



# **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

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

**Day 14**

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

## **HANSARD**

**Thursday, May 27, 2004**

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**The Honourable David Krutko, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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Tel: (867) 669-2200 Fax: (867) 920-4735 Toll-Free: 1-800-661-0784  
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## YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Thursday, May 27, 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):** Item 2, Ministers' statements. Mr. Handley.

**ITEM 2: MINISTER'S STATEMENTS****Minister's Statement 29-15(3): Auditor General's Report On Land Claims Implementation**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During the Committee of the Whole's review of the 2004-05 main estimates it was recommended that the GNWT publicly respond to the Auditor General's Report on Land Claims Implementation.

The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs has completed a comprehensive review of the Auditor General's report and the observations and recommendations contained within it.

The main points of the Auditor General's report are: (1) Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development must manage federal responsibilities in a way that achieves results; (2) there needs to be a focus by the federal government on fulfilling the spirit and intent of the land claim agreements; and (3) there must be a more effective process for resolving disputes arising from the implementation of land claim agreements.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report that since the release of the Auditor General's report, significant efforts have been made to address various recommendations.

In response to the first point, DIAND is designing a new federal obligations reporting system of land claims implementation. DIAND has also restructured and streamlined the federal Steering Committee on Self-Government and Comprehensive Claims as part of the federal performance management framework. DIAND has committed to working with this committee to ensure that implementation issues are brought to the attention of senior officials in federal departments.

DIAND and the GNWT have also agreed to work with the Gwich'in, Sahtu and Inuvialuit implementation committees to overhaul the annual reporting process, making the annual reports more results-based. The Auditor General's office has volunteered to assist the implementation committees in designing annual reports that provide a more accurate and realistic account of progress for implementation activities and obligations.

Mr. Speaker, at recent Gwich'in and Sahtu implementation committee meetings, Canada proposed that a workshop with the Auditor General's office be held in the fall to design a new annual report format. The Government of the Northwest Territories is supportive of the fall

workshop, and looks forward to participating in designing methods to improve the annual reports. The Gwich'in see the proposed workshop as favourable, and the Sahtu have stated that they will advise the GNWT and Canada of their support for this workshop.

Our government has suggested, Mr. Speaker, that the parties prepare ahead of time a list of questions, subjects and relevant concerns on annual reports to bring to the proposed fall workshop.

Mr. Speaker, although DIAND maintains the position that implementation success is defined by fulfilling specific obligations, the GNWT will continue to work with the Gwich'in, Sahtu and Inuvialuit to promote the spirit and intent of the land claim agreements.

The Auditor General's final point is that the various mechanisms for managing the land claim agreements are not effective in resolving disputes.

Mr. Speaker, worth noting is that the Auditor General's report acknowledges that instances of disagreement are outweighed by areas of agreement. In fact, there are only a handful of issues that have not been successfully resolved by the respective implementation committees.

It should also be noted that the Inuvialuit Arbitration Board has been used effectively in resolving outstanding Inuvialuit implementation disputes. In an effort to strengthen the dispute resolution process under the Gwich'in Land Claim Agreement, the GNWT supported a formal mediation process to assist in resolving implementation disputes. This process has been incorporated into the new implementation plan which was signed on November 14, 2003.

Mr. Speaker, the GNWT continues to be committed to honouring the spirit and intent of the Gwich'in, Sahtu and Inuvialuit land claim agreements. The GNWT, working with the Gwich'in, Sahtu, Inuvialuit and Canada, will continue to promote the effective implementation of land claim activities and obligations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 2, Ministers' statements. Minister Bell.

**Minister's Statement 30-15(3): National Diamond Round Table**

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to advise Members that the diamond capital of North America is hosting a national diamond round table this week.

As many of you know, more than 100 delegates, representing the diamond industry, government and other stakeholders, are meeting in Yellowknife for two days this

week to put the final touches on reports that play an integral part in the development of a national diamond strategy.

As Members are aware, Canada's provincial and Territorial Premiers have unanimously agreed to develop a national diamond strategy to ensure that this country can effectively benefit from all aspects of the diamond industry. It will be Canada's blueprint for building a major diamond industry from the Arctic to the Atlantic to the Pacific.

Mr. Speaker, the diamond industry is a special industry which has developed and evolved over centuries. It has met challenges both large and small, and has continued to maintain its unique characteristics and style. Mr. Speaker, as with any global industry, it will continue to evolve in order to face the challenges of this new millennium.

In the Northwest Territories we are taking steps to assist and encourage the development of a viable and sustainable diamond industry. We are being proactive in promoting and encouraging investment by the private sector to develop the industry. We are being cooperative in our approach; working with the private sector to address the issues and constraints that a new industry is bound to face.

Mr. Speaker, we recognize there will be ups and downs, as well as challenges we cannot yet foresee. However, I believe that if we stay the course we will realize our vision for the diamond industry in the Northwest Territories.

This government's vision going forward is that the Northwest Territories will become North America's diamond centre. In the coming years, more than 15 percent of the world's rough diamonds by value will be mined here. There will be sorting and selling facilities. Polished diamonds will be produced from a number of processing facilities. Our jewellery will combine northern and aboriginal designs and themes with our own diamonds and gold. We will be recognized as a centre of excellence for diamond training and knowledge. Tourists will visit North America's diamond centre to learn about diamonds and to purchase them. Government-certified polished diamonds and northern jewellery will be recognized in North America and around the world as unique, high-quality products. Diamond companies will be a valued part of the Northwest Territories, providing benefits and opportunities to ensure the sustainable development of our resources.

While on a global scale, Mr. Speaker, our four diamond manufacturing facilities barely make an impact now, they are extremely significant for northerners and Canada. We are now adding value to our raw resources before exporting them. We are working to ensure that the NWT and Canada obtains as much benefit as possible from the extraction and development of our natural resources.

Mr. Speaker, Canada and the NWT can be leaders in the global diamond industry. Our residents can become significant participants in all stages of this industry, from exploration to retail sales of diamond jewellery, but only if we work together to ensure substantial training, employment, business and investment opportunities in all stages from exploration to retail sales of diamond jewellery are available for all Canadians.

I am confident the efforts of the delegates at the national diamond round table will help Canada realize this goal. I look forward to seeing the results of their efforts reflected in the national diamond strategy later this summer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for North Slave, Mr. Zoe.

### ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### Member's Statement On Apology From The Member For North Slave

**HON. HENRY ZOE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address an incident concerning my personal conduct that occurred at the Royal Canadian Legion Yellowknife branch on the evening of May 15, 2004. On the evening in question, I was involved in a verbal altercation with a number of members of the Legion. During that incident I made an inappropriate statement concerning fellow Legion members that I deeply regret.

Mr. Speaker, I take full responsibility for my conduct on the evening in question. Shortly after the incident occurred, I apologized in writing and in person to the management and the members of the Royal Canadian Legion. I very much appreciate their acceptance of my apology.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I want to apologize publicly to the Members of this assembly, to my constituents and to the people of the Northwest Territories. I fully accept the high standards of personal conduct that the Premier has set for Members of Cabinet, and that all Members have set for this entire assembly. I want to assure all Members today that this type of incident will not be repeated. Thank you.

---Applause

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

#### Member's Statement On Involving Constituents And Students In The Work Of The Legislative Assembly

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the work of the Legislative Assembly is unique. Relatively few people will have the experience of representing the interests of others in this capacity. It is work that can be little known or sometimes understood by the average person who may not need to engage the support or services of their MLA. For this reason I believe that it is very important to find creative ways of providing awareness and engaging our constituents in what we do. One way of doing this is through programs that reach out to the curiosity and eager minds of young people. We have several avenues to achieve that goal and I would like to speak about some of them today.

