



# **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Session**

**Day 13**

**15<sup>th</sup> Assembly**

## **HANSARD**

**Wednesday, May 26, 2004**

Pages 531 - 556

**The Honourable David Krutko, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Wednesday, May 26, 2004****Members Present**

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):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. I would like to welcome the Members back to the House. I hope you had a nice spring break and visit with your constituents. I would like to welcome Ethel Blondin-Andrew.

---Applause

Mr. Terry Foster.

---Applause

Before we get going, I would like to read a statement. I would like to advise the House that I have received the following message from the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories: "Dear Mr. Speaker, I wish to recommend to the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories passage of Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2004-05, during the Third Session of the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly. Glenna F. Hansen, Commissioner." Thank you.

Item 2, Ministers' statements. Premier Handley.

**ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS****Minister's Statement 28-15(3): Sessional Statement**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are now six months into the term of the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly and much has been accomplished. In January, I told this House that I looked to the future of the Northwest Territories with enthusiasm. Since then, I have travelled to many communities and talked with many leaders and residents of the Northwest Territories. My optimism for the future has increased even more.

Today, I want to discuss how we have approached our work in the first six months of our mandate. I would also like to provide an overview of the strategic plan of the Government of the Northwest Territories, which I intend to table later today, and provide an update on a number of the specific actions that we are taking in response to what we have heard to date from Members and northern leaders.

**A New Way Of Doing Business**

Mr. Speaker, some have argued the first step in the life of this government should have been to develop an agenda for the next four years. I disagree.

When the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly took office in December, Members signalled that we were looking for new ways of doing business. We agreed to work together to make consensus government stronger, to ensure

transparency and openness and be more responsive to the people of the Northwest Territories. We agreed to work in partnership with other governments to build an agenda that has a broad base of support throughout the territory.

In six short, busy months, significant progress has been made towards these objectives.

**Strengthening Consensus Government**

Mr. Speaker, we are deeply committed to running government in a more open, transparent and cooperative manner. I believe the Members of this House share the desire to demonstrate to the rest of Canada consensus government at its best in spirit and in its actions.

Does this mean we will always agree? Of course not, nor should we. To be successful, consensus government needs a vigorous and full debate on the issues, one that ensures all viewpoints are on the table. We have already seen some differences of opinion in this legislature, on issues of policy and direction. We should, and will, see many more over the life of this assembly.

Members have met often during the past six months to discuss how to move forward. These discussions have been very productive and we thank the other Members of Caucus for their input, for their support and for their constructive criticism. We have looked for ways to ensure input from all Members of the 15<sup>th</sup> Assembly into the decision-making process.

In March, Cabinet and AOC agreed to establish a joint planning committee to oversee pipeline planning for this government, chaired by the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, the Honourable Brendan Bell. I am pleased to note this committee is up and running with the initial meeting of the joint committee held yesterday. This project, perhaps the most important we will deal with during our term of office, is of integral importance to all people in the Northwest Territories and requires input from all regions.

We are also looking for other ways to bring regular Members into the decision-making process. The Minister of Health and Social Services, the Honourable Michael Miltenberger, has been tasked with the long overdue job of reviewing boards and agencies.

---Applause

Over the coming days, we will be discussing with the Chair and Members of AOC ways to ensure regular Members are involved. This review will look at the role and mandate of the many boards and agencies we have in the NWT and make recommendations on how to make them more effective.

Mr. Speaker, these are small but important steps. Will we always get it right? No. Will we always agree? Of course not. What we must do is ensure a full debate of the issues and see that all viewpoints are taken into account during the decision-making process.

**Open And Transparent Government**

Mr. Speaker, one of the guiding principles all Members of Cabinet and I believe all Members of Caucus felt strongly about when we took office was the need to ensure our decisions are made based on the public interest and in a forthright and open manner.

The people of the Northwest Territories, through this Legislative Assembly, have placed their trust in us to lead the government through the next four years. As a Cabinet, we strongly believe it is critical we act with honesty, integrity and impartiality and we uphold the highest ethical standards in carrying out the responsibilities entrusted to us.

We have made an important commitment to be inclusive, transparent and accountable in our decision-making. To ensure inclusiveness, we will continue to work hard as a Cabinet to earn the support and respect of our Caucus colleagues, our partner aboriginal and municipal governments and all residents of the Northwest Territories. To ensure transparent and accountable government, our decisions will be made, and be seen to be made, on the merits of the issue and in the public interest.

We have taken steps to ensure this openness, inclusiveness and transparency. One example of this is our commitment to ensure information about travel by Ministers is made public on a regular basis. I will be tabling the first ministerial travel report later this session and this information will also be available on the government Web site.

### **Building Strong Partnerships**

Trust is the foundation upon which good relationships are built, both at home and in the workplace. It takes time to build trust. It has to be earned; with consistent actions, respect for input received, and a demonstrated commitment to live up to promises made.

At the outset of our term, the Members of the 15<sup>th</sup> Assembly agreed a new approach was needed to develop an agenda for this assembly. Caucus rejected the old method of developing an agenda based solely on the views of the 19 Members of the Legislative Assembly and in isolation of other governments in the Northwest Territories. Members felt it was important we embark on a new way of doing business that emphasized partnership and collaboration.

Partnership requires meaningful dialogue and consultation. Members of this Assembly have spent a great deal of time meeting with leaders, organizations and residents across our territory. These discussions have confirmed there is a great deal of support for the direction taken by Caucus to build an agenda based on the priorities of all people in the Northwest Territories. As a Caucus, we are determined to open up the lines of communication with all northern residents.

We agreed we must start by finding new ways to talk with other northern leaders, discussion that allows for a frank exchange of views and creates a foundation for understanding and working together.

Mr. Speaker, this foundation has begun to be established with the Circle of Northern Leaders meeting, held on the Hay River Reserve from April 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup>. This historic meeting, which brought together over 50 leaders from all regions of the Northwest Territories, was an important first step in redefining how northern governments will communicate with each other. Northern leaders agreed northern governments must work together to establish an overall agenda for the NWT.

At that meeting, the Aboriginal Summit tabled a proposal to establish an intergovernmental assembly that would provide an ongoing forum for such discussions. We

strongly support such a forum and will be working with our partner government to make it a reality.

Partnership also means working with other governments in the Northwest Territories on matters of priority to them. In January I spoke about this government's commitment to the negotiation and implementation of aboriginal rights agreements in the Northwest Territories, agreements that will bring further clarity and certainty to governance in our territory.

Mr. Speaker, we are working hard with the Tlicho to finalize the drafting of the Tlicho Community Services Agency Act for introduction in this Legislative Assembly. This legislation represents another important step in the implementation of aboriginal rights in the Northwest Territories. It is the third and final piece of legislation required of this Legislative Assembly to ratify the Tlicho Land Claim and Self-Government Agreement, the first combined land claims and self-government agreement in our history.

Mr. Speaker, this government also recognizes the importance of building a foundation for strong, self-reliant community governments. In collaboration with community governments, we will move to provide the tools for community governments to achieve greater autonomy with the legislative and financial ability to govern effectively, manage their priorities and be accountable to their constituents.

We have been working towards this goal for many years, the goal of providing community governments, in a supportive and collaborative manner, with the full authority and responsibility they have been asking for. The Honourable Henry Zoe, Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, will be outlining our plans in this regard to municipal leaders at the annual general meeting of the Northwest Territories Association of Communities next month in Hay River.

Mr. Speaker, strong political partnerships must be complemented by equally strong economic partnerships with other governments and the private sector. These partnerships are required to build desperately needed infrastructure to further economic projects or to fund critically needed training programs. We have seen many examples of such partnerships unfold over the past few months. The Deh Cho Bridge project and hydro development in the Akaitcho and Sahtu regions are examples of the government and aboriginal groups working together in a productive manner on key projects.

We have worked with other levels of government to match funding on critical infrastructure programming. The Minister of Transportation, the Honourable Michael McLeod, has worked with his federal colleagues to obtain funding from the strategic infrastructure program to fund important infrastructure projects. Last week, Minister McLeod joined with the Honourable Ethel Blondin-Andrew, the Member of Parliament for the Western Arctic, to mark the beginning of work to reconstruct and pave the final 30 kilometres between Yellowknife and Rae.

---Applause

Earlier this month, the GNWT joined the federal government, aboriginal governments and industry in announcing a new mine training partnership funded by the GNWT, Canada and industry. Such programs will help train more of our people to take advantage of the opportunities created through the development of northern resources.

Mr. Speaker, by negotiating aboriginal rights agreements, by taking partnership approaches to economic and infrastructure projects and by ensuring a greater role for all governments in the NWT, we are building on our work during the first six months to create strong and lasting partnerships that are, in the long-term, a benefit to all residents of the Northwest Territories.

### **Government Of The Northwest Territories' Strategic Plan**

Mr. Speaker, over the past six months we have listened to leaders and residents of the Northwest Territories about the issues and priorities they believe are important.

We have been guided by input from Members of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight. I would like to thank the chairman of AOC, Mr. Kevin Menicoche, and all Members of the Legislative Assembly for providing timely and important advice. This has contributed significantly to the development of the Government of the Northwest Territories' strategic plan, which I am pleased to table today.

### **Strong Fiscal Leadership**

Mr. Speaker, this government is fully committed to sound fiscal management. The first budget presented by the Minister of Finance, the Honourable Floyd Roland, signalled our intent to balance both the expenditure and revenue side of our budget. We will continue to move forward in a manner that ensures the long-term fiscal sustainability of this government. This will require us to make difficult choices in the short term in order to protect those programs and services essential to all people and communities in the Northwest Territories.

It also means we must continue to press the federal government on concluding a fair agreement on formula financing negotiations. It means that we must continue to work with our partner aboriginal governments on reaching a devolution and resource revenue sharing agreement that ensures a fair sharing of resource revenues with northern governments.

While we intend to run a tight ship, we will also make strategic investments that make sense in light of the priorities we collectively establish, as a government, as a Caucus and as northern leaders.

### **Strategic Plan Overview**

In December, I said that I saw my role as Premier to "...lead a government with a vision developed and supported by all MLAs, a vision that we need to be prepared to modify as time progresses and as we are advised by our partners." I believe this government and this legislature are on course to realize this objective.

The strategic plan of the Government of the Northwest Territories represents a starting point in our ongoing discussions with the people of the Northwest Territories. We have looked at the opportunities and challenges that define where we are today and have built on the vision and goals of the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly to identify actions that get us where we want to be in the future.

The strategic plan is a 10-year plan. However, this does not mean it is carved in stone. It is important that this strategic plan is seen as a living document. It is a planning tool to help us identify our course of action. These actions will be reviewed and modified over time as we receive guidance from Members of Caucus and northern leaders.

The strategic plan sets our broad direction to the Government of the Northwest Territories by listing

priorities and actions supporting the vision and goals of the Legislative Assembly. These priorities and actions represent a snapshot in time, not an exhaustive listing of all areas we will concentrate on over the next four years. They will be changed, modified and added to as we continue to work with our partners. The broad direction established in the strategic plan will provide direction to departments on the development of detailed departmental business plans for review by the Legislative Assembly.

The spirit of the strategic plan is captured in the title "Self-Reliant People, Communities and Northwest Territories -- A Shared Responsibility." It emphasizes that we must each do our part, individually and collectively, to better our own lives and those of the people around us. Working together towards shared objectives, we can all reap the benefits and rewards of a vibrant Northwest Territories.

### **Some Specific Actions**

Mr. Speaker, while the strategic plan is a 10-year plan, we have already begun to take concrete actions based on priority issues identified by Members and northern leaders. I would like to briefly speak about a number of these actions today.

### **Mackenzie Valley Gas Pipeline Project**

As the development of the Mackenzie Valley pipeline approaches, we must be prepared, as a legislature and as a government, for this historic development. I have already spoken about the joint Cabinet/AOC planning committee that will allow for a more collaborative approach to the planning for this project.

