabling that document, hopefully before the end of our session. In terms of what is being allocated for Fort Liard, I don't have that level of detail in front of me so I would have to take that question as notice, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The question has been taken as notice. Item 6, oral questions. Mrs. Groenewegen.

Question 10-15(3): Medical Travel Arrangements

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. There is a lot of pressure on our funding for health services in the Northwest Territories and one large-ticket item is medical travel. Certainly, the GNWT is probably a fairly significant customer to the major airlines here in the Northwest Territories that travel south, and probably not as significant as we used to be in relation to industry but certainly still very significant. On Northbeat last night, they'd indicated that in Nunavut, the Minister of Health had negotiated with First Air and Canadian North a reduced rate on the basis of guaranteed business. So one airline will get 60 percent guaranteed of the medical travel; one will get 40 percent. On that basis they were able to offer a significant reduction in the costs that will probably save the Government of Nunavut several million dollars over the next five years. I would like to ask the Minister, Mr. Miltenberger, if this is something that has ever been canvassed with the airline carriers here. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Return To Question 10-15(3): Medical Travel Arrangements

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am aware that there were discussions in Nunavut, but it is not an approach that we have taken to date in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 10-15(3): Medical Travel Arrangements

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, would the Minister have a ballpark figure on what we would spend on medical travel, excluding that portion which is emergency medical travel which requires specialized equipment and aircraft? I just want the general, mainline carriers. What would we spend in a year on medical travel, approximately? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 10-15(3): Medical Travel Arrangements

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, the broad figure for medical travel, which I don't have broken down in my mind, but I know the ballpark figure is about \$10 million a year. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 10-15(3): Medical Travel Arrangements

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister indicated that approaching the airlines with some kind of a proposal for a certain amount of business, sharing the business is not an approach that he has chosen to take. I was wondering with an expenditure like \$10 million if this isn't something that he

might consider visiting that subject with the airlines. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger

Further Return To Question 10-15(3): Medical Travel Arrangements

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will commit to contact my colleague in Nunavut. As well, I will talk to the department about it and, as well, commit to discussing the issue in Cabinet to see what the possible broader implications may or may not be to the overall travel industry. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 10-15(3): Medical Travel Arrangements

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, I would not be supportive of anything that was detrimental to the airline carriers and I understand that is a very fragile business as well, but they do offer savings on an ongoing basis, things such as reduced rate seat sales, reductions for pre-booking a certain amount of time, also special rates for seniors. Does the department and the people in medical travel who make these arrangements on behalf of patients take advantage of at least those kinds of offerings that are made by the airlines? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 10-15(3): Medical Travel Arrangements

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, when we do medical travel we attempt to be as frugal as possible, as effective and efficient as possible. Oftentimes medical travel is booked on short notice so we don't often get the benefits of long-range planning. We do attempt to be as careful as we can be. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Time for oral questions is over. Item 7, written questions. Mr. Allen.

ITEM 7: WRITTEN QUESTIONS**Written Question 1-15(3): Bill Of Intent To Seek Provincial Status**

MR. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a written question for the Premier of the Northwest Territories.

Would the Premier provide an in-depth political analysis of those sections of the Constitution Act, 1982, which give constitutionality to other political institutions in the Northwest Territories, which you must consult with prior to the introduction of a bill of intent to achieve provincehood?

Will he provide analysis of the applicability of relevant past provisions of the BNA/Constitution acts?

Would the continuity of laws not consistent with those of the act be impacted?

Would changes to the judicial system be required? How would it affect the other territories? Would it require their participation?

Would revenue from federal government and provincial taxation be impacted?

Would the continuity of federal laws governing resources, such as the Territorial Lands Act, be impacted in the interim until provincial laws are established under Section 92? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 7, written questions. Mr. Menicoche.

Written Question 2-15(3): Search For Missing Willow Lake River Resident

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have a written question for the Minister of Justice.

Recently, on Saturday March 13, 2004, a young, mentally-challenged woman from my riding, from the Willow Lake River, was missing for over 24 hours and the RCMP were notified but did not respond for a search. I just want to ask the Minister responsible to see if there is a satisfactory answer by the RCMP in responding to a search for this young woman in Willow Lake River. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 7, written questions. Item 8, petitions. Item 9, reports of standing and special committees. Item 10, tabling of documents. Item 11, notices of motion, Mr. Allen.

ITEM 11: NOTICES OF MOTION

Motion 1-15(3): Appointment Of Deputy Chairpersons Of Committee Of The Whole

MR. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Thursday, March 18, 2004, I will move the following motion. Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Frame Lake, that the honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Calvin Pokiak, and the honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. David Ramsay, be appointed as deputy chairpersons of Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 11, notices of motion. Mr. Hawkins.

Motion 2-15(3): Setting Of Sitting Hours By Speaker

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, March 18, 2004, I will move the following motion. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Kam Lake, that the Speaker be authorized to set such sitting days and hours as the Speaker, after consultation, deems fit to assist with the business before the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 11, notices of motion. Item 12, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Mr. Roland.

ITEM 12: NOTICES OF MOTION FOR FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 1: Appropriation Act, 2004-2005

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Thursday, March 18, 2004, I will move that Bill 1, Appropriation Act, 2004-2005, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 13, motions. Item 14, first reading of bills. Item 15, second reading of bills. Item 16, orders of the day. Mr. Clerk, Orders of the Day.

ITEM 16: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Orders of the Day for Wednesday, March 17th:

1. Prayer
2. Budget Address
3. Ministers' Statements
4. Members' Statements
5. Returns to Oral Questions
6. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Opening Address
11. Replies to Budget Address
12. Petitions
13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
14. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
15. Tabling of Documents
16. Notices of Motion
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. Motions
19. First Reading of Bills
20. Second Reading of Bills
21. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
22. Report of Committee of the Whole
23. Third Reading of Bills
24. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Wednesday, March 17, 2004, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 3:35 p.m.