One example, Mr. Speaker, is our paging program, whereby young people from our respective constituencies have the opportunity to travel to Yellowknife and work in the Legislative Assembly. They see the operation of the assembly and the work of the Members from a unique perspective. There is financial support from the assembly for Members to bring Pages every year.

Another example is the Youth Parliament program. The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Youth Parliament was recently convened in these Chambers, and I had the pleasure of observing the work of these young people as they raised and debated issues, made statements and asked questions, and I am sure that this is an experience that they will always remember. This did require the dedication and support of many staff members in the Clerk's office and the administrative staff.

Another example is the work we do as Members in the schools, whether it is job shadowing or visiting classrooms, as I did in Hay River last week to talk about and answer questions about the role of an MLA and the Legislative Assembly.

Another opportunity which exists is that of bringing young people to this assembly, and I am very pleased that the three grade 6 classes from Hay River are here in the visitors' gallery today. These 50 students, their teachers and some of their parents took a bus from Hay River, assisted by the generous support of the Hay River Elk's club. They have had an opportunity to see the sights of Yellowknife. Earlier today they met with the Premier and the Speaker -- and I thank the Premier and the Speaker for taking that time today in your busy schedule -- and now they are having a chance to observe firsthand the work of MLAs in this Chamber. I believe that this experience is very valuable. It has given them a close view of a democratic parliamentary process which, at the very least, is a learning experience and might even spark their interest in community and public leadership in the future.

I want to thank my assistant Wendy Morgan, and Deb Mageean, the assistant of my colleague from Hay River North, for their role in assisting with the logistics of this visit. This is the second year that this annual trek has been undertaken, and we would be happy to share our experience with other Members who would like to do something similar to this. Thank you very much.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** I would like to welcome you to the Legislative Assembly. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

#### **Member's Statement On Health Hazards Of Moulds In Home Construction**

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. (English not provided)

Mr. Speaker, today I would like to speak to you about a growing problem with housing in our communities in the Nahendeh riding, and that's the mould problem. Recently I have been contacted by a number of my constituents who are suffering from the presence of mould in their homes, especially in the communities of Fort Simpson and Fort Liard. This is not just a northern issue; it is currently recognized as a national problem. The report on the issue is expected to be released by the federal government in July.

Mr. Speaker, mould is primarily a health issue. The presence of mould produces allergens, irritants and, in some cases, potentially toxic substances. Allergic reactions to mould are common. Mould can also cause

asthma attacks in people with asthma, and young children seem to be particularly affected.

While all houses have potential for mould problems, the situation only becomes critical when compounded by moisture in the house. It is difficult to say how widespread the problem is at the present time, however, we can expect the problem to get worse in time as houses deteriorate with age. But the problem is not just a question of the age of the home, in certain cases the problem stems from shoddy construction practices and even design. In at least one case I'm aware of, the presence of mould has been attributed to construction of the house in the off-season under wet conditions. I am concerned that some of these problems could have been avoided by carrying out proper inspections of work done by contractors. I believe that we may be looking at the tip of a very nice, large iceberg here. This problem exists with homes in my riding and must also be present in other territorial communities.

Mr. Speaker, this is a problem that I will be addressing in earnest in the future. Solutions are required both in the short term and in the long term. I would like to advise the Minister responsible that I will be seeking answers from him during question period. Mahsi cho.

---Applause

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

#### **Member's Statement On Identity Theft In Canada**

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to shed some light on a matter that has been increasing dramatically in Canada and one that we as a government can take steps to improve. Mr. Speaker, the issue that I refer to is the growing trend of identity theft in Canada.

Identity theft has become one of the fastest growing crimes in both Canada and the United States. Mr. Speaker, the statistics are staggering. In Canada alone, the Phone Busters national call centre received 7,629 identity theft complaints in 2002, which resulted in a reported total loss to people of more than \$8.5 million. In the first quarter of 2003, there were 2,250 complaints resulting in total losses of \$5.3 million.

Mr. Speaker, one of the ways that thieves get a hold of your identity is to take your driver's licence, credit cards or other major pieces of identification that you may possess. Mr. Speaker, it was recently brought to my attention that the way that our driver's licences are processed in the Northwest Territories makes it very simple for a thief to assume your identity once they are in possession of your licence.

Mr. Speaker, the very fact of plasticizing our driver's licence makes it very simple for a thief to peel back the plastic and insert their photo on your licence. It is so simple that once a thief has your driver's licence, they are able to obtain numerous other pieces of identification and will allow a new identity. Mr. Speaker, I question why the Department of Transportation is still allowing this archaic practice of plasticizing driver's licences to be continued in light of the rapid increase in identity theft.

Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that the credit card format is used for driver's licences in almost every other jurisdiction in Canada. Many jurisdictions also have a bar code on their licences that does not allow further tampering of driver's licences. I would think that surely it is time for the Northwest Territories to get on board with this practice also. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

**Member's Statement On Delivery Of Health Services In The Yellowknife Correctional Centre**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be using my Member's statement today to allow this House and the public to become aware of some ongoing concerns that I have with the Department of Justice and the Yellowknife Correctional Centre.

The Minister is well aware of my concerns, but I feel I have to bring this to the attention of the Assembly to get some action on it. In February, I received a petition signed by over 100 inmates incarcerated at the Yellowknife Correctional Centre. They cited some serious deficiencies with the delivery of health services at the centre. Upon receipt of this petition, I drafted a letter to the Minister asking for swift action to their concerns and that he keep me apprised of what was happening. I did receive a letter from the Minister stating that they would look into this problem in the near future. On April 21<sup>st</sup>, I learned through an outside source that, as a result of the petition, a service audit was commissioned by his department. The service audit was to be conducted by an outside professional from Correction Services Canada and the departmental corrections investigator.

The audit has taken place, and I will have some questions for the Minister about that at the appropriate time. I am concerned that I was not informed of this audit taking place. Because my name appears in the conveyance order for this audit, I should have been informed that it was happening and not have to find out through other sources.

Mr. Speaker, the concerns about the delivery of health services at the centre are coupled with many other issues at the Yellowknife Correctional Centre. The staff morale continues to suffer, even though most had hoped the change of scenery in the new building would help. My concern is for the safety of the staff and of the inmates at the centre. Under the current circumstances, it may be just a matter of time before a serious incident takes place. I will have questions about this at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

**Member's Statement On Health Concerns Of Dust In Communities Of The Sahtu**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, summer is here at last. The summer brings many enjoyable things: warmer weather, longer days, summer holidays, time out on the land with the family.

Unfortunately, the summer season also has a downside: terrible dust in the Sahtu communities. It is not the first time that this problem in the communities has been raised in the House.

It was a real concern for some of the Members during the 14<sup>th</sup> Assembly, and for good reason. Dust is a serious health concern. No one is immune to the negative effects of breathing dust. Mr. Speaker, the elders in our communities suffer the most. I receive many telephone calls from the constituents in Tulita asking me if I can do something to improve the situation. The majority of them are elders. In 2003, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs and Transportation began work on chipsealing main streets in the non-taxed-based communities. I applaud the department for the work they have done so far. Chipsealing really makes a difference in the quality of life in the communities in the summer.