The pipeline project and associated gas development will be a complex undertaking using state of the art science and engineering practices. Our response to this project will be timely and relevant. To accomplish this we intend to establish a Mackenzie Valley pipeline office within the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development to coordinate our approach to this project.

### **Language And Culture**

Earlier this year, Members passed a motion confirming their view of the importance of early childhood programming and calling on government to restore funding for programming that ended on March 31<sup>st</sup>. Members talked about the need to support language and culture in early childhood programs to improve literacy results.

Mr. Speaker, this government agrees that early childhood programming is essential to long-term success. For this reason, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, the Honourable Charles Dent, joined the chairperson of the Standing Committee on Social Programs, Ms. Sandy Lee, on May 4<sup>th</sup> to announce our intention to seek additional funding authority from this assembly to build on early literacy by restoring the language nest program. This program will help support families and communities in ensuring our youngest residents are able to learn their respective language and culture.

### **Establishment Of A Family Law Legal Services Clinic**

Mr. Speaker, since the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly, we have heard from Members about the need to reduce the extended waiting period necessary for people to access legal aid. We agree many wait too long to see a legal aid family law lawyer. To address this issue, the Minister of Justice, the Honourable Charles Dent, has

been working hard with the Legal Services Board to address this issue.

I am pleased to announce we will be seeking supplementary funding during the current session to open a separate legal aid clinic dedicated to family law.

---Applause

It is proposed that this clinic employ two full-time family law lawyers and will be open in September. We believe this approach will assist in providing timely and effective family law services to those most in need.

#### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, the first six months of the mandate of the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly have been a success by any objective measure. We have found new, cooperative ways to do business. We have passed a budget and set a prudent fiscal course for the next four years and beyond.

Today we are publicly releasing our goals and vision for the Northwest Territories. As Premier, I am proud to release the strategic plan of the government, a document that builds upon the work all Members have done in our short time in office. I look forward to discussing the strategic plan with the Members of this legislature and other northern leaders in the coming weeks and months. Through such discussion, we can make sure we stay on course to achieve our long-term vision for a productive and self-reliant Northwest Territories in the years to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

### **ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

#### **Member's Statement On Condition Of Northern Schools**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, some weeks ago, I was at the Legislative Assembly when I saw my name on the computer. You can imagine my surprise when I saw a picture of the roof of the Samuel Hearne Secondary School classroom under the weight of a heavy snowstorm. I graduated from that school, Mr. Speaker. Is this what things have come to, Mr. Speaker? Will we be known across the country as a territory up north where schools are falling under the watchful eye of the government? I am thankful no one was particularly hurt, Mr. Speaker. It's an unfortunate time for mishap, Mr. Speaker. Many of the Grade 12 students are working hard in preparations for their final graduation.

I was interested to hear the options had come together quickly, so the Grade 12 classes will not be delayed. I have a great deal of sympathy for the students and parents who are working so hard under less than ideal conditions. Mr. Speaker, I have spoken before about the importance of comfortable and safe schools to provide space and a learning environment that creates opportunity for our children...(inaudible). During the last session, in a Member's statement I spoke quite strongly about the school children in Tulita. I mentioned some problems of Chief Albert Wright School having severe overcrowding, some structural problems and possibly health concerns as a result of poor ventilation. The Minister of Education, Culture and Employment was quick to respond to my

concerns, ensuring that these problems are not immediate health risks.

I thank the Minister and his staff for their vigilance. Working together we can ensure that the schools are supported, and are healthy and safe places for learning to take place. We don't want any more stories about the schools falling down across the Northwest Territories. I will have questions for the Minister at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

#### **Member's Statement On Driver's Licence As Proof Of Identity**

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the heightened security environment that we all live in today, more and more people are being asked to produce photo identification in the course of their day-to-day routines. Although drivers' licences are primarily intended to show that a person is qualified to operate a motor vehicle, in reality people do rely on them for proof of their identity in a number of situations. Many organizations, including banks and airlines, consider them a standard piece of identification. For many people, their driver's licence is the only kind of standard ID that they have. Mr. Speaker, I include myself in that group of people. Mr. Speaker, I was, therefore, very concerned to hear from a constituent of mine that while traveling to southern Canada, his driver's licence was rejected as a proof of identity, presumably because it did lack authenticity. Sadly, I know that this was not the only case. Although the idea of a national standard for drivers' licences has reached the drawing board of discussion, according to the Minister, the NWT drivers' licence needs some immediate considerations. At the appropriate time, Mr. Speaker, I will be asking the Minister of Transportation about his plans that will continue to ensure the confidence in the NWT drivers' licence. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 3, Members' statements. The Member for Nunakput, Mr. Pokiak.

#### **Member's Statement On Constituents' Concerns About Community Freezers**

**MR. POKIAK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My statement today is with regard to the community freezers in Paulatuk and Holman. At my recent constituency meeting in Paulatuk and Holman on April 29, 2004, the residents of these two communities raised, once again, the importance of community freezers. They indicated that community freezers are a vital component for the safe storage of their annual harvest. Mr. Speaker, the high cost of diesel-generated electricity running these freezers is expensive, there is no doubt about it. Small communities are struggling to meet the needs of their residents as it is, and they just do not have the cash laying around to cover thousands of dollars in utility costs. My constituents are concerned that if RWED cannot provide the necessary funds for the maintenance and operation of these freezers, their annual spring harvest will spoil and they will be left without traditional food. Traditional food plays a very significant role in their daily diet and offsets the high cost of buying southern foods in local stores. This government promotes traditional food as a healthier nutrition choice than a lot of what you can buy in the stores.



There is another factor that may come into play, which is one concern of the residents of Paulatuk and Homan, and that is the wastage of wild meat, which, in their culture, is forbidden. Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to discuss this issue with the honourable Minister on a couple of occasions. Today, as I speak, there is still no commitment from his department to address this important concern from the residents of Paulatuk and Holman by providing sufficient funds to maintain their freezers for the 2004-2005 season, and suffice it to say that government is looking for more energy efficient solutions, and in the long term I think that I will see that as the outcome. But, in the meantime, what are the people supposed to do?

Mr. Speaker, the weather is particularly warm and it is a concern for residents of Paulatuk and Holman and they cannot be without a safe storage for their annual spring and summer harvest. If resolution is not found today, my constituents will suffer in particular with regard to their traditional hunt and summer holidays.

Mr. Speaker, I ask for unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Member is seeking for consent to conclude his statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You have unanimous consent to conclude your statement.

**MR. POKIAK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the perfect time I will have questions for the honourable Minister of RWED. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 3, Members' statements. The Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

#### **Member's Statement On Access To Public Housing**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, navigating one's way through the government bureaucracy to access programs and services can be a difficult task at the best of times. In many cases this is something that can be overcome with patience and persistence. However, for people who depend on programs and services to meet their basic needs, missing important information about rules and criteria can have devastating consequences. I'd like to speak to a couple of those rules today.

Mr. Speaker, recently I've heard from constituents who have just moved out of public housing. Their income support accommodation allowance was set at \$32 a month, which is only enough to rent subsidized public housing units. One constituent, Mr. Speaker, left another community to move to Hay River only to get there to find out that they were not aware of the rule that you had to live in the community for six months prior to applying for another public housing unit. So even though they were a public housing client in another community, once they moved to Hay River they were not aware of the six-month rule.

Another rule that a lot of people are not aware of who live in public housing is that if you owe any back rent to any housing authority, or any damages to any housing authority, or to any other landlord for that matter, you are also ineligible for public housing. I think that there are probably very good and sound reasons for some of these rules; some I would question to some extent. The one on mobility within territory is a difficult one sometimes, because people sometimes move for good and valid reasons: to seek education or employment opportunities, or training. For example, a single mother may decide to go to Fort Smith or Yellowknife to seek training, go back to

their home community for the summer only to find out that the home they gave up in public housing is no longer available to them because they've left the community and they're back on the bottom of the list because of the six-month criteria.

The rule with respect to not owing back rent is also a good rule because people shouldn't be living in public housing and expect them not to have to be current with their rent, especially if it is \$32 a month. That having been said, there may be good and solid grounds for some of these rules, but, Mr. Speaker, surely the government has to show some compassion and take some responsibility for making program rules and criteria clear, especially when lack of awareness can result in someone ending up on the street.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude her statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You have unanimous consent to conclude.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, we have tenant relation officers and income support workers who should be in a position to warn people about the consequences of leaving public housing, and also not paying their rent and leaving debts owing to housing authorities. Mr. Speaker, people generally want to avoid being homeless if they can help it. I believe that, and they need to make informed choices, but, Mr. Speaker, they also need to know the rules. Public housing is usually people who are in difficult circumstances, and it needs to be viewed as such. We have an obligation to make those rules very clear and that's why I make this statement today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 3, Members' statements. The Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

#### **Member's Statement On Proposed Mackenzie River Bridge Project**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to use my Member's statement today to speak about the proposed Mackenzie River bridge project. The Mackenzie River is one of the great rivers of the world. The Mackenzie River runs through most of our territory and affects and impacts many of our residents in a variety of different ways. It causes me a great deal of concern that this government is going down the path of building a bridge without all the answers to many questions. I should state for the record that I am a supporter of putting a bridge across the Mackenzie River. However, we should, at the very least, get a handle on some key concerns. I have not seen a design, it seems to change on the fly. The proponent was recently asked what the impact of rising steel prices would do to the project. His reply was that more concrete would be used. What is the design, and what will be the price?

Mr. Speaker, I also have some concerns regarding the financial arrangement for this project, and how other initiatives brought on by this government, such as the Taltson hydro project, what impact that will have on the possible toll revenue for the bridge project. I have many questions surrounding the cost and viability of this project. The last cost we have seen is in the neighbourhood of \$57

million. How sound is this number and, again, what exactly is being proposed?

Mr. Speaker, most people want a bridge. It is exciting. It will be a key piece of public infrastructure for a century or more. I just want to ensure that we have all the answers to the many questions that surround this project. It is also a concern of mine that under the Deh Cho Bridge Act, Cabinet has the authority to sign off on this project without input from regular Members. If all goes well, the GNWT will get a \$60 million to \$70 million bridge paid for by toll revenues over 35 years. If all goes south or sour, the GNWT will get an \$80 million to \$100 million bridge that toll revenues alone will not cover. The shortfall will then have to come from other GNWT revenues.

To me it seems like a very one-sided agreement, and I will have specific questions for the Premier, who is the Minister responsible for the Deh Cho Bridge project, at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Member's Statement On Addressing Alcohol Abuse In Yellowknife**

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the past few months the Yellowknifer newspaper has supplied us with a new and I think very valuable feature, and that is with the assistance of the RCMP and their crime statistics, a snapshot of a very, very real side of life in Yellowknife. It has the number of assaults, break-ins, impaired driving, public drunkenness and shop lifting complaints handled by the Yellowknife RCMP detachment. The headlines are disturbing. There were 528 calls for RCMP service in the two-week period between May 3<sup>rd</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Speaker. Thirty percent of these involved alcohol. That is more than 20 a day. We know that hard drug use is rapidly escalating, and enforcement authorities would say in Yellowknife we have a drug and alcohol epidemic.

This community though, is demonstrating that it knows there are problems, and it is showing that it wants to do something about it. It is getting involved, and it is taking leadership. The Community Wellness Coalition and its Citizens on Patrol -- or COPs -- program, are working to deal with the street issues of alcohol and drug abuse. The Salvation Army, the YWCA and the Native Women's Association are working to come to grips with alcohol and its devastating effects, and they are to be congratulated for their efforts. Now is the time for this government to show that it too can and should be getting involved with alcohol and its abuse.

I was very pleased to hear Premier Handley's commitment in mid-April that this government is finally going to rewrite the Liquor Act. It is 75 pages, Mr. Speaker. It is one of the more complex and regrettably one of our more outdated pieces of legislation. My personal view is that most alcohol abuse problems don't occur in bars and drinking establishments. They happen in homes and at house parties where spousal and family abuse takes a tremendous toll, especially on kids. They happen in motor vehicle and boat accidents, where people are hurt and killed. Alcohol abuse happens at workplaces and jobsites, where it cuts productivity and threatens safety.