In March of this year, the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs sent a letter to all Members informing us of this government's implementation schedule for chipsealing on main streets in the non-taxed-based communities. I am very disappointed, however, to note that in Tulita this is not scheduled to begin until 2007, at which time the road begins to assess a design process. At this rate, it will be 2010 before the elders in Tulita can breathe easier during the summer months.

Mr. Speaker, the dust situation in Tulita is a present problem that has to be dealt with immediately. Twenty years ago, there were only four or five vehicles in these communities. However, highway access has changed this. Now, over 60 vehicles come up and down the roads easily and daily in the streets of Tulita, raising dust and severely interfering with the health of some of the elders of communities who live close to the roads. I do not want to tell the elders of Tulita that they must suffer another six years or more before something will be done to alleviate the dust problem. I will have questions for the Minister later on. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Allen.

**Member's Statement On Resource Development Negotiations In The Mackenzie Delta**

**MR. ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the benefit of viewers in Inuvik Twin Lakes, I just want to say that I am glad to be back today after a bout of the flu for the last several days. Today, Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak about how great it is to have the Government of the Northwest Territories sign with the large corporations that are developing our diamond mine industry. Now we have negotiations with a potential oil and gas industry in the Mackenzie Valley. The agreements are often referred to as EAs. Mr. Speaker, I am not talking about IBAs, or impact benefit agreements, signed between aboriginal governments and the industry. What needs somebody's attention is the framework used by the Government of the Northwest Territories in developing these documents.

Mr. Speaker, to date I can only reference the Norman Wells pipeline project and the BHP and Diavik projects in recent history having socioeconomic agreements signed. I received press releases issued last Friday by the



Government of the Northwest Territories saying they have clearly negotiated full federal support for the plan.

Mr. Speaker, it should be of concern to the people of the Northwest Territories that the agreement to support the secondary diamond industry has been sealed. This does not give us any confidence that all obligations will ever be fulfilled under the sub-agreement which cannot be devolved due to a confidentiality commitment.

Mr. Speaker, this is something that is always prior to celebrating an opening carnival for people of the North. By sealing something such as a sub-agreement does not allow this to happen. Mr. Speaker, these agreements are merely a vehicle for the Government of the Northwest Territories to intersect with industry and through to the federal government whereby we can be involved in the process that addresses our socioeconomic liability.

Mr. Speaker, the importance of this document is very high. The pipeline talks are happening so these agreements will be negotiated. As in March, when this government was not at the environmental impact assessment workshop in which the Minister replied that RWED was not invited, then how does this government expect to negotiate a compatible, favourable agreement with the oil and gas sector federal agency that will not observe such important workshops? Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister on how open these agreements are, how they will be monitored, and the long-term impact they will have on our government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

**Member's Statement On Lifeguard Services At Fred Henne Territorial Park**

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to talk to you about an issue of lifeguard services at the Fred Henne Territorial Park this upcoming summer. I should truly say the lack thereof of services. The Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development has said that they will no longer contract with the City of Yellowknife to provide lifeguarding services so there will be no lifeguards this summer at the Long Lake beach.

Mr. Speaker, as I see it, Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development has misinterpreted their contract with the City of Yellowknife, which I will table later this afternoon. Firstly, the terms of this agreement in section 6 of this contract, it says to consider this ongoing, unless cancelled by either party in writing by January 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. To my knowledge, this has not happened by either party. This agreement states that Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development is responsible to the City of Yellowknife for supplementing the cost of lifeguarding services to the tune of \$12,500. Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I did not point out that that was an equally shared partnership between the City of Yellowknife and the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, and one further point to say is the cost significantly rose since the original agreement was struck.

Mr. Speaker, secondly, I would further like to go on and report that, in the May 14<sup>th</sup> Yellowknifer, the main reason Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development does not

want to fulfill their agreement with the City of Yellowknife and provide lifeguarding services is because they do not want to assume the liability that occurs at this territorial park. Mr. Speaker, section 4.7 of this contractual agreement between the City of Yellowknife and the GNWT states, "shall indemnify and save harmless the Commissioner and the GNWT from any losses, costs, claims, charges, suits, actions or judgment made, brought or recovered against the Commissioner of the NWT or resulting from any negligent acts or omissions by the City of Yellowknife or its employees in connection with this service."

Mr. Speaker, I, therefore, say, given that liability need not be an issue for cancelling the lifeguarding services at Long Lake, given that in every area of our lives the GNWT encourages us to be safe, they educate us about dangers of smoking and not to drink and drive, to wear helmets on bicycles...Mr. Speaker, may I seek unanimous consent to continue and finish my Member's statement?

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. The GNWT encourages us to be safe by educating us of the dangers of smoking and not to drink and drive, to wear helmets when riding bicycles. I cannot understand why the GNWT would cancel the service that keeps everyone safe at this beach. I cannot understand that they are not willing to pay their fair share of costs through a partnership for this service. Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time, I will be asking the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development about this decision to no longer provide lifeguarding services at the Long Lake beach through this contract located in a territorial park in this city. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

**Member's Statement On Financial Support For Team NWT And The Canada Senior Games**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, following up on my commitment to speak on the issues related to senior citizens, I am happy to highlight a pamphlet that arrived in my Member's e-mail box this morning rather fortuitously. Mr. Speaker, that has to do with the Team NWT to the Canada Senior Games competition beginning in September of this year in Whitehorse.

Mr. Speaker, the Canada Senior Games is a national program to sponsor wellness, spiritual, mental and physical wellbeing among Canadians 50 years of age and older. Provincial and territorial programs come together annually or bi-annually in different locations across Canada. The first national games were held in Regina in 1996, the second in Medicine Hat in 1998, and the third in Summerside, PEI, in 2002. The next games are in Whitehorse.

Mr. Speaker, the event brings together amateur competitors who participate for the sheer joy of competition, for the opportunity to visit other parts of

Canada and for the camaraderie and social interactions that are integral and essential pillars to maintaining spiritual, mental and physical wellbeing.

The NWT Seniors' Society, now celebrating 21 years in the Northwest Territories, are managing and sponsoring Team NWT. Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that our very own Paul Delorey is a member of the senior team.

---Applause

I can assure you that I am not yet. Mr. Speaker, along with the support of corporate and individual donations, Team NWT is seeking the support of the government at all levels. There will be approximately 35 competitors. In addition, many non-participants will be cheering NWT on as they compete for our territory. Many volunteers from communities in Fort Simpson, Hay River, Fort Smith and Yellowknife have accumulated hours of work in fundraising campaigns and presentations to get their communities throughout the North represented on the team. Mr. Speaker, the NWT Seniors' Society believes that by investing in this endeavour, governments will save money. They really know how to make a good argument, Mr. Speaker. May I 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 your statement.

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is a very positive aspect to this. I do believe we released a statement yesterday talking about self-relying individuals and working towards wellness. I do not think anybody could disagree that active seniors are healthy seniors who have less need and make less use of the health care system. By engaging people as soon as they become seniors -- 55 plus for the purpose of the games -- the society hopes to get them active both physically and mentally and keep them active for the rest of their lives. In 2002, the oldest participant at the games was 92 years old. Team NWT's oldest competitor is 83 years young. My mother, who would probably not forgive me if I gave her age, is a much better bowler than I am.

Mr. Speaker, with Canada's rapidly aging population and escalating health care costs, it is obvious that the more we can do to keep seniors healthy and active, we will be building a more cost-effective system for everyone, governments and society in general.

I want to conclude my statement by stating to the Minister responsible for Seniors and Cabinet, that I am in full support of the proposal by the NWT Seniors' Society for \$65,000 in funding to get the 35 seniors to represent the NWT. I would like to ask the support of Members in this Assembly and Cabinet and reply as soon as possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

### **Member's Statement On Residency Criteria Of The Affirmative Action Policy**

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For many years, the GNWT has hired its workforce using a three-stage policy, based on race, residency, gender and ability. In a report filed in November of 1998, called the GNWT Report on the Affirmative Action Policy, the government of the day committed to examining at least one aspect of this, which was the residency condition under this policy. To date, Mr. Speaker, we are looking at about six years now. I am not aware of any changes to the definition of a long-term northerner under the affirmative action policy.

Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Constitution does allow for affirmative action programs, provided they meet certain criteria. I assume that when the affirmative action policy was first introduced, this government confirmed that its policy did meet that criterion. But, over time, things change. The question now, I believe, is whether our affirmative action policy still meets the criteria and whether the government examines such policies on a regular basis.

Mr. Speaker, for a person to be classified as a P2 candidate under this residency criteria of the affirmative action policy, it is necessary that they spend over half of their lives in the Northwest Territories. Now, constituents have brought it to my attention that this provision of our affirmative action policy is, in effect, age discrimination. They point out, for example, that a person who moved here when they were 10 years old would be eligible for P2 affirmative action hiring status in our government when they were 20 years old, just in time to get a good education and enter our workforce. But their parents who may have moved here when they were 30 years of age would not be eligible for that same status until they were 60 years old, just in time to retire.

Mr. Speaker, this part of our policy is unfair to all of the people who made a commitment to the Northwest Territories. I can see merit in maintaining such a classification to recognize a commitment to people who have made a long-term investment here in the Northwest Territories. Our workforce should be representative of the people it serves. But, in my mind, half a lifetime is far too long for determining that a person is a long-term northerner eligible for hiring by this government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

### **Member's Statement On Salute To The Cooperative Teamwork Approach Of This Government**

**MR. VILLENEUVE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, over the past couple of weeks, I have had the opportunity to meet with several Ministers to discuss various issues of concern to my constituency, Tu Nedhe, and to the residents of the Northwest Territories. During the course of these meetings with the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, the Minister of Health and Social Services, the Premier and the rest of the staff, I was assured that many of the valid concerns would be addressed in a timely and effective manner, although I realize that many issues cannot always be resolved quickly and to everybody's liking at all times.

Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to share with this House my evaluation of the government's practices and priorities which relates to my constituency issues. Mr. Speaker, I am glad to say that this government is moving forward on addressing and resolving many issues of concern that have not received the same level of attention in the past. I am happy to see that there is cooperation, transparency and responsiveness to many concerns that are being brought to the government's attention in a manner that is both expedient and satisfactory on most accounts, like the creation of another family law clinic and the reinstatement of the language nest program.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend the government's cooperative teamwork approach to solving many outstanding problems, and I encourage them to continue to build my confidence in this government. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

**Member's Statement On Salute To The Fire Department - Fire At Samuel Hearne Secondary School**

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier this month, the students and staff of Samuel Hearne Secondary School in Inuvik narrowly avoided tragedy when the roof of the foyer collapsed. As a parent of three children in the school and as MLA for the area, I am grateful that no one was injured. Since then, efforts have been focused on getting students back to class so that they are able to complete their school year. Although the subsequent fire in the gymnasium was a major setback, the timely response of the Inuvik fire department and the efforts of the school and education officials, government departments, and regulatory agencies and contractors have paid off. After a few short weeks, the school has re-opened and classes have once again resumed at the SHSS this week.

I would like to take the opportunity to convey my appreciation to all the people in the department and the agencies that pulled together to ensure that the situation was addressed so quickly and efficiently. In particular, I would like to thank the firefighters who assisted in containing the fire.

Mr. Speaker, a great deal remains to be done. As a parent and MLA, I commit to working together with all associated agencies and individuals to ensure that students and staff are safe, secure and able to continue with their learning. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**SPEAKER:** Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, Reports of Standing and Special Committees. Mr. Delorey.

**ITEM 4: REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

**Committee Report 4-15(3): Report On The Review Of Bill 5, Tlicho Community Government Act**

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development is

pleased to report on its review of Bill 5, Tlicho Community Government Act.

The committee heard from members of the public on Bill 5 on May 11, 2004, in Rae, and on May 13<sup>th</sup> in Yellowknife. Public hearings with the Minister took place in Yellowknife on May 10<sup>th</sup> and May 14<sup>th</sup>.

The committee would like to thank all the individuals who took the time to prepare submissions or to make presentations at our public hearings, and in particular those who traveled from Gameti, Wekweti and Wha Ti. The committee would also like to thank the Minister and his staff for presenting the bill.

The Tlicho Community Government Act is an unusual bill in that it flows out of a three-party agreement that, barring unforeseen circumstances, will be adopted as law by federal settlement legislation and will be constitutionally protected under section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982. This assembly has already made provision to adopt the agreement as territorial law through the Tlicho Land Claims and Self Government Agreement Act, which was passed last fall.

Bill 5 is intended to fulfill the GNWT's obligation under chapter 8 of the Tlicho Agreement to introduce community government legislation for Behchokò, Gameti, Wha ti, and Wekweti in keeping with the model agreed to by the Dogrib Treaty 11 Council, the GNWT and the Government of Canada. The agreement sets out a number of provisions that must be included in the legislation, in particular the composition and jurisdiction of the community government councils. As a result, there is very little latitude for the Legislative Assembly to make major changes to this bill without, in effect, repudiating the agreement and its own settlement legislation passed last fall.

The committee heard from several elders and leaders in Rae, including delegations from Gameti, Wekweti and Wha ti, who spoke of the importance of the bill and the tremendous amount of work that has been done by many people to get to this stage of implementing the Tlicho Agreement. The presenters unanimously gave their unconditional support to Bill 5 and asked that it be passed as soon as possible. In the words of one of the presenters, (translation):

Today we are talking about this bill that we have been working on for many years. We want this bill to pass as soon as possible. We talk about our young people, and those of us who are from the surrounding isolated communities have a lot of young people in our communities. We are doing this for them.

In Yellowknife, the committee heard from two Metis local representatives who asked that the passage of this bill be postponed until the rights of Metis in the North Slave region can be addressed. There are unresolved issues within that community that have delayed articulation and recognition of their treaty and aboriginal rights. It is to be hoped that once these rights have been articulated, the outstanding concerns can be resolved and the rights of all aboriginal people within the North Slave can be exercised on a collaborative basis.

As required by the agreement, Bill 5 provides that the chief and at least half of the councillors in each of the four

community governments must be Tlicho citizens. Only Tlicho citizens may vote for the chief. The committee received two written submissions that raised concerns about whether this guaranteed representation would violate the rights of non-Tlicho citizens, in particular their democratic, equality and mobility rights under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. One of the submissions also questioned why the community governments were being established by GNWT as opposed to Tlicho government legislation, and suggested that it would be more efficient if all NWT communities were covered by a single piece of legislation.

As previously explained, the committee has very little room to recommend major changes to this bill without effectively asking the parties to go back to the negotiating table, something they are not likely to agree to at this stage. The committee does not have a position on guaranteed representation for Tlicho citizens, and notes that it is impossible to predict with any certainty whether the courts, in the wake of a Charter challenge, would uphold this guaranteed representation model and agree that the three parties arrived at an acceptable balance between the respective rights of Tlicho and non-Tlicho. Some committee Members suggested that this community government model was a good compromise by all parties that was apparently intended to avoid the potential divisiveness and inefficiencies of having separate local governments for Tlicho and non-Tlicho Citizens.