Mr. Speaker, previous governments of the NWT I think have been in a state of denial regarding alcohol abuse. Positive strides have been made regarding tobacco reduction. Can't we do the same with alcohol? I think we are on the verge of doing that. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You have unanimous consent to conclude your statement.

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In a newsletter that I recently distributed to my riding, Mr. Speaker, I proposed that this government should consider taking a review to a new step in that we would be probably looking at two acts governing the way we control liquor. Mr. Speaker, one act would provide an effective business framework for the supply, the taxation and the pricing of alcohol. The other, and the far more significant one, the one we really need, is to legislate an entirely new approach for the prevention, awareness, enforcement, treatment and community empowerment, a social approach to the way we manage alcohol. My constituents have repeatedly told me that frontline social issues, many of which are impacted by alcohol, can and must be dealt with head on by this government. I look forward to a territory-wide review, which is long overdue, in the way we manage liquor here in the NWT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 3, Members' statements. The Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicocche.

#### **Member's Statement On Recognition Of Graduating Students**

**MR. MENICOOCHE:** Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. I would like to say what a great pleasure it is to be in the House again for this Third Session of the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly. Spring is with us once again, finally. This time of year there is always a kind of change in the North, time to put away some things and a time to gain new things. Perhaps one of the most important changes we see in our communities at this time of year is graduation. This is the time of year when students take what they have learned in the classroom out into the real world, when they begin in earnest to apply their new skills to improve their lives, and the lives of the people around them and their communities.

In my riding of Nahendeh, it has been a good year for education. We have a number of students graduating from a variety of courses, and I would like to take the time today to recognize them and their achievements. We have 14 students who earned their high school diplomas. The majority of those students are from Fort Simpson. We have one from Nahanni, and as well as one student from Fort Liard. I should point out that for our smaller communities it is a significant achievement to have a student earn their high school diploma, and we are justifiably proud of the achievements these young people have made. We are also proud of other students who have graduated from high school and have continued their education and gone on to earn their diplomas at the college level, not only in the Nahendeh riding, but outside the NWT, as well. For example, we have one student from Wrigley who graduated as a teacher in Whitehorse; a Fort Simpson graduate of ecotourism in Calgary; and a nursing graduate from Wrigley in Yellowknife.

It has also been a busy year at the Aurora College. Eight people successfully completed the trades access program in Fort Simpson, and eight others completed the office administration program, as well as six students from Fort Liard and two from Nahanni Butte improved their education levels through the adult basic literacy and education program. In Trout Lake we have five women

who graduated from the Aurora College introduction to cooking program.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Are there any nays? You have unanimous consent to conclude your statement.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. I certainly would have liked to take the time to read out the names of every one of these students, but the list is too long. They all have done very well and are all deserving of individual recognition. That being said, that is a good thing, Mr. Speaker. Still I have no doubt that in the future we will see even more people from the Nahendeh riding improving their lives and their communities through education. I am confident that when I stand in the House next spring to recognize our graduates, the number of students having successfully completed their studies will be even greater. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to take this time to recognize and congratulate the graduates of the Nahendeh riding. We are very proud of them all. Mahsi cho.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 3, Members' statements. The Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

#### **Member's Statement On Special Events In Hay River**

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to be back with yourself and all of my colleagues in this wonderful House as we commence another session of this, the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to focus on a couple of events that will be occurring in Hay River in the very near future.

Mr. Speaker, this weekend I will be returning home to Hay River to volunteer at the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Knights of Columbus Lobster Fest. This event has long proven to be a premier social event of the year in Hay River. This is a major fundraiser for the Hay River Knights of Columbus organization, of which I have had the pleasure to serve for the past 22 years. This event is an excellent example of what can be accomplished through volunteering. Mr. Speaker, this event brings together some 16 or so businesses, some 60 to 70 individual volunteers, many of whom don't belong to the Knights of Columbus, as well as the 600 plus individuals who come out and support this event.

Mr. Speaker, I am very proud of this event, as I had a major role to play in getting it all started 20 years ago, and I have worked and volunteered at this event every year since. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to report that this event has raised over \$300,000, all of which has gone back into the community, and mostly to youth organizations.

Mr. Speaker, on June 26<sup>th</sup> the graduation ceremonies for Diamond Jenness Secondary School will take place in Hay River. This is the largest graduating class to date. Some 45 students will graduate. My sincere congratulations go out to all of the graduates, and I look forward to attending their ceremonies. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I know that many of the graduates will be celebrating their accomplishments, and so they should. However, Mr. Speaker, I would like to encourage all the students to do so in a responsible manner that will not put their lives or the lives of the fellow graduates at risk. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 3, Members' statements. The Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

#### **Member's Statement On Lack Of Affordable Housing For Seniors**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as a legislator, I believe in the principle that the performance of a government is measured by how well we take care of the most vulnerable in our society. One of the most vulnerable I believe are our seniors, Mr. Speaker, and I am glad to see two distinguished seniors, Ed Jeske and Esther Braden, in the gallery.

Mr. Speaker, I must tell you that our seniors need the help of this government to deal with the housing crisis. In Yellowknife in particular, Mr. Speaker, our housing market is on a runaway train. The lack of supply to meet overwhelming demands has the prices skyrocketing with no end in sight. We are seeing a situation where people are buying houses at higher prices than the listed price. This is making it hard even for the young with steady incomes and jobs, but it is really making it impossible for our senior citizens on fixed incomes. Even those seniors, Mr. Speaker, who have houses paid for and have no mortgages are having a hard time covering the high cost of fuel, power, water and taxes, which all have been rising. Those without adequate income or affordable housing are really in dire straits. They are lining up for limited spaces in low-cost units, but these line-ups are very long, and they are not moving very fast or getting any shorter. I believe a group of seniors that are really suffering are those with a small income, but incomes too high to qualify for income support or social housing, but not enough to buy or maintain their own housing. They are completely being left on the sideline and ignored.

Mr. Speaker, it is high time that this government act on the principle of elevating the quality of life for the most vulnerable, and to also act on the knowledge that the seniors are the fastest growing population in the Northwest Territories. We have to have a plan in place to figure out how to address the unique needs of seniors. We need to have independent housing units that are affordable that meet the physical and financial needs of our growing population of seniors.

Mr. Speaker, I believe it is a very good thing that many of our senior citizens are choosing to retire in the North. Mr. Speaker, may I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement?

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

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, I believe it is a very good thing that more and more senior citizens, especially in Yellowknife, are choosing to retire in the North. I believe that they add to the wholeness of our society, and make us more complete. Next week following the session is Senior Citizens' Week, and I am going to put the Minister responsible for Seniors, Minister Miltenberger, on notice, and Cabinet, that I am going to make the senior issues -- and there are many of them -- a sort of a theme topic for me to pursue during this short session. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 3, Members' statements. The Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

### **Member's Statement On Economic Development Benefits For Tu Nedhe**

**MR. VILLENEUVE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First I just want to say hello to all the Members of this Assembly, to the people in the gallery and to all my constituents. It is a pleasure to return to Yellowknife to this Third Session of the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly, and it is a welcoming sight to see all the Members returning to the session in good health. I sincerely hope that this remains the same in the future.

Mr. Speaker, since the last session in March 2004, many new developments have taken place, not only in the Tu Nedhe region, but also in the NWT and in Canada. With many new developments in the Tu Nedhe region, such as the signing of the Snap Lake project, socioeconomic and environmental agreements, the municipal co-management signing agreement, and also ongoing discussions on future hydro developments along with some improvements in forestry, housing and social sectors of my constituency. I would like to state that I look forward to working more diligently with all the Members of this 15<sup>th</sup> Assembly to move forward and realize some of the goals that will be laid out in the government's strategic plan, and making some of these new developments beneficial to all the residents of Tu Nedhe.

Mr. Speaker, although the future does seem brighter from a government standpoint, I cannot stress the need for this government to continue its commitment to resolve many outstanding issues of my constituents in areas of income support, student financial assistance, seniors health issues, and a review of the rent scale and WCB, just to name a few.

Mr. Speaker, I feel that this government is going to realize that any progress towards achieving a small degree of the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly's vision of self-reliant individuals and families, and healthy communities we have to start from the grassroots and work our way up, because if we want to retain and improve the public's confidence in our government like what the Calgary Flames are doing, grassroots is where we need to start. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Premier. Handley.

#### **ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize a number of people. First of all my wife, Theresa, who is here; Barb Saunders, the executive director for the Council of Status of Women, my faithful constituent; the major for the Salvation Army, Karen Hoeft; and also, I don't know if he's left, but Chief Peter Liske was here as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I brought with me my summer student, constituency assistant from Fort Simpson, Ms. Tiffany Pedersen. I would just like to recognize her today. Mahsi cho.

---Applause

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize Dennis Marchiori, who is the Human Rights Act implementation coordinator, and also I am hoping my colleagues will join me in giving a warm welcome to Therese Boullard, who is the new director of Human Rights for the Northwest Territories. They have a lot of work to do. We know that we're opening an office very soon and we wish them all the best. Thank you.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Welcome to the Legislative Assembly. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague, Ms. Lee, has already recognized persons in the gallery, some seniors here, and I would too. My mother, Esther, and her good friend and neighbour, Ed Jeske, and Ms. Barb Hood, the executive director of the NWT Seniors' Society. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Welcome to the Legislative Assembly. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Villeneuve.

**MR. VILLENEUVE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I am not sure if he's still here, but I would to recognize the chief of the Lutselk'e Dene Band, Chief Archie Catholique. He was here earlier, I don't know if he's behind me or what, but if he is, welcome.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Hawkins.

#### **ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS**

##### **Question 130-15(3): National Standards For Drivers' Licences**

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, referring back to my Member's statement, the NWT driver's licence, as I see it, is an important piece of identification that in these days of increased security is being more and more criticized for authenticity. Therefore, it demands quality, safety and security around our country with those needs in mind. That is why national standards need to be developed.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Transportation what is his department's involvement, if any, in a discussion to develop a national standard for driver's licences? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister of Transportation, Mr. McLeod.

##### **Return To Question 130-15(3): National Standards For Drivers' Licences**

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our department, along with all North American jurisdictions, is participating with the Canadian Council on Motor Transport Administrators and also the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators to develop new acceptable standards. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

##### **Supplementary To Question 130-15(3): National Standards For Drivers' Licences**

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Mr. Minister, for your answer. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell us what the process and timelines will be for

the approval and implementation of a new national standard for drivers' licences? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister of Transportation, Mr. McLeod.

**Further Return To Question 130-15(3): National Standards For Drivers' Licences**

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, our current driver's licence was developed 15 years ago. We are reviewing it now with our partners. Currently it is still acceptable as a driver's licence, and that's what it was intended for. We do not have timelines at this point. We are reviewing it, and we also are doing a needs analysis of whether we should be changing it and that will come in due course. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

**Supplementary To Question 130-15(3): National Standards For Drivers' Licences**

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Minister. Can the Minister give us some examples of what kinds of new standards and requirements are likely to come forward as recommendations to be adopted for a new standard of driver's licence? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister of Transportation, Mr. McLeod.

**Further Return To Question 130-15(3): National Standards For Drivers' Licences**

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have that at this current moment. We have hired a contractor to provide a needs analysis to give us what we need in terms of a new driver's licence and what it should entail. We are looking at a digital type of driver's licence. However, our current driver's licence is still acceptable in Canada and if there is any outside requirement for this document to be used as identification, then we have problems. However, then maybe we should be looking at a passport instead of trying to use our driver's licence. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Final supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

**Supplementary To Question 130-15(3): National Standards For Drivers' Licences**

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Speaker, even as I look down at my own driver's licence right in front of me, I can see imperfections that need addressing immediately. I see a photo that covers the word "driver" so it reads "river's licence." I see shades, contrasts and background symbols that make it very difficult to read my home address. Mr. Speaker, this picture ID doesn't even have the word Canada on it. So for NWT residents travelling outside of Canada, they may be accused of having a fake ID. So maybe the Department of Transportation should be issuing maps because they are trying to explain where the Northwest Territories is to some Americans who don't even know where Canada is.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Whoa!

**MR. HAWKINS:** Mr. Speaker, would the Minister be willing to consider making these adjustments I have noted to our territorial driver's licence? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister of Transportation, Mr. McLeod.

**Further Return To Question 130-15(3): National Standards For Drivers' Licences**

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't what we can do about his current photo.

---Laughter

However, I have indicated that we are reviewing it and it is something that is a concern. We take it seriously and we have a contractor who is looking at this whole issue and will report back to the House as soon as we have those documents. Thank you.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 6, oral questions. Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

**Question 131-15(3): Update On The Deh Cho Bridge Project**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister responsible for the Deh Cho Bridge project and that is Premier Handley. I would like to know what cost the GNWT has incurred to date for the Deh Cho Bridge project and why we haven't seen a final design on the bridge project. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Premier Handley.

**Return To Question 131-15(3): Update On The Deh Cho Bridge Project**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, the GNWT has had minimal costs, in the neighbourhood of \$200,000 or \$300,000, that we have dedicated ourselves to the bridge project. We have, in addition to that, approved a loan guarantee for the Deh Cho Bridge project of up to \$2.5 million over the last government and this current government.

Mr. Speaker, the Member asked two questions and I answered the first one. I will answer the second one, as well. The Deh Cho Bridge Corporation have, to my knowledge, basically finished the design for the bridge and we are waiting for cost estimates from them and expect to have those estimates, based on the design that they have, within two to three weeks. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

**Supplementary To Question 131-15(3): Update On The Deh Cho Bridge Project**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to know if the Premier is aware of the fact that the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation recently had their submission to the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board returned due to a lack of information. Does this cause him, as Minister responsible, any concern? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Premier Handley.

**Further Return To Question 131-15(3): Update On The Deh Cho Bridge Project**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, it's not unusual when proponents make submissions for the environmental review process to have it deemed to be incomplete. The information that was provided by the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation, to my knowledge, was incomplete. The environmental review board asked for more information that is being provided. The bridge corporation tells me that the environmental review process is still scheduled to be completed by September. So at this point, I don't have any concerns that this is going to cause a delay. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

**Supplementary To Question 131-15(3): Update On The Deh Cho Bridge Project**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Is the Premier aware that the proposed site of the bridge at the current ferry crossing is, in fact, at the foot of the Fort Providence Rapids where the current in the river is at its fastest? Does the Premier know to date there has been no geotechnical work or ice floe studies? What will this do to the cost of the project and does this cause the Premier any concern? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Premier Handley.

**Further Return To Question 131-15(3): Update On The Deh Cho Bridge Project**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to my knowledge there has been a fair bit of geotechnical work on ice conditions as well as river floe done over the years. Looking at this site for a bridge is not something that's new to this government or even the last government. In fact, there was a lot of work done in either the 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> government where a firm was contracted to do some of these studies. We do know that the water is swift at that site and the assessment that that is still the least expensive place for the location of the bridge. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Final supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

**Supplementary To Question 131-15(3): Update On The Deh Cho Bridge Project**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Premier to supply that geotechnical work that supposedly has been done because to my knowledge, it hasn't been done, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to insist that as a Member of this assembly that I know a final design price, expected tolls, and that I am privy to the financing agreement before the GNWT is committed to the next 35 years. Will the Premier agree to this? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Premier.

**Further Return To Question 131-15(3): Update On The Deh Cho Bridge Project**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I will check to see what information is available, and whatever I have access to I will certainly be happy to share it with the Member. In terms of commitments on the bridge, we will certainly want to know what the price is before we make a final commitment. We won't know what that price is until the contract is tendered and we have something firm from the successful bidder. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 6, oral questions. The Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

**Question 132-15(3): Deteriorating Conditions In NWT Schools**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment on the Chief Albert Wright School overcrowding. As I mentioned earlier in my Member's statement, our children deserve a comfortable and safe learning environment in which they can grow and develop. The situation for teachers and students in Inuvik illustrates the challenge of the northern school facilities. The learning environment of Chief Albert Wright School is another example of the...(inaudible)...Unfortunately the construction of the Chief Albert Wright School won't be completed until the spring of 2007. Mr. Speaker, in light of

the recent collapse of Inuvik's Samuel Hearne School roof and the added pressure that's going to be placed on already strained infrastructure, can I have a commitment from the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment that the construction of a new school in Tulita will not be delayed? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Return To Question 132-15(3): Deteriorating Conditions In NWT Schools**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Member knows, this assembly has to approve the funds for a capital plan, but it will certainly be my intention to move the funding forward for that school replacement as expected and shown in the infrastructure plan for the next few years.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

**Supplementary To Question 132-15(3): Deteriorating Conditions In NWT Schools**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister and Cabinet says we have to wait for a decision in terms of moving the project up for the Chief Albert Wright School, and the overcrowding in our schools makes it very challenging. Would the Minister provide the position of providing portable classrooms to alleviate the overcrowding in the interim for Chief Albert Wright School? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 132-15(3): Deteriorating Conditions In NWT Schools**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In a few weeks, I will be travelling to the Sahtu with the Member. I would welcome the opportunity to meet with the community and discuss what needs to happen in that project to replace the school. We can certainly have that discussion with the community when we get there.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 6, oral questions. Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

**Question 133-15(3): Seniors' Housing Needs**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Further to my statement earlier, I would like to ask questions to the Minister responsible for Seniors, Minister Miltenberger. Obviously there are many issues pertaining to seniors that one can address in this House, but I would like to start with the housing needs. There is quite a bit of backup with respect to seniors' housing. We have a lack of facilities for those who are suffering from dementia and they are currently being placed at the hospital, which costs a lot more on a day-to-day basis than if we were to have a separate facility to house the health and physical needs of persons who suffer from dementia. Then some of those seniors are in the hospital or in Aven Manor or Aven Seniors' Centre, which was not designed for that purpose in the first place. I know that the Minister has been considering a proposal from YACCS, Yellowknife Association for Concerned Citizens for Seniors. I would like to know if the Minister could update this House on where he is with that proposal. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister responsible for Seniors, Mr. Miltenberger.

**Return To Question 133-15(3): Seniors' Housing Needs**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is work still being done by the working group on the design. Money has been put in this over the last couple of years. Land has been acquired, but they are still working on a design. As well, we are still completing the review of facilities across the Northwest Territories and all the communities that have seniors' facilities to see what requirements are there to upgrade these facilities to make them compatible for the use we find ourselves requiring these days when it comes to dealing with accountability and plans that are there. So that work, as well, is underway and will be completed in the next few months. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

**Supplementary To Question 133-15(3): Seniors' Housing Needs**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My supplementary question is also to Minister Miltenberger in his responsibility for senior citizens, but I understand this has also to do with the Housing Minister. Mr. Speaker, we have needs for the seniors in terms of those who are suffering from dementia and who have special needs, but also seniors who can function quite independently but for financial or physical needs are not able to be in the marketplace. Does the Minister, as the Minister responsible for Seniors, have any idea to see what the needs are for seniors in terms of their differing housing needs? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister Miltenberger.

**Further Return To Question 133-15(3): Seniors' Housing Needs**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Housing Corporation came up with a seniors' housing strategy back in 2000 that goes from 2000 to 2005. There was a needs assessment done. Currently there are 10 units slated for Yellowknife and four or five to be built as part of that strategy. In addition, Mr. Speaker, there is an extensive number of programs for seniors. There is the senior citizen home repair program, the seniors' disabled preventative maintenance initiative, home adaptations for seniors' independent program and emergency home repair and homeowner residential rehabilitation assistance program, all which seniors are eligible for. In addition to that, we have the fuel subsidy. We have the arrangements with municipalities where they can get taxes offset when they hit 60. So, Mr. Speaker, there is an extensive range available for seniors when it comes to housing; some of the best programs in the country. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

**Supplementary To Question 133-15(3): Seniors' Housing Needs**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have things so well for the seniors, maybe we could just pack up and go home since everything has been dealt with. Surely we know that's not the case. Mr. Speaker, I believe most of the programs that the Minister has indicated are in the amounts of hundreds of dollars here, hundreds of dollars there, fixing this and fixing that. I do believe that the Minister has to agree that there are no programs currently that would help seniors to get into a low-cost unit for those who have fixed pension income or some sort of income. It's a nest egg, but it's probably too large to qualify for any

of these programs, but not enough to maintain a house or buy a house in this Yellowknife market. Has the Minister looked at the unique needs that seniors with fixed incomes are suffering with in Yellowknife because of its heated market? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister Miltenberger.

**Further Return To Question 133-15(3): Seniors' Housing Needs**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, working with the Housing Corporation, needs assessments are done on an ongoing basis. We have a range of programs that are available. There are housing needs across the territory. We are looking at 10 new units here in Yellowknife in addition to the range of programs that seniors are eligible for, that I have already listed, Mr. Speaker. We recognize, as well, that as another program area, there are probably more problems and needs than there are resources. We believe we have a selection of services and resources available here that would help address those particular issues. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Final supplementary, Ms. Lee.

**Supplementary To Question 133-15(3): Seniors' Housing Needs**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I could tell the Minister that the last time I checked, about a month ago, there were at least six seniors waiting for low cost, not social housing, but low rent housing in the Northern United Place. There are dozens of people waiting for housing in Aven Manor. That tells me there are over 20. Even if there are 10 new units being built in Yellowknife, that would only meet half of the need. I think there is a way to solve this without government actually building senior citizens' housing. There is a partnership that can be done with the government and private developers. Would the Minister consider looking at what the needs of seniors are and come up with some sort of independent housing? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister Miltenberger.

**Further Return To Question 133-15(3): Seniors' Housing Needs**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are waiting lists, I would suggest, in every community for housing. If the Member has a specific suggestion in terms of some creative partnerships and financing that could be done that's not going to require capital, then I am sure, as a government and as a Housing Corporation, the Minister would be very interested in hearing what those suggestions are. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 6, oral questions. The Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

**Question 134-15(3): Reduction In RCMP Complement In Fort Simpson**

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Minister of Justice. Recently it was brought to my attention that the RCMP detachment in Fort Simpson is considering a reduction in staff. This is a huge concern to me and my constituents. Here we have a riding, my riding, that is poised for economic growth and, of course, the negative affects that come with it. Of course, the Fort Simpson detachment services four satellite communities of Nahanni Butte, Jean Marie, Trout Lake and Wrigley. I would just like to know if the Minister

is aware of the RCMP in this regard in reducing the staff of the Fort Simpson detachment.

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

**Return To Question 134-15(3): Reduction In RCMP Complement In Fort Simpson**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have been advised that there is one vacant position in the Fort Simpson detachment that the RCMP is not planning to fill at this time. I have been told that this is based on the workload that they currently have in the detachment. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

**Supplementary To Question 134-15(3): Reduction In RCMP Complement In Fort Simpson**

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister is well aware of how budget and budgeting cycles work, especially when you reduce or take away a position. I would just like to ask the Minister if it is possible to keep that position resident and not really take it away from the budget, because once we take away a position it's so much harder to replace that position and to justify it again. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 134-15(3): Reduction In RCMP Complement In Fort Simpson**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The total staff complement for the RCMP would not be reduced. The contract that we have with them pays for a certain number of personnel, but the RCMP often make decisions about where to place staff and as demand changes, the location of staff will change. So if the need increases in Fort Simpson, I would expect that the RCMP would make sure that that position was then filled in that community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

**Supplementary To Question 134-15(3): Reduction In RCMP Complement In Fort Simpson**

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am just trying to request the Minister to speak with the RCMP, of course with whom we have a contract, to get some kind of commitment that certainly they won't staff that position now, but at least they won't remove that position. We are going to grow and that's going to happen soon in light of the pipeline and the activities that are associated with it. It's certainly trying to pick up speed. We are looking at filing the application this year, so a lot of things will start to happen. Lots of people will start passing through the communities and we will certainly experience unwanted negative effects like drifters and people passing through. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister of Justice.