One member of the committee voiced further concerns regarding the availability of land in the settlement region for future economic development. In keeping with the agreement, Bill 5 places a 20-year moratorium on selling community government lands. Following the 20-year period, the community governments will be able to transfer fee simple title, with voter approval. The Minister advised that lands would still be available for lease in accordance with past practices in this regard.

The clause-by-clause review of Bill 5 took place on May 14<sup>th</sup>. Seven amendments to correct minor oversights and to reorganize the schedules were agreed to at that time.

Following the committee's review, a motion was carried to report Bill 5, Tlicho Community Government Act, to the assembly as ready for Committee of the Whole as amended and reprinted.

That concludes the report of the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development on the review of Bill 5, Tlicho Community Government Act.

#### **Motion To Receive Committee Report 4-15(3) And Move To Committee Of The Whole, Carried**

Therefore, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, that Committee Report 4-15(3) be received by the assembly and moved into Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

Mr. Delorey.

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 93(4) and have Committee Report 4-15(3) moved into Committee of the Whole for today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Member is seeking unanimous consent to move the report into Committee of the Whole for today. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You have unanimous consent. The report will be moved into Committee of the Whole for today. Item 4, reports of standing and special committees. Mr. Menicoche.

#### **Committee Report 5-15(3): Report On The Review Of Bill 6, Payroll Tax Act, 1993 And The Income Tax Act**

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight is pleased to provide its report on the review of Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, 1993 and the Income Tax Act.

The committee held public hearings on May 20 and 21, 2004, in Yellowknife. The committee would like to thank the NWT Seniors' Society for their presentation, and the NWT Chamber of Commerce, NWT and Nunavut Chamber of Mines and the NWT Construction Association for their joint written submission. The committee would also like to thank the Minister and his staff for presenting the bill.

Bill 6 is the final piece of legislation needed to put into effect the revenue initiatives announced in the 2004-2005 budget address. Bill 6 will increase the payroll tax from one percent to two percent, increase cost of living tax credits and reduce the personal income tax rate on the lower two income brackets. Bills 2 and 3, which were passed earlier this year, increased the large corporate tax rate and the personal income tax rates for the top two income brackets. The committee was advised by Department of Finance staff that, even including the payroll tax, the NWT's top personal income tax rate will still be one of the four lowest in Canada.

The combination of revenue measures represented by Bill 2, Bill 3 and Bill 6 will help to address the NWT's need to keep up with the tax efforts of other provinces and territories. The consequences of not keeping up are that the NWT would be penalized in its formula funding deal with Ottawa.

The increase to the payroll tax is primarily intended to allow the GNWT to collect more revenue from individuals who work in the NWT, but who reside and file their income taxes in other parts of Canada. The numbers of these fly-in/fly-out workers are steadily increasing as more resource developments come on-stream, and it is expected that there will be a significant spike with the construction of a Mackenzie Valley pipeline. Bill 6 will help to position the GNWT for increased resource development, although revenues from the payroll tax will continue to be modest unless and until the construction phase of the Mackenzie Valley pipeline begins.

The changes to the cost of living tax credits and the personal income tax rates for the lower two brackets are intended to partially offset the payroll tax increase for NWT residents. The committee commissioned independent research to gauge the combined impact of Bill 3 and Bill 6 on resident taxpayers in several different scenarios. The findings are appended to this report.

While the scenarios outlined are somewhat simplistic, they do confirm that lower and middle income wage earners will see modest net reductions in their overall income tax as a result of Bill 6.

Some residents with higher incomes will see a net loss as the higher tax credits and lower personal income tax rates will only partially offset the payroll tax increase for them. Taxpayers whose income comes from sources other than wages, such as pensions or self-employment, will see a net gain of as much as \$800 because they will benefit from the changes to tax credits and tax rates although their income sources are not subject to the increased payroll tax.

Although some middle and high-income earners will see net losses in their take-home pay, the number of residents who will gain from these changes outnumbers those who will lose some income. In this context, those people who have fewer options to deal with the high cost of living in the NWT will be a little better off.

Although Bill 6 will directly benefit many lower and middle income earners, some committee Members stressed that tax increases cannot be looked at in isolation, but must be considered in the context of the high northern cost of living. Similar concerns were also raised in both submissions the committee received. The NWT Chamber of Commerce, NWT and Nunavut Chamber of Mines and NWT Construction Association suggested that an increasingly unattractive tax burden will make recruiting and retaining skilled and professional workers to the NWT even more difficult than it already is. The NWT Seniors' Society raised concerns that any tax reductions lower and middle income earners receive as a result of this bill could be more than offset by increases to the cost of living that result from a higher payroll tax.

The clause-by-clause review of Bill 6 took place on May 21<sup>st</sup>. Two amendments of a minor and technical nature were agreed to at that time.

Following the committee's review, a motion was carried to report Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Payroll Tax Act, 1993 and the Income Tax Act, to the assembly as ready for Committee of the Whole as amended and reprinted.

Mr. Speaker, that concludes the report of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight on the review of Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Payroll Tax Act, 1993 and the Income Tax Act.

**Motion To Receive Committee Report 5-15(3) And Move To Committee Of The Whole, Carried**

Therefore, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Sahtu, that Committee Report 5-15(3), be received by the assembly and moved into Committee of the Whole.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

Mr. Menicoche.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 93(4) and have Committee Report 5-15(3) moved into Committee of the Whole for today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Member is seeking unanimous consent to move the report into Committee of the Whole for today. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You have unanimous consent. Committee Report 5-15(3) will be moved into Committee of the Whole for today. Item 4, reports of standing and special committees. Item 5, returns to oral questions. Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mrs. Groenewegen.

**ITEM 6: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I said in my Member's statement, it's a pleasure to have the Grade 6 students from Hay River in the gallery today. I would like to name them if they could just quickly jump up so we can see you. First of all, before we do that, Ginny Groenheyde, one of their teachers and Bob White is one of the teachers. Also from the PA school, Carolyn Carroll and I would also like to recognize my assistant Wendy Morgan who put a lot of work into this. Now for the students: Keisha Kipling, Jaeda Larocque, Ben Corneau, Allee Geade, Madison Sabel, Tanya Maher, Irene Angulalik, Rie Wiedemann, Alexander Tatti, Luke Lafreniere, Jeffrey Fabian, Amy Carroll, Jeremy Carroll, Brett Soroff, Seth Norn, Brieanne Glaicar, Jordee Walsh, Keegan Beaulieu, Kaillyn McNabb, Deanna Crook, Danielle Gardener, Melissa McKinnon, Catherine Monkman, Cheslea Pukanich and Jordan Fabian. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Delorey.

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I, as well, would like to welcome all the students here today and introduce the rest of them. I also would like to first start out by introducing two of my constituents who are chaperones with this group: Sheila Hachey and Barb Atwell. The rest of the students are Ann Marie Pynton, Tristan Campbell, Shaylynn Atwell, John Bob Herrington, Colton Yee, Mason Hachey, Lyndon Antoine, Steffon Beggair, Barry Buckley, Kali-Ann Butala, Raymond Chalifoux, Sheldon Farcy, Elizabeth Gullion, Kayla Hoff, Kandace Kimiksana, Shannon Lafferty, Kelly Larocque, Patrick McNeely, Veronica Mennillo, Holly Rae Monkman, Harvey Moses, Alex Norwegian, John Stanga, Chelsey Willford and Kelli Steinwand. Welcome to the Legislature and I hope you enjoyed your trip.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's nice to see a lot of young faces in the gallery today. I would like to recognize my partner, my boss and supporter, Cheryl Bonnetrouge, who is in the gallery here. Thank you.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Zoe.

**HON. HENRY ZOE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize the president of the Royal Canadian Legion, Yellowknife branch, Mr. Lloyd Lush.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** I would like to welcome you to the gallery. At this time, I would like to thank the class from Hay River for coming to Yellowknife and for getting some insight to how the Legislative Assembly works, and hopefully that you have something to take back to your class in Hay River and share with your other classmates in Hay River. Also I hope to see you back here again to ensure you keep an eye on how our government works, your MLAs, the Premier and myself. So it was a real honour to have you here today and I wish you a safe trip home. Thanks for coming. You are always welcome back.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 7, oral questions. Mr. Hawkins.

#### ITEM 7: ORAL QUESTIONS

##### Question 143-15(3): Lifeguards At Fred Henne Territorial Park

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as per my Member's statement earlier today, I said I believed that the Department of RWED has misinterpreted their contractual obligation with the City of Yellowknife. At this time, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of RWED, when did his department cancel this contract with the City of Yellowknife and did they provide notice by the January 1<sup>st</sup> deadline as required in the contract? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

##### Return To Question 143-15(3): Lifeguards At Fred Henne Territorial Park

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have the benefit of the contract in front of me, as it seems Mr. Hawkins does. I appreciate that he will table it later today, so we have it and I can probably give him some more important answers at that point. Just a little background, Mr. Speaker, though, I believe we approached negotiations with the city this year and were looking to sign a contract, recognizing that costs had increased. It has always been on a cost-shared basis in the past. Past expenditures have been about \$12,000 for our government. We went into these negotiations and offered \$15,000 this year. It's my understanding that the City of Yellowknife had made a determination that they wanted full cost recovery and no longer wanted to share the cost of these services and indicated the full cost was \$21,000. So we were unable to come to an agreement at that point. I don't believe -- and I will wait to see the contract -- that we had an obligation to inform the city by January 1<sup>st</sup>. I have to take the Member's word for it at this point, but I believe that contract has expired, but I will wait to see the contract. Thank you.

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

##### Supplementary To Question 143-15(3): Lifeguards At Fred Henne Territorial Park

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will first say I noted the willingness to talk to the City of Yellowknife in the Minister's voice there, so I may forego my other excitable questions by asking for a commitment today that the Minister will open up negotiations with the City of Yellowknife as soon as possible to ensure that we do have life-guarding services in this territorial park. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

##### Further Return To Question 143-15(3): Lifeguards At Fred Henne Territorial Park

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, we didn't have life-guarding services last year. The contract notwithstanding, the city was unable to find people to do the life-guarding. Obviously it would be nice if there were lifeguards at all our NWT parks that are on water. I believe there are about 15 of them across the territory. I don't believe there are any lifeguards at any others, unless there are municipalities providing that service. I can indicate to the Member that I have called the mayor's office to discuss this matter. We have been playing phone tag. I do look forward to sitting down and discussing it with him further, but I hope he will recognize if you take a number like \$21,000 and extrapolate that over 15 other parks, we are talking into the \$300,000 range. In this instance, it would appear that Yellowknife is in a unique situation over the past two years of having had a contribution where other beaches have not. Thank you.

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

##### Supplementary To Question 143-15(3): Lifeguards At Fred Henne Territorial Park

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Due to the complexity of the last answer, it forces me to ask again for reassurance on the Minister's commitment. Due to the fact that we have a historical commitment on an open contract, as I read it, which I will further table today, I would like absolute commitment, so I can feel confident today that this Minister will deal with this historical problem and ensure that we have safety at this territorial park beach. I used to lifeguard at this beach and I am sorry I have to say here today that I can even recall the honourable Minister frolicking on that beach under the safety of a lifeguard. I would not like to put people in jeopardy on that beach. Can I have an absolutely firm commitment from the Minister that he will ensure that they will address this problem immediately with the City of Yellowknife?

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

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

##### Further Return To Question 143-15(3): Lifeguards At Fred Henne Territorial Park

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will go the Member one better. I also was a lifeguard at the beach and I hope I wasn't frolicking on the job.

---Laughter

I recognize that it would be certainly helpful and it is important to make sure that the beach is safe. We are

proposing that it be posted as unsupervised. I can't guarantee that there will be lifeguard services at that beach, no more than the past Minister could for the past season despite the contract in place. The city was unable to provide lifeguards. So it would be misleading for me to stand here and say that I could guarantee that there would be lifeguards at that beach. I think another point to keep in mind, Mr. Speaker, is despite life-guarding in the past, there has always been hours. In most cases during the week, life-guarding services didn't start until noon. In my past experience on the job, you would show up on a hot, sunny day at noon to find the beach full and kids swimming. There really is an obligation on the part of parents to be vigilant and to make sure that they know where their children are, make sure that their children are supervised while swimming, swimming within the guarded area even when there are lifeguards on duty because as a lifeguard you can't insist that children stay within the guarded area. I don't think this government can guarantee the safety in the water of children. I think parents have to work hard to do that and I don't want to make guarantees that I can't fulfill. I will indicate, as I have, that I am prepared to sit down and discuss the matter with the mayor and council. We would like to come to some sort of resolution. I think that's important, but I don't want to make guarantees I can't deliver on. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 143-15(3): Lifeguards At Fred Henne Territorial Park**

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am only concerned about the obligation of safety, whereas the territorial government may see no smoking as a personal obligation, yet the territorial government engages in non-smoking policies and safety policies. Last year was an anomaly and we pointed out the uniqueness of it, whereas qualified lifeguards were not available. This year they are available, so I would like to think that the territorial government is trying to ensure the lifeguards are there. I am asking for the Minister to ensure that he will be there contractually to help support through financial means, so that this service can continue as it historically has. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 143-15(3): Lifeguards At Fred Henne Territorial Park**

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Mr. Speaker, again, I can't provide that assurance. In the past it has been a \$12,000 contribution, it has been cost shared, a shared responsibility with the city. The proposal this year from our government, recognizing that costs have indeed gone up, was to increase that to \$15,000, recognizing that it should still be on a cost-shared basis. The city countered with full cost recovery only, turned down the \$15,000 offer, wanted the \$21,000 in full cost recoveries. So I can't guarantee that we'll come to a contractual arrangement, but I will guarantee that I will sit down and speak with the mayor on the matter. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 7, oral questions. The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Allen.