**Further Return To Question 134-15(3): Reduction In RCMP Complement In Fort Simpson**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will certainly commit to the Member that I will discuss the staffing issues with the RCMP the next time I meet with the chief superintendent, but I will remind Members that it's always an RCMP decision as to where staff are located and they make their decisions based on the volume of work. There is no intent for us to reduce the total staff complement with the RCMP. In fact, I am hoping that we will, over the next two years, be able to increase

the level of staffing in our contract with them to respond to the request that they have submitted to this government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 6, oral questions. Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

**Question 135-15(3): Public Housing Decisions In Communities**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation. Mr. Speaker, each of the communities have local housing authorities and subsequently they have boards which govern their activities. I would like to know how much say or how much input the Minister or the NWT Housing Corporation has into the rules applied to tenants living in and applying for public housing in the communities. Thank you.

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

**Return To Question 135-15(3): Public Housing Decisions In Communities**

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In most of the communities across the Territories, we are working with the LHOs to develop a partnership agreement. Our approach from the corporation's standpoint is that we work together as a team. For the most part, under the partnership agreements, the social housing program delivery falls under their authority. Although we set the general terms of what the requirements are, we also try to work so we give some room for those partnership agreements to incorporate some of their loan standards. We also have some communities that we work directly with under management authorities. It's fully...(inaudible)...However, it's more in the management of our programs and their delivery. So we do have some say and authority with how the requirements are set, however, we give flexibility for most of the LHOs to make their own decisions. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

**Supplementary To Question 135-15(3): Public Housing Decisions In Communities**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So then for example, the six-month residency requirement that I referred to in my Member's statement today, would that be something that is a rule that is developed at the local level or is that something that would be put in place by the corporation? Thank you.

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

**Further Return To Question 135-15(3): Public Housing Decisions In Communities**

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have the historical detail as to how the six-month rule came about. I believe it's an NWT Housing Corporation rule that we requested the LHOs to follow. I would have to double check that, however. In every case we try to ensure that the rules that we put in place are consistent, although I can't say with any certainty whether that's something that came directly from the corporation or LHOs. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.



**Supplementary To Question 135-15(3): Public Housing Decisions In Communities**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, would the Minister be able to relate to the problem that we have when somebody moves from one NWT community to another? So if they are living in Fort Resolution in public housing and they move to another location and apply for public housing, that six-month residency may create a problem. In another instance I referred to is a single mother who goes south or goes to another community to upgrade their education, comes back to the home community for the summer, is ineligible now -- they've left that public housing unit -- for public housing. Does the Minister understand the problem as it relates to mobility of NWT residents amongst different communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 135-15(3): Public Housing Decisions In Communities**

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I have a couple of points with regard to the question raised by the Member. First of all, the students who are required to leave their community to attend school still retain their principal residence. The six-month requirement only applies to social housing programs. Social assistance also assists people who move to a new community or require housing in a community, and there is no residency requirement on income support. We have to recognize that there is a shortage of housing in all the communities. Our core needs assessments tell us that. It's not really fair for us to allow people to move from one community to another or move to the head of the line or if there is a waiting list, they get in front of somebody else. We can take a look at the six-month requirement, as the Member has requested. However, we also have partnerships dealing with this issue. I would say that it's something that was put in place for a reason. It does serve its purpose. If there are situations where people have fallen through the cracks, I will certainly take a look at it. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Final supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

**Supplementary To Question 135-15(3): Public Housing Decisions In Communities**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I could see where the six-month residency criteria would be very valuable if it was addressing people moving from the South or from other jurisdictions into the Northwest Territories. Of course, you shouldn't be able to land in town one day and move into public housing the next. I can see that. But I am more concerned about the availability of housing on a short-term basis on the understanding that housing is available. I understand that if there is a long waiting list and every unit is full, that's one thing, but I think there is something that should be looked at for emergency housing and for waiving the ability and the discretion to waive the six-month residency requirement when there is housing available. I would appreciate it if the Minister would look into that and report back on that. Thank you.

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

**Further Return To Question 135-15(3): Public Housing Decisions In Communities**

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, we will look at that. It's something we continue to review. The availability of units is an issue that we are always looking at ways to try to address. We've tried different things over the years and will continue to do so. We will review the situation raised in Hay River and report back to the Member. Thank you.

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

**Question 136-15(3): Liquor Act Review**

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question this afternoon is a follow-up to my statement and it is directed to the Minister of Finance concerning the upcoming review of the Liquor Act. I wonder if the Minister could give us an outline of the process that the government is planning on undertaking in its review and rewrite of the Liquor Act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

**Return To Question 136-15(3): Liquor Act Review**

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, some work has been done by a company that was contracted by the Department of Finance to begin the process of looking at what can be undertaken in a review. We have yet to make a decision if it will be a full-blown review or if we would look at segments of it, but we are still in that process. We should be making a decision soon as to what degree we will go. If we, for example, put a panel together to look at all the issues and make recommendations on what avenue we should take, or if we would just use our normal process of getting some input and then going forward with developing legislative proposals, we haven't got to that point yet. Potentially if it is a full-blown review, it would be quite a lengthy process as well as quite an expensive process. What we're trying to ensure we do is that we have the Liquor Act process review done and new legislation brought in in the life of this assembly. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Supplementary, Mr. Braden.

**Supplementary To Question 136-15(3): Liquor Act Review**

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Those sound like very constructive steps, Mr. Speaker, and I won't press the government on which one or how to go yet. I will be quite happy to leave it for some time, and come back with a thorough recommendation. But I would like to pursue, Mr. Speaker, one aspect of this that I believe deserves some attention and should be considered right out front, and that is the approach of saying that we should have two acts; one to administer the liquor on a business basis, and the mandate of the government's social responsibility. I'm wondering if Mr. Roland would advise us as to whether this approach to creating two acts to manage liquor would be a viable approach that we could consider. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

**Further Return To Question 136-15(3): Liquor Act Review**

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I stated earlier, the work that has been done hasn't given us enough information right now if we should, in fact, look at splitting the act and look at one, for example, truly on the

business side of the liquor equation, or if it continued along the same lines with some strengthening of areas and updating of the old legislation that is there today. We are in that process. The first phase, in a sense, has been done with the contract that was let and a report that is coming forward. It is actually in draft stage now, I believe, in the final stages. From a departmental point of view, we need to decide if we in fact do the full-blown process as well as take work that has been done in the past, because there was a substantial amount of work done in 1994 that we would like to look at and see how that can be incorporated in there. We expect it would be a controversial piece of legislation. There will be people on both sides of it that would affect how we look at this and to what degree we proceed with it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Supplementary, Mr. Braden.

**Supplementary To Question 136-15(3): Liquor Act Review**

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This too is something that I hope the whole idea of going and looking at two different acts takes some time. But I would put to the Minister to consider that I think we already have a very strong precedent for that in our government, and this is in the area of tobacco legislation. I think it is the Department of Finance that looks after taxation and administration of cigarettes, but, yet, the Department of Health has demonstrated, I think with extraordinary vigour and good results, that we are making headway on the reduction of tobacco and its impact on society. I venture that the same can and should apply to alcohol. So I would like to ask him if that scenario, or that precedent that already exists in our government, is one that he would look at. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

**Further Return To Question 136-15(3): Liquor Act Review**

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure if that would require two acts to do what is being done presently through the example used of Health and Social Services. We do have, through Health and Social Services, a drug and alcohol program. On the finance side, the sales side and the taxes received through the sale of tobacco comes through the Department of Finance. There could be work, and I think the Member may be heading to this; the fact that we do have some issues that have caused us some concern and we recognize that. It's in the jurisdiction that the Liquor Board does have in the existing act. There can be separation in that. That is one of the things that we're looking at, to ensure that the legislative side, the enforcement side, is very clear and concise as to how that part of the business operates. The addictions side and drug and alcohol awareness side is something we need to continue pursuing as a government overall, and how we deal with the addictions side. I'm not sure that would require two pieces of legislation to be developed though. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Final supplementary, Mr. Braden.

**Supplementary To Question 136-15(3): Liquor Act Review**

**MR. BRADEN:** Mr. Speaker, I'm looking forward to a process whereby the public can get involved with this, whether it's a panel or a committee process. But we all know that the degree of input, the quality and the calibre of the input will certainly improve when people get access

to some resources. So I'd like to ask the Minister would the non-government organizations, or frontline service agencies, be factored into this and be able to access funding or other assistance to help in their involvement in a review of the Liquor Act? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister of Finance.

**Further Return To Question 136-15(3): Liquor Act Review**

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again in how we would go about dealing with the Liquor Act review process, we would have to look at how we got that input; if it was in fact allowing for funding to go out to agencies to come and make presentations or, in fact, if we do a process where we go out and get their input. So we have to look at it. Cost is one area of concern that we have to look at for this whole process, but at the end of the day we want to ensure we have a Liquor Act that is up to date, that works for both sides of the equation in the sense of managing the sales and taxation area, as well as making sure, overall as government, we continue to work on the prevention side and dealing with the effects of alcohol. So again, I think this is two processes. One is to ensure we have an up-to-date Liquor Act that is functional and can be used in the Territories to provide clear direction for all those involved in the sale of liquor products. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 6, oral questions. Member for Nunakput, Mr. Pokiak.

**Question 137-15(3): Community Freezers In Paulatuk And Holman**

**MR. POKIAK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement I indicated the importance of the community freezers in the communities, as voiced by the residents of Paulatuk and Holman. They are concerned about the storage of their wild meat and their wild game this spring and summer if funding is not made available. My question is to the honourable Minister Brendan Bell, Minister of RWED, on whether he will direct his department to dig half way into their pockets to find the necessary funds for the continued maintenance and operation for the 2004-2005 season? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Return To Question 137-15(3): Community Freezers In Paulatuk And Holman**

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me first preface my comments by saying that this government supports and recognizes how important the harvesting of country foods are to small communities, and we're supportive of traditional lifestyles and we recognize and acknowledge in past times it was very important to have this critical piece of community infrastructure, community freezers, in our more remote communities that weren't accessible by highway, Mr. Speaker. Times are changing. We've looked at divesting ourselves of these pieces of infrastructure, and we've done that through Public Works and Services. They have essentially been turned over to most communities. Most communities have had a choice to either take the freezer at no cost and continue to pay for the O and M, but that's not our advisable choice. In most cases the other option that has been presented is one of providing chest freezers to all members of the community. Most communities have taken us up on that offer, and we think that that is the

most prudent course. Community freezers are very expensive to operate, they're old pieces of infrastructure, they aren't efficient, and there are potential health concerns because of the age of the freezers. We know that the situation, I believe, in Holman has been rectified. They have chosen to carry on with the O and M of the asset themselves. If that's their choice, then we support that. But I would ask again and make the offer again to the people of Paulatuk and hope that they would be receptive to the idea of having us provide chest freezers. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Supplementary, Mr. Pokiak.

**Supplementary To Question 137-15(3): Community Freezers In Paulatuk And Holman**

**MR. POKIAK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks for the answer, Mr. Minister. Once again, it has been very clear from Paulatuk that the community freezers that they presently have are very important to them. When I was in Paulatuk we did discuss about the chest freezers, as you mentioned, but at the present time they find the community freezer a vital component of their daily lives. It is important for them to utilize a facility like that. Once again, could the Minister at least guarantee funds for this season for them to continue using that community freezer? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 137-15(3): Community Freezers In Paulatuk And Holman**

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In many cases community freezers were not being well utilized anymore, and I know that the Member knows his riding well, and the Member's insistence that Paulatuk residents do need this piece of infrastructure is one that I am listening to, but, Mr. Speaker, we think there are more cost effective options. We are truly concerned that because of the age of this piece of infrastructure that if it continues to operate in the manner it's operating, there could be a situation where the power goes down, members of the community are not aware, food spoilage happens, and the community could get very, very sick. That is certainly not something we want to see. We would encourage the community to look at chest freezers. Maybe what I would propose, if it would be acceptable to the Member, is that I come to his riding and sit down with the leadership of the community, and we discuss the concerns that we have in terms of the health risks of operating this piece of infrastructure, and talk about the actual O and M cost going forward to keep this aging piece of infrastructure running. I think it is something like \$17,000 a month in the summer to run the freezer. I think there are more cost-effective options. So I would make that offer to the Member. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Supplementary, Mr. Pokiak.