**Question 144-15(3): Potential Impacts Of Resource Development In The Mackenzie Valley**

**MR. ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, have my questions directed to the Minister of RWED. The contents of my Member's statement referred that we definitely need a policy framework for negative impacts as it pertains to industry development across the Northwest Territories. So could the Minister provide this House as to what framework was used for the Snap Lake project as it was raised in the news release on the Snap Lake agreement? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Return to Question 144-15(3): Potential Impacts Of Resource Development In The Mackenzie Valley**

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We talk about the context or the frame in which negotiations were undertaken with DeBeers in this matter, in developing our socioeconomic agreement. I would say that we took our guidance from past SEA agreements with BHP and with Rio Tinto, and further to that, Mr. Speaker, followed the direction as laid out in the EA process by the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board. That EA process provided the frame of reference, and laid out a number of obligations that had to be met both by the company, by DeBeers, and by our government. So we've used that as our context or frame for developing the socioeconomic agreement. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 144-15(3): Potential Impacts Of Resource Development In The Mackenzie Valley**

**MR. ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So would the Minister confirm then if this same process will be used for the Mackenzie Valley pipeline, and the pipeline groups? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 144-15(3): Potential Impacts Of Resource Development In The Mackenzie Valley**

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** I think philosophically we are talking about, Mr. Speaker, the same idea. We've been working to negotiate a protocol agreement with the producers group. That protocol agreement would be an umbrella agreement that would spell out the number of sub-agreements that come under it. I think there are -- I am going to guess between nine and 15 -- one of those agreements would be the socioeconomic agreement, and we've also had discussions about the length of time it has been taking to get the protocol agreement finalized. We are in discussions with the producers group and at the same time moving forward on the SEA process, starting to negotiate the socioeconomic process, because, of course, we are concerned about the time frame here, we want to move forward quickly. But, the ideas are similar. We are talking about business targets, we are talking about employment targets. Those kinds of things would be included in this agreement. In general, Mr. Speaker, we are talking about benefits that we think should accrue to residents of the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 144-15(3): Potential Impacts Of Resource Development In The Mackenzie Valley**

**MR. ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. All said and done, although one key component seems to be missing, and that is in terms of monitoring of these agreements. So will the department continue to monitor these reports and the contents of the BHP and Diavik previous agreements? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 144-15(3): Potential Impacts Of Resource Development In The Mackenzie Valley**

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you. The Member is certainly right; we have monitoring obligations. We have obligations that are shared with BHP and with Diavik, and we will with DeBeers, as well. We are proposing to set up a joint monitoring board under the terms of the new agreement, and have done likewise in some of the past agreements. I think the Member is making the point that we need to be vigilant in monitoring. I agree with the Member. We have to ensure that the commitments being made, and that we spent so much time negotiating, are being lived up to. Obviously we have an obligation in that regard, and my department has an obligation, and I take the Member's point that we certainly need to be fulfilling that commitment. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 144-15(3): Potential Impacts Of Resource Development In The Mackenzie Valley**

**MR. ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Then can the Minister articulate to this House and to the people of the Northwest Territories and conclude that there will be no negative impacts or negative effects on government from these projects? Could he state that to this assembly? Thank you.

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

**Further Return To Question 144-15(3): Potential Impacts Of Resource Development In The Mackenzie Valley**

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you. In terms of negative impacts on the people of the Northwest Territories, obviously we want to mitigate those wherever possible. I can assure the Member that I'm sitting down with my colleagues, the Minister responsible for the social envelope, to first identify what those potential impacts are, and we have some I would say track record now. We can take a look at our experience with the course of the last couple of mines. I think we need to learn from that. We need to understand where the challenges are, and where there are potential impacts seek to mitigate them. There certainly has to be structure and framework in place to do that. I give the Members my assurance that that's high on our radar as a government, and we are dedicating resources to making sure we collaborate interdepartmentally to meet that. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 7, oral questions. The Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

**Question 145-15(3): Examination Of The Affirmative Action Policy**

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Premier, and they are a follow-up to my statement about an aspect of the affirmative action policy. As I said, I have had constituents remark, and in fact complain, that the policy really amounts to a form of age discrimination. I also spoke of our previous government's commitment to look at this issue, but I have found in my research no evidence that this was addressed. Mr. Speaker, can the Premier tell this assembly whether this government has examined its affirmative action policy in light of changing circumstances and the passage of time? Thank you.

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

**Return To Question 145-15(3): Examination Of The Affirmative Action Policy**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, no, this government has not had an opportunity yet to review the affirmative action policy. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 145-15(3): Examination Of The Affirmative Action Policy**

**MR. BRADEN:** Mr. Speaker, specific to the residency criteria, could the Premier advise whether he is in any position to consider whether this half lifetime requirement for eligibility for hiring in our government is still acceptable in today's human rights standards? Thank you.

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

**Further Return To Question 145-15(3): Examination Of The Affirmative Action Policy**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I've asked the same question. First of all, what is the rationale for half of one's lifetime in order to qualify under the affirmative action policy, and I am also asking whether this is any inconsistency or possible violation of our other legislation. But, Mr. Speaker, at this time I don't know the rationale that was used at the time this was established. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 145-15(3): Examination Of The Affirmative Action Policy**

**MR. BRADEN:** Mr. Speaker, as the 15<sup>th</sup> Assembly has been preparing its work plans and its priorities in committee, and in consultation with other leaders in the NWT, a fair amount of attention has been paid to growing and sustaining a workforce with the government that is capable and willing to perform the tasks that we require as a new government. A number of areas of how do we do this, how do we enable our civil service to be the best it can be have been addressed? Is a review of the affirmative action policy one of the priorities that this government will undertake during the life of this assembly? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.



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

**Further Return To Question 145-15(3): Examination Of The Affirmative Action Policy**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, certainly we will be looking at this as time permits. Our statistics in terms of employment of people, whether its indigenous aboriginal persons or indigenous non-aboriginal persons, or disabled people, or women in management, are important to us, and we certainly want to have employment that reflects our population. So, yes, this will be looked at by the 15<sup>th</sup> Assembly. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 7, oral questions. The Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

**Question 146-15(3): Delivery Of Health Services In Yellowknife Correctional Centre**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In reference to my statement earlier today, I would like to ask the Minister if he knows or if he is aware, as the Minister of Justice, of the fact that guards at the Yellowknife Correctional Centre currently administer medications, narcotics and other medicine to inmates. This happens daily, even though none of the guards have formal training on handling these medications, and I am wondering if this causes the Minister any concern, and what this practice does to the GNWT's liability. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister of Justice, two questions.

**Return To Question 146-15(3): Delivery Of Health Services In Yellowknife Correctional Centre**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Mr. Speaker, in response to the first question, yes, I am aware that corrections officers do hand out medications to inmates, and to the supplementary, they are only handed out under the direction of medical staff, and only when officers have completed a training course.

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

**Supplementary To Question 146-15(3): Delivery Of Health Services In Yellowknife Correctional Centre**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What are the impacts of the ongoing issues at the Yellowknife Correctional Centre in the health services unit? What kind of impact is it having on Stanton Territorial Hospital? I know inmates have to go to Stanton for procedures that could and should be done at the facility, and I have also been made aware that casual nurses are actually being taken from the hospital and sent over to the facility. Thank you.

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

**Further Return To Question 146-15(3): Delivery Of Health Services In Yellowknife Correctional Centre**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the intention is to be able to deliver the services at the facility, and we do currently have two nurses on staff to be able to provide services. I am advised by the Department of Health and Social Services that there has been no appreciable increase or noticeable increase in the patients from YCC to date. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 146-15(3): Delivery Of Health Services In Yellowknife Correctional Centre**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I understand it, the audit was conducted solely by Ms. Shannon Weatherhead-McCoy, the chief of health services from Drumheller Institution in Alberta. Why wasn't the Department of Justice corrections investigator involved in this audit, as was set out in the conveyance order? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 146-15(3): Delivery Of Health Services In Yellowknife Correctional Centre**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that individual was unavailable at the time that we wanted to have the audit work done. Rather than hold it up and wait until both were available, it was felt that the person from Corrections Canada was well qualified to conduct the audit or the review, and that is the reason that it went forward at the time it did. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 7, oral questions. The Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