**Supplementary To Question 137-15(3): Community Freezers In Paulatuk And Holman**

**MR. POKIAK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are planning to make a trip to my riding of Paulatuk, Holman and Sachs next month. You are more than welcome to come along with us, your invitation is always open. So you will hear verbally, firsthand exactly what the people of Paulatuk want with regard to the community freezer. It is a situation right now where, like I said in my Member's statement, the weather is getting very warm right now, the geese are flying, they just recently got caribou that came by, and

they are concerned about the storage of their wild meat. So at this present time, Mr. Speaker, can the Minister guarantee the funds to be available to maintain at least for the 2004-2005 season? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister of RWED, Mr. Bell.

**Further Return To Question 137-15(3): Community Freezers In Paulatuk And Holman**

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I recognize that it is soon getting warm. I think the community has been in discussions with our department for some time. This is not something that was sprung on the community, and I do believe that if the community made the decision to run the piece of infrastructure and operate the freezer as a stopgap measure they could do so, and we can sit down then when I go up there to discuss going forward, how we deal with it, and deal with this season as well. I would be prepared to do that when I visit the community. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 6, oral questions. The Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

**Question 138-15(3): Deh Cho Bridge Project Concerns**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to again ask the Minister responsible for the Deh Cho Bridge project, Mr. Handley, some questions. I draw his attention to two recent bridge projects in the territory that have been marred by cost overruns and a lack of pre-engineering. Willow Creek was supposed to cost \$4.5 million, and ended up over \$7 million. The river between Two Mountains Bridge was crushed by ice. No ice floe study was done prior to this bridge being put in. Is the Premier aware of these two bridge projects, and what will he do to ensure that these problems won't happen with the Deh Cho Bridge project?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Premier, two questions.

**Return To Question 138-15(3): Deh Cho Bridge Project Concerns**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I'm generally aware of those two projects, two different situations. The Willow Creek Bridge goes back a number of years. There were some design problems with it. I expect that the Department of Transportation has learned from that. In terms of the other bridge where ice removed, it was a much smaller bridge but, again, one that we have concerns about, the inconsistent flow of water and ice in those small streams in that area. Mr. Speaker, the Deh Cho Bridge is a totally different kind of structure. It is a much larger bridge. It is one that the design is a very serious issue, and one that I assure the Member that we'll be as thorough as we possibly can in reviewing the design that is put forward by the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

**Supplementary To Question 138-15(3): Deh Cho Bridge Project Concerns**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I mentioned this earlier, there hasn't been an ice floe study on the mass and the volume during spring break up, and the impact that might have on the piers that are going to connect the bridge from one side of the river to the other. I'd like to also ask the Premier and mention this to him that there needs to be an incentive for the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation to not incur cost overruns in this project. This has to be in the agreement. The GNWT should not

assume all the risk, and currently, under the agreement that I have seen here, we are assuming all the risk, Mr. Speaker. Can we get this in the agreement that the GNWT does not assume all the risk in this project? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Premier, Mr. Handley.

**Further Return To Question 138-15(3): Deh Cho Bridge Project Concerns**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, if you look at the agreement you will find that the GNWT's contribution to the bridge when it is built is going to be the cost of operating the ferry, the cost of building and maintaining that ice bridge. Beyond that the costs for the bridge will be recouped through a toll. So whatever the price is, the GNWT is not assuming additional risk. The only risk we would assume would be if for some reason the bridge was never built. Then we have been guaranteeing loans to enable the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation to continue on with their planning and environmental assessment for the proposed bridge. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Final supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

**Supplementary To Question 138-15(3): Deh Cho Bridge Project Concerns**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think that the GNWT does assume the risk in this because if the bridge is put in at a cost of \$80 million, \$90 million or \$100 million, how are we possibly going to recoup that through toll revenues? It is a risk that the GNWT is going to have, and that is why I feel strongly that the Premier has to get in this agreement a firm price, and the cost overruns cannot be allowed to happen. I've seen it firsthand when I was a city councillor, and I've also seen it during the life of this last government with the jail. We have to get a firm price, and we can't allow it to snowball. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Premier.

**Further Return To Question 138-15(3): Deh Cho Bridge Project Concerns**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We certainly won't make the mistakes those city councillors made on that project.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

---Laughter

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** But, Mr. Speaker, the Bridge Corporation are using the time that is available to them now to do more testing on the design of the bridge. They have made some changes to the design as a result of testing. They will be issuing a tender for the project, and we will take every step possible to ensure that there are no cost overruns. Mr. Speaker, on this size of project, that is a substantial challenge for the designers to be able to ever come up with a project that is going to be right on with no change orders. Mr. Speaker, the latest information that we have from the Bridge Corporation is that they are still looking at a \$55 million to \$60 million bridge. We are waiting, as I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, for an update on that cost estimate, and I would certainly be glad to share that with the Members as soon as we receive it in the next two or three weeks. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Ramsay, you did have your final supplementary. So I have put you back on the list, and I will move to the next Member. Item 6, oral questions. Member for the Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

**Question 139-15(3): Reclassification Of Mental Health Workers**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today, Mr. Speaker, is regarding the Department of Health and Social Services in the Sahtu. In light of the recent initiative to include community wellness and mental health workers into the government system, I had a call from a member from the Sahtu about the reclassification of the mental health worker in my community, and they wanted to know why, Mr. Minister, I heard she had to reapply for a position that she held for a long time.

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

**Return To Question 139-15(3): Reclassification Of Mental Health Workers**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't have the full particulars of the individual case that the Member is mentioning, but I would be glad to commit to check into the questions that he does have so that we can make sure that it is addressed. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

**Supplementary To Question 139-15(3): Reclassification Of Mental Health Workers**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Minister. The other issue in my communities, maybe across the Northwest Territories also, is about mental health workers who are in a position for a long, long time, and then when they have a chance for this new program, the initiative by the department is that they have to reapply for their position again. Some of the communities feel safe and secure with the old mental health worker. Now they get reclassified, and the standards are quite high, and this discourages members from working in the communities. Could the Minister inform the House as to reasons for this type of initiative? Thank you.

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

**Further Return to Question 139-15(3): Reclassification Of Mental Health Workers**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the intent of the alcohol and drug mental health strategy was to specifically initially look at the alcohol and drug workers, and recognized that for years they have laboured in relative isolation and at a very, very low level of pay with no benefits. Tied in with that was the recognized need that mental health services, as well, can supplement the work done by alcohol and drug workers. The alcohol and drug workers are subsequently reclassified, and need title to community wellness workers, and we have added some mental health workers to the mix as well. They were all given pay increases, positions were classified, there were job descriptions done, and paid benefits were tied to those positions. Mr. Speaker, the intent in this was not to lay people off. The intent of this was to recognize the work that's being done, to allow for the incumbents to be given prior learning assessments, and if necessary give the training to upgrade their skills. So I say again, Mr. Speaker, the intent is not to lay people off, and we do have, in my opinion, and if we don't, we do now have provisions for grandfathered incumbents so that they can be given the training that they are capable of, and we recognize their years of service. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

**Supplementary To Question 139-15(3):  
Reclassification Of Mental Health Workers**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Mr. Minister. I was one of those workers at one time. I was a drug and alcohol worker in Tulita, and I know the frustration that the mental health workers go through, drug and alcohol workers go through in terms of providing services to our people, and I encourage the department. I guess I am concerned about the people that do work in this field, the community wellness workers and mental health workers, that they continue on as some of the people feel comfortable with the workers in their field. I have a hard time seeing, Mr. Minister, reclassifying and having them reapply for a job that they have held for many years. Could the Minister commit to look at this issue with some of the people in our region? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 139-15(3):  
Reclassification Of Mental Health Workers**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I will make that commitment. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 6, oral questions. The Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

**Question 140-15(3): Status Of Written Questions**

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, seeing how the Premier, and in conjunction with the Minister of Justice, the honourable Minister Dent, have taken away all my legal aid questions, I had to find a new stump to climb up on and yell about. My question to the Premier, Mr. Speaker, is I have noticed on the status of returns to written questions many of the items, if not all of the items, are overdue for answers, and my question to the Premier is he in a position to remind all Members of Cabinet that regular Members are waiting for answers on these, and to encourage them to reply? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I will have to rule your question out of order because it is an item on the agenda, and we will be getting to that. So your question is out of order.

---Ruled Out of Order

Item 6, oral questions. The Member for Kam Lake.

**Question 141-15(3): Deh Cho Bridge Design**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will continue on with my questioning for the Minister responsible for the Deh Cho Bridge project, and I will go back to a comment that he made. I don't think you have to look any further than the YCC project for a poster for cost overruns, and the Minister is well aware of that. Can I get a commitment from the Minister when we might expect a design, something for instance -- you know, it has been two years -- something we can put on display in the Great Hall, something that would show that we actually do have a design and we actually do know what we are talking about? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Premier, Mr. Handley.

**Return To Question 141-15(3): Deh Cho Bridge Design**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I expect that we will have a final design for the bridge by this fall. It will not be

finalized until the environmental review is completed. We expect that to be in September. Thank you.

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

**Question 142-15(3): Tuberculosis In Colville Lake**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One short question. In light of the news report the last couple of days, my question is to the Minister of Health and Social Services regarding the TB situation in Colville Lake and medevacing the people out to Inuvik to do the tests there. It is the responsibility of the Minister's department to act quickly on this issue because Colville Lake is small and isolated, and does not have a nurse to monitor the situation in instances like this. So I would like to ask the Minister could he inform the House and the people of the Northwest Territories what he is doing to ensure that the TB issue in Colville Lake is satisfactory to people in the Sahtu and to people in the Northwest Territories? Mahsi.

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

**Return To Question 142-15(3): Tuberculosis In Colville Lake**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just quickly to recap, on May 17<sup>th</sup> an individual was sent out for treatment for what was thought to be cancer, and it turned out to be a very contagious form of TB. It was judged at that time that this individual had been in the community for a while, and being as it was highly infectious there were steps taken to go to the community with health practitioners. About 15 individuals were subsequently flown to Inuvik where they were tested. The majority of them returned home. Some have been identified that they may require follow-up and treatment. They will be given that treatment and monitored. There will be regular visits into Colville Lake by the doctors and nurses to ensure that the protocols are complete, and they will be tracking this very, very closely. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I would just like to recognize the clock. The time for oral questions has expired, but I will allow the Member for Sahtu to conclude your supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

**Supplementary To Question 142-15(3): Tuberculosis In Colville Lake**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, in light of the Minister's comments, do you feel with the regular visits of the doctors and nurses...I guess I am looking for some commitment from his department to have a nurse practitioner situated in Colville Lake to monitor on a day-to-day basis. I know the department is strapped for nurses in the Northwest Territories, but it is something that would assure the people of Colville Lake and the people in the North that this TB scare will be taken care of. Thank you.

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

**Further Return To Question 142-15(3): Tuberculosis In Colville Lake**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this particular situation is being monitored very closely. We've been working with the lay dispenser in Colville Lake. There has been close contact with Inuvik and there will continue to be, and they are

mapping out the medical requirements to ensure that there is proper follow-up and that the required staff are in the community when they are needed for as long as they are needed. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

**Supplementary To Question 142-15(3): Tuberculosis In Colville Lake**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Minister. The comments for assisting the...(inaudible)...I would like to ask the Minister with regard to situations like Colville Lake, how did this come about and what situations did we look at where TB has occurred in this day and age in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

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

**Further Return To Question 142-15(3): Tuberculosis In Colville Lake**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, tuberculosis continues to exist as a disease and there are approximately eight to 12 cases a year. What has improved is our ability to make sure that we don't miss those cases. We had a case a number of years ago, I believe the Member will recall in his own riding, and there was a lot of circumstances and we learned a very hard lesson from that and have taken great steps to ensure the medical staff in the communities is trained, that there are TB protocols that are adhered to and when things are identified, this is one of the things tested for and when TB is discovered, that we move into gear to respond in the medically appropriate way. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Mr. Clerk.