**Question 147-15(3): Disciplinary Action For The Conduct Of Minister Zoe**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier, and it is with regard to the Member's statement by Mr. Zoe earlier today. Mr. Speaker, I can't say that I know all of the details that pertain to the incident that led to the statement by Mr. Zoe today, but I have had the opportunity to speak to those who have more knowledge about it, and my understanding is that the incident was quite serious, and one that has brought disrepute and questioned the integrity of this House. Mr. Speaker, I have to tell you that I take membership in this assembly as a privilege that is very important and serious, and one that I have to work really hard to uphold. It is the standard that we have for all of us, and the respect and the expectations that people have of this assembly depends on the conduct of all the Members of this House. My information is that what Mr. Zoe did in this incident has put a dark shadow on that, and one of the things that the public has said is that if anybody in the public did what Mr. Zoe did, they would be fired. So I would like to ask the Premier whether he has given any consideration to remove the portfolios from Mr. Zoe. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Return To Question 147-15(3): Disciplinary Action For The Conduct Of Minister Zoe**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, the incident that occurred is certainly being viewed as one that we take seriously. I can let the Member know that upon hearing about it, I did call the Legion, I did talk with Mr. Zoe, I sent a letter to all of the Members advising them of the incident, and I have also spoken to many of the Members about this particular incident. Mr. Speaker, the incident is serious, and it is one that I certainly view as one that we don't want to see happening, whether it is MLAs or Ministers. I can assure the Member that I have also

included in the mandate letters to all of the Ministers concerned with regard to anything that brings embarrassment to our government. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 147-15(3): Disciplinary Action For The Conduct Of Minister Zoe**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to add that I have a lot of respect for Mr. Zoe, as I have for Members in this House. I do believe he is a very capable Minister. I believe the issue here is something quite different, and I believe the issue has to do with leadership. I would rather like to see a situation where Mr. Zoe maintains his duties in Cabinet, but I need to be assured that there are decisions made by decision makers with the power to make sure that it doesn't happen again, and the statement today does not tell me, and does not give me the confidence that we have taken the steps necessary to make sure that it doesn't happen again. So I would like to know if the Premier would exercise his power -- and he has the power -- to discipline his Minister to make sure this doesn't happen again. What sort of disciplinary action has the Premier taken as the leader of the pack? Thank you.

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

**Further Return To Question 147-15(3): Disciplinary Action For The Conduct Of Minister Zoe**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I've outlined some of the actions I have taken. I am doing another letter as a reminder to all of Cabinet that we cannot tolerate these kinds of incidents. So that will be going out today or tomorrow. I assure the Member that I do view this very seriously. We maintain high ethical standards within this House and certainly within Cabinet, and if there is another such incident then, as I have told many Members, that I will then make fairly strong recommendations to this House.

Mr. Speaker, I want to remind us that it is not me who makes that decision, it is the House that has selected me as Premier, it is the House that has selected the Cabinet, and we have to work as a team in dealing with these kinds of issues. But I assure the House that we maintain the highest ethical standards that can be expected of people, and I don't intend to vary from that. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 147-15(3): Disciplinary Action For The Conduct Of Minister Zoe**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I just want to state that I think that we have to be fully mindful of the fact that we are dealing with the public expectations and our responsibility to the public. I don't believe this is now limited to what happened in the Legion. It is not a Legion issue. It is an issue that goes to the general public. Mr. Speaker, I don't believe the public who knows about this -- and there are a lot of people in the public who knows about what happened -- are satisfied with the Premier and Members around this House exchanging letters. I think the public expects us to do more to show, and not just talk about it, but to act the talk. So I think the public has the right that concrete actions were taken, and I have to remind the Premier he has the power to take disciplinary

actions, and he has the power to remove the portfolios from him. Would the Premier consider that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 147-15(3): Disciplinary Action For The Conduct Of Minister Zoe**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Zoe's mandate and portfolio is...With him certainly I have considered it, certainly I will consider it in the future. If anything like this ever happens again, not just with Mr. Zoe but with all of Cabinet, I have looked at this one very seriously, I have followed up with the Legion. Mr. Zoe has as well, apologized; the Legion has given me a letter indicating that they have accepted the apology. Today Mr. Zoe stood up and made an apology to all of us and to the public, and has indicated that this will not happen again. I assure the Members again that if there is any such thing happening again, not just by Mr. Zoe but by the whole of Cabinet including myself, then we will take action. I intend immediately to follow up with another letter to confirm that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary To Question 147-15(3): Disciplinary Action For The Conduct Of Minister Zoe**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't believe the Premier has answered the question, and that is doing his part to not just do the letters. How many letters can you write? Does he not think, based on the information that he has, that what happened is not important enough for him to take more action than writing letters? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 147-15(3): Disciplinary Action For The Conduct Of Minister Zoe**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I believe that the action that I have taken and the action that Mr. Zoe has taken certainly indicates that we view this issue very, very seriously. I believe that what has been done to date not only upholds our ethical standards, but is also showing responsibility towards ourselves as Cabinet Ministers and as MLAs. I want to make it very clear that there will be absolutely no tolerance from here on, and I have said that to many of the Members. I have told Mr. Zoe, I have told all of Cabinet, that there will be no further acceptance of this. Mr. Speaker, I don't want to get into the details of this, but at this point I think that we have dealt with the issue, I think I have dealt with it in a way that is fair, and I think at the same time underlines the importance and the significance of this kind of incident. I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, and assure this House that this will not be tolerated further. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 7, oral questions. The Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

**Question 148-15(3): Incidence of Identity Theft In The Northwest Territories**

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Transportation. It has to do with my Member's statement with regard to identity theft. It is an issue that is an increasing problem

right across Canada, the Northwest Territories and in the United States, as well. The numbers are increasing dramatically. I was wondering if the Minister of Transportation could tell this House whether his department has any statistics on the number of thefts that go on in the Northwest Territories with regard to vehicles, and drivers' licences that do result in loss of compensation and new identities being formed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Return To Question 148-15(3): Incidence of Identity Theft In The Northwest Territories**

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, no, I don't have those statistics. I know it is a concern, it has been a concern raised to us by a number of organizations and individuals. However, I do not have that information in front of me. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 148-15(3): Incidence of Identity Theft In The Northwest Territories**

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of the issues that was brought up yesterday by my colleague, Mr. Hawkins, was drivers' licences, and the importance of us doing work to correct the problems with our drivers' licences. In following up with that, that is an area where a lot of theft is going on to get new identities, and our drivers' licences being plasticized leads to that quite easily. Can the Minister tell this House when his department is going to be coming forward with changes to our drivers' licences and, more importantly, when will we get to see what changes are being made because there is more than one problem with the drivers' licences when it comes to identity theft? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 148-15(3): Incidence of Identity Theft In The Northwest Territories**

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I indicated yesterday that we have been working on this issue with a number of jurisdictions, and also the Canadian Council of Motor Transportation Administrators and the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators. We are trying to develop standards that will receive national consensus. We are doing a needs analysis and we have hired a contractor, and we expect those results very shortly. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 148-15(3): Incidence of Identity Theft In The Northwest Territories**

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I had mentioned previously, there are a number of flaws in our drivers' licences that lead to identity theft, and one of the very important ones that was the fact that drivers' licences in the Northwest Territories, people who hold a driver's licence are allowed to have a driver's licence and only have a box number, no street number on their driver's licence. So it could be a box number from anywhere, but there is no street address on their driver's licence. I think we are the only jurisdiction in Canada that

allows that. Will that be addressed, and is it a concern that the Minister is aware of? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 148-15(3): Incidence of Identity Theft In The Northwest Territories**

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. There is that issue. There are other issues that are a concern regarding security, and the issue of drivers' licences and the issue of using drivers' licences as identification documents