**ITEM 8: RETURNS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS**

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Mr. Speaker, I am in receipt of returns to several written questions: returns to written question 2-15(3), 6-15(3), 7-15(3), 8-15(3), 10-15(3), 11-15(3), 13-15(3), 15-15(3), 16-15(3), 18-15(3) and 19-15(3).

I am also in receipt of a provisional return to question 17-15(3) regarding rent assistance to seniors for public housing. The question was asked by Mr. Allen to the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation. A return will be provided on May 28<sup>th</sup>. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Menicoche on March 16, 2004, regarding the search for a missing Willow Lake River resident.

A resident had gone for a walk on the evening of March 13, 2004. The next morning, after she had been missing for 17 hours, other residents went into Wrigley to telephone the RCMP. The RCMP did not respond until that evening. They informed the Rangers to stand by but did not tell them to proceed.

Members of the community continued their search and found the missing person more than 24 hours after her disappearance. Fortunately the missing person is making a full recovery. Members of the community are angry at the lack of response from the RCMP.

This matter was referred to the RCMP and it was determined that a public complaint investigation was warranted. On March 23, 2004, an officer was sent to Fort Simpson to begin the investigation.

Also, Staff Sergeant Bob Gray, south district commander, Hay River, and Constable Wes Heron, Fort Simpson detachment, met with Mr. Menicoche on April 1, 2004, to discuss the progress of this public complaint investigation. The RCMP is working with other government agencies and the community to address the issue of communication with Willow Lake River.

I will forward to Mr. Menicoche the RCMP's formal response when it is available and provide a copy to the House at the earliest opportunity.

**Return To Written Question 6-15(3): Private Power Generation And Sales**

I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Allen on March 22, 2004, regarding private power generation and sales.

The Executive Council has not given any direction to the Northwest Territories Power Corporation Board to reform their policy purchasing excess power from private generators.

Currently, the corporation has a policy that allows for private generators to sell their excess power into the grid and has in the past purchased power from private generators. The policy requires that any private generation meet NTPC's connection and safety standards and will not be allowed if the interconnection negatively affects other customers. Excess power is purchased at a negotiated price not greater than the corporation's avoided cost of diesel fuel.

The corporation has been directed by the Public Utilities Board to apply for a standby rate and interconnection standards that would be required if NTPC is providing backup power to the private generator. This application will be filed with the PUB at the end of June 2004.

**Return To Written Question 7-15(3): WCB Revenues And Expenses For 2002-03 And 2003-04**

I have a return to written question asked by Ms. Sandy Lee on March 24, 2004, regarding the Workers' Compensation Board's revenue and expenses for 2002-03 and 2003-04.

The WCB's fiscal year is the calendar year and, therefore, information is provided for the year ending December 31, 2002. The 2003 financial information will not be available until the office of the Auditor General has approved the WCB's 2003 financial statements, which is anticipated for the end of July.

The WCB's financial statements for 2002 are contained in the WCB's annual report, which was previously tabled with the Legislative Assembly.

2002 revenue: assessments - \$20.079 million; investment revenues - \$13.936 million; recoveries - \$873,000; total revenue - \$34.888 million.

2002 expenses: claims costs - \$31.749 million; administration; salaries, wages and allowances - \$9.627 million; other administration and general expenses - \$7.960 million; less allocation to claims cost - negative \$4.431 million; total administration - \$13.156 million; total expenses - \$44.905 million. Profit/loss from operations - \$10.017 million.

It should be noted that the WCB's governance council has granted employers a discount on their assessment rates since 1999. The discount was intended to reduce a huge surplus that existed in the accident fund because of high investment returns in the 1990s.

Additional information requested by Ms. Lee concerned assessment rates and claims.

Average assessment rate: 2002 - \$1.18; 2003 - \$1.60.

Total numbers of claims: 2002 - \$3,655; 2003 - \$3,349.

Number of claims accepted: 2002 - 3,236; 2003 - 2,954.

**Return To Written Question 8-15(3): Sex Offender Registry**

I have a return to a written question asked by Mr. Hawkins on March 24, 2004, regarding the sex offender registry.

On April 1, 2004, Bill C-16, the federal Sex Offender Information Registration Act, received assent in Parliament. This act will require that information on sex offenders in all provinces and territories is registered and kept in a national database maintained by the RCMP. This information will be used by police services across the country to investigate crimes of a sexual nature.

Officials from the Department of Justice participated in the national working group that examined the need for a sex offender registry. All governments, including the NWT, approved the national registry model at the 2002 meeting of Ministers responsible for Justice.

Although an implementation date has not yet been finalized, representation from the Department of Justice, the RCMP and Justice Canada have already formed a working group to prepare for implementing the act in the NWT. In the NWT, the RCMP will administer and enforce the registration of offenders, the Government of the Northwest Territories will designate registration centres, and Justice Canada will apply for orders and prosecute offences under the act.

The national system is similar to that in place in Ontario. Both were established to register information on sex offenders to be used in the investigation of crimes of a sexual nature. Ontario will be rationalizing its system to conform to the national legislation.

**Return To Written Question 10-15(3): Bill Of Intent To Achieve Provincehood**

I have a return to a written question asked by Mr. Allen on March 25, 2004, regarding a bill of intent to seek provincial status.

The Government of the Northwest Territories does not intend to seek provincial status at this time as we believe that devolution, and not provincehood, is the best way to gain control over lands, water and resources in the Northwest Territories.

The GNWT, together with the Aboriginal Summit, are currently in devolution negotiations with the Government of Canada. With the March 18, 2004, signing of the devolution framework agreement, we have made significant progress.

There are a number of factors that suggest seeking provincial status at this time may not provide the powers and benefits that are being sought through devolution negotiations.

As the Premier outlined previously, achieving provincial status does not guarantee control over land, resources or resource revenues. Although Manitoba became a

province in 1870, and Saskatchewan and Alberta became provinces in 1905, control over lands and resources was not transferred to these provinces until the 1930s.

As a province, the Northwest Territories would no longer receive funding from Canada through a formula financial agreement. Instead, funding would be subject to existing equalization arrangements. Equalization payments are based on the revenue-raising capacity of a province and do not consider the cost of providing government programs and services. The existing formula financing arrangement with the federal government does consider the higher costs of providing programs and services in the Northwest Territories. This gives our government more money on a per capita basis than it would likely receive through equalization.

Devolution negotiations offer the best possibility for the people of the Northwest Territories to gain control over their own lands and resources. We do not believe that there would be any further benefit from putting aside the success we have achieved to date to start a new process to gain provincial status.

**Return To Written Question 11-15(3): Statistical Data For Sahtu Schools**

I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Yakeleya on March 26, 2004, regarding the statistical data for the Sahtu schools.

1. How many students are enrolled in K to 12 by grade?

Tomorrow I will table the information regarding school enrolment in the Sahtu.

2. What is the pupil/teacher ratio?

The funded pupil/teacher ratio for the total Sahtu board is 12 to nine to one. This is below the average pupil teacher ration of 16 to one, because of the number of small schools in the Sahtu, which are funded at a lower pupil/teacher ratio than large schools, in accordance with the funding formula. Tomorrow I will table information on the pupil/teacher ratio in the Sahtu.

3. What mixed classes exist in the Sahtu?

The following mixed classes exist in each of the Sahtu communities: Norman Wells - one grade 4/5 split class. The rest are single grades or are at the high school level single course classes. Deline - one K/grade 1 split class, one grade 2/3 split class. The rest are single grades or are at the high school level course classes. Colville Lake - all classes are mixed grade. Tulita - one grade 3/4 split class and one grade 5/6 split class. The rest are single grades or are at the high school level single course classes. Fort Good Hope - no split grade classes.

**Return To Written Question 13-15(3): Bad Debt Collection For Corporations, Boards And Agencies**

I have a return to written question asked by Ms. Lee on March 29, 2004, with respect to bad debt collection for corporations, boards and agencies.

Bad debt collection for the NWT Housing Corporation, NWT Power Corporation, Workers' Compensation Board, NWT Development Corporation, Aurora College and the Business Credit Corporation are done in house. At the request of these agencies, the Financial Management Board Secretariat places holds on funds payable by the Government of the Northwest Territories for possible set-off action. In addition, Aurora College provides the necessary information to the Financial Management

Board Secretariat to have set-off applied to Canada Revenue Agency refunds.

All other delinquent account collection action is the responsibility of the Financial Management Board Secretariat with the exception of the Department of Finance who is solely responsible for the collection of taxes. Departments are responsible to follow up on overdue receivables until such time as they are considered delinquent. Departments are then required to submit their delinquent receivables to the Financial Management Board Secretariat for collection action.

In its role as the main collection agent for the Government of the Northwest Territories, the Financial Management Board Secretariat contracts an outside agency to perform some collections. Files transferred to the outside collection agency are mainly accounts under \$5,000 and debtors that the Financial Management Board Secretariat has had no success in locating.

The contract for outside collection services was tendered and renewed effective June 16, 2003, for a three-year term. This was the second contract tendered for collection services during the last six years. Six years ago, the Financial Management Board Secretariat also contracted to a southern agency for any debtors located south of 60. At this time, both northern and southern collection action is contracted to the same local agency. Both contracts were completed using a competitive tendering process.

**Return To Written Question 15-15(3): Implementation Of The Sahtu And Dene Metis Aboriginal Land Claims**

I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Yakeleya on March 30, 2004, regarding implementation of the Sahtu Land Claim Agreement.

The Member asked if the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs has conducted any reviews of the economic measures chapters of other land claim agreements in the Northwest Territories. Pursuant to the Sahtu economic measures chapter, Government of the Northwest Territories departments participated in joint reviews with the Sahtu and Canada in 1998 and 2001. Because the Gwich'in economic measures chapter is virtually identical, the Gwich'in also participated in these joint reviews. The Inuvialuit, Government of Canada and GNWT recently completed a comprehensive review of the Inuvialuit economic measures chapter. The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs coordinated GNWT participation in these reviews.

The Member also asked if the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs had a report card identifying the status of GNWT implementation activities. The ministry represents the GNWT on the Sahtu Implementation Committee, which meets three times per year. At each meeting, the GNWT provides the Sahtu and Canada members with a status report that highlights current status of all GNWT implementation activities. The Implementation Committee also produces an annual report that includes previous years' accomplishments and outstanding issues as identified by any one of the parties. The Sahtu, Gwich'in and Inuvialuit implementation committees have agreed to review the format of the annual reports in anticipation of making the reports more results-based.

Specific to economic measures, the Sahtu and Gwich'in implementation committees have recognized that measuring effectiveness of economic development programs is problematic. The Sahtu, Gwich'in, Canada and the GNWT are designing a framework, that will assist government departments with determining effectiveness

of their programs, as they related to the economic measures objectives in the Sahtu and Gwich'in land claim agreements. Canada and the GNWT are cost sharing this initiative.

The Member's final question was how many of the economic measures obligations have been implemented in the Sahtu settlement area. With respect to GNWT activities, the GNWT continues to be committed to implementing all of its land claim obligations and reports progress on a regular basis through the Sahtu Implementation Committee.

Specific to economic measures, GNWT departments are implementing all provisions of this chapter through their ongoing programs and policies, as directed in the economic measures chapter.

The following are some examples of GNWT programs that support the economic measures objectives pursuant to section 12.1 of the economic measures chapter.

The trappers' assistance program and the fur purchase program support the traditional economy of Sahtu participants.

Assistance in the development of commercially viable businesses and enterprises of Sahtu participants is provided through programs such as the business development fund, grants to small businesses, the NWT Development Corporation and the NWT Business Credit Corporation. These programs can be accessed through the local economic development officer, the regional business development officer, or the Sahtu Business Development Centre.

The provision of business and economic training and educational assistant to Sahtu participants is offered through GNWT regional offices, including assisting with development of applications, aftercare and related information services. The Community Futures Development Corporation also provides aftercare and mentoring services. The GNWT, in partnership with industry and others, utilize the maximizing northern employment program for regional training initiatives.

The GNWT continues to work together with agencies and the business sector to develop the employment skills and opportunities for Sahtu participants through programs such as: training on the job programs for apprentices and non-apprentices, pre-apprenticeship training the pipeline operations training program.

In support of the economic measures objectives, the GNWT affirmative action policy promotes and encourages the employment of Sahtu participants. Also, in 1996, the GNWT initiated a review of all job descriptions to determine the require knowledge, skills and abilities for each job. This review was intended to remove inappropriate requirements in respect of cultural factors, experience or education.

The GNWT is also committed to consulting with the Sahtu when proposing economic development programs related to the economic measures objectives.

With respect to 12.2 of the economic measures chapter, when the GNWT carries out public activities in the Sahtu settlement area which give rise to employment or other economic opportunities and the GNWT elects to enter into contracts with respect to those activities the GNWT preferential contracting policies and procedures intended to maximize local, regional and northern employment and business opportunities are followed. The business incentive policy is an economic policy of the GNWT



primarily targeted to support and create opportunities for community-based smaller businesses.

The GNWT contract registry and reporting system, which applies to all government departments, came into effect April 1, 2004. This system will be able to produce reports on contracts awarded specifically to Sahtu businesses.

The GNWT is committed to consulting with the Sahtu when developing modifications to its preferential contracting policies and procedures. The Sahtu Secretariat was involved in extensive consultations during the business incentive policy review, which concluded last fall.

Finally, with respect to the final activity under 12.2, if the GNWT elects to enter into contracts with respect to activities on Sahtu-owned settlement lands without going to public tender, participants will be given first opportunity to negotiate such contracts, provided they satisfy all criteria particular to the contract.

Mr. Speaker, the GNWT continues to be committed to honouring the spirit and intent of the economic measures chapter of the Sahtu Land Claim Agreement. GNWT economic development programs will continue to support these very important economic measures objectives.

**Return To Written Question 16-15(3): Reclamation Standards For Con Mine Leases**

I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Braden of March 30, 2004, regarding the reclamation standards required under the Con Mine leases.

The leases currently held by Miramar Con Mine required that the land be restored to an environmentally safe and reusable condition, to the satisfaction of the deputy minister of the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs.

The Government of the Northwest Territories' position regarding the reclamation standard for the Con Mine property, including the Con and Rycon trailer courts, is to require MCM to remediate the land to an industrial standard for arsenic, and any other contaminants that may be present on the site. In determining what an environmentally safe and reusable condition is, the deputy minister will refer to existing industrial standards and guidelines under territorial and federal legislation.

The GNWT's position requiring the reclamation of the Con Mine site, including the Con and Rycon trailer courts, is based on the following factors:

1. The primary use of the land has been to conduct an industrial mining operation, and the land has been used for that purpose since the late 1930s. There is evidence to suggest that the trailer court lands were actively worked as part of the overall mining operation prior to the development of the trailer courts. Historical aerial photographs suggest that exploration activities were conducted on the trailer court lands, and that they were used for the storage of waste mine materials, in support of the industrial mining activity.
2. The trailer court development was only envisioned as a temporary measure to house mine employees, in response to a critical housing shortage in the city of Yellowknife in the early 1970s. The trailer courts were never intended to become a permanent residential area. The trailer courts were developed with the sole objective of housing mine employees. MCM's employees are an essential component of the

ability of the mine to carry out its mining operation, and are, therefore, an integral part of the overall industrial activity that has historically been undertaken on the property.

3. The request for the transfer of the trailer court lands is based on use of the land for residential purposes. The GNWT's position is that the responsibility to remediate the land to the appropriate standard for the proposed land use is to be borne by the party that is interested in acquiring the land, if that land use changes with the transfer of ownership.

MACA has communicated the GNWT's position respecting the industrial standard to the City of Yellowknife. The department will continue to consult with the City of Yellowknife on the industrial standard, through the joint working group established by the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board, to review MCM's draft abandonment and restoration plan, and through other forums that the City of Yellowknife may deem appropriate.

**Return To Written Question 18-15(3): Power Rates**

I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Yakeleya on March 31, 2004, regarding power rates.

Can the Minister provide a current dollar estimate on a one-rate power structure that would provide an adequate rate of return to the NWT Power Corporation?

A one-rate power structure would be subject to approval by the Public Utilities Board and would require integration with North Utilities Ltd's rates, as they distribute the power purchased from NTPC in Yellowknife and Hay River. Based on the Northwest Territories Power Corporation's previous general rate application for a single rate zone, the estimate of rates per kilowatt hour on a one-rate power structure that would provide an adequate return to the NTPC is a rate of \$.2321 for residential customers, \$.2101 for general service customers, and \$.1836 for wholesale customers.

Can the Minister provide information on the projected costs to maintain the NWT power subsidy program at current rates over the next five years?

The territorial power support program includes subsidies to both residential and commercial customers. The commercial customer subsidy is \$250,000 per year and is not expected to change unless rates change significantly. The residential subsidy is forecast to increase from approximately \$7.1 million in 2004-05 to \$7.7 million in 2008-09 based on consumption alone and holding the 2003-04 rates constant. If rates change due to increases in the price of diesel fuel, this would increase this forecast. However, with the volatility of world oil prices it is impossible for us to forecast what rate changes may occur.

Can the Minister provide the assembly with information on the direction provided to the board of directors of the GNWT Power Corporation in making their next general rate application?

Typically the government does not provide direction to the board of directors of the NTPC with regard to the corporation's general rate application. However, at the time of the last rate application, the Executive Council directed the board of directors to withdraw its single rate zone application and to resubmit the application based on the existing community-based rate structure. In addition, the corporation was directed to defer any public consultation or support for a move to a single rate zone

until an energy strategy is completed and adopted by Executive Council. This direction is published in the back section of the corporation's 2002-03 annual report.

No further direction has been issued to the corporation in respect of any future rate applications.

Can the Minister provide information on costs incurred by the NWT Power Corporation in examining and pursuing the expansion of the hydropower to date? This accounting should show the money provided to the Power Corporation by the GNWT as well as the money the Power Corporation has expended from its retained earnings.

Costs related to examining and pursuing the expansion of the hydropower system have been shared between the NWT Energy Corporation (03) Ltd, the GNWT and the NWT Power Corporation:

1. To the extent that the work being undertaken is related to the pursuit and expansion of the hydropower system, the costs are being incurred by the NWT Energy Corporation (03) Ltd, a subsidiary of the NWT Power Corporation, and include funding for aboriginal partners to participate in this work, engineering and environmental studies and business development expenses incurred by the NWT Energy Corporation (03) Ltd to further these projects. The amount spent to date is estimated at just over \$4 million.
2. The GNWT provided funding to the hydro development projects by way of a \$500,000 reduction in the 2003-04 dividend declared to the NWT Power Corporation. In addition, the GNWT provide contribution funding in 2002-03 in the amount of \$450,000 primarily for aboriginal partner participation.
3. The final accounting for these costs cannot be determined at this time. To the extent that costs incurred to explore hydro development are determined to have a future use to the regulated customer, for example, to complete a water license renewal or for capital investment requirement to continue to serve existing customers, some of the costs identified under 1. above may form part of an application to be recovered through rates at a later date. The funding for the aboriginal partners will be expensed as incurred and totals approximately \$1.5 million. The engineering and environmental studies will form part of the costs of any project should they proceed.

**Return To Written Question 19-15(3): Harvesters' Assistance Program And The Income Support Program**

I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Yakeleya on March 31, 2004, regarding the harvesters' assistance program and the income support program.

Harvesters' assistance payments to trappers are not considered in income support calculations. The harvesters' assistance program is an exemption under the consolidation of social assistance regulations. This exemption allows the value of materials or vehicles required for hunting, trapping or fishing to be excluded from the net monthly income calculations. This rule applies to everyone in the Northwest Territories, including the Sahtu, Gwich'in and the Inuvialuit.

Income support officers receive training on a regular basis and are aware of this regulation. The regional income support managers will ensure that these guidelines are followed.

**Return To Written Question 17-15(3): Rent Assessment For Seniors In Public Housing**

Mr. Speaker, I have a provisional return to a written question asked by Mr. Allen on March 31, 2004, regarding rent assessment for seniors in public housing.

Return To Written Question 17-15(3) is not ready today due to an administrative problem. The return will be ready on Friday, May 28, 2004. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 9, replies to opening address. Item 10, petitions. Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Mr. Delorey.

**ITEM 12: REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON THE REVIEW OF BILLS**

**Bill 5: Tlicho Community Government Act**

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to report that the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development has reviewed Bill 5, Tlicho Community Government Act, and wishes to report that Bill 5 is ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole as amended and reprinted and, Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 70(5) and have Bill 5 ordered into Committee of the Whole for tomorrow. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Member is seeking unanimous consent. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You have unanimous consent. The bill will be reported to Committee of the Whole for tomorrow. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Mr. Menicoche.

**Bill 6: An Act To Amend The Payroll Tax Act, 1993 And The Income Tax Act**

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to report that the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight has reviewed Bill 6, An Act to Amend Payroll Tax Act, 1993 and the Income Tax Act, and wishes to report that Bill 6 is ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole as amended and reprinted, and, Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 70(5) and have Bill 6 ordered into Committee of the Whole for tomorrow. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Member is seeking unanimous consent. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You have unanimous consent. The bill will be reported to Committee of the Whole for tomorrow. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents. Mr. Yakeleya.

**ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS**

**Tabled Document 34-15(3): Vision And Goals Of The 15<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to table Vision and Goals of the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly. We have gone through the efforts and contributions of all Members of the assembly for the benefit of all our people. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 13, tabling of documents. Mr. Premier.

**Tabled Document 35-15(3): Self-Reliant People, Communities And Northwest Territories - A Shared**

**Responsibility: Government Of The Northwest Territories Strategic Plan**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled Self-Reliant People, Communities and Northwest Territories -- A Shared Responsibility, Government of the Northwest Territories Strategic Plan, June 2004. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 13, tabling of documents. Mr. Bell.

**Tabled Document 36-15(3): Snap Lake Diamond Project Socioeconomic Agreement**

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled Snap Lake Diamond Project Socioeconomic Agreement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 13, tabling of documents. Mr. Yakeleya.

**Tabled Document 37-15(3): Summary Report Of The Circle Of Northern Leaders, April 2004**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to table a report of the Circle of Northern Leaders gathering that was held in April on the Hay River Dene Reserve. Mr. Speaker, this gathering, the first of its kind, brought together northern leaders from aboriginal and community governments and the Legislative Assembly to build better relationships and to identify shared interests and priorities. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 13, tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills, Item 19, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

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

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** I will call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Menicoche.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** I move that we report progress.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** You are making a motion to report progress?

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Yes.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The motion is in order. It's not debatable. All those in favour of the motion? The motion is carried. I will now rise and report progress.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 20, report of Committee of the Whole. Mrs. Groenewegen.

**ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Mr. Speaker, your committee would like to report progress and, Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Is there a seconder for that? Ms. Lee.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Item 21, third reading of bills. Item 22, orders of the day. Mr. Clerk.

**ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY**

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Mr. Speaker, there will be a Board of Management meeting at the rise of the House today, also a meeting of the Accountability and Oversight committee at 9:00 a.m. tomorrow morning and a meeting of the Governance and Economic Development committee at 10:30 a.m. tomorrow morning.

Orders of the day for Thursday, May 27<sup>th</sup>, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Reports of Standing and Special Committee
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. Petitions
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motion
15. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
17. First Reading of Bills
18. Second Reading of Bills
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
  - Bill 5, Tlicho Community Government Act
  - Bill 6, Payroll Tax Act, 1993 and the Income Tax Act
20. Report of Committee of the Whole
21. Third Reading of Bills
22. Orders of the Days

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Thursday, May 27, 2004, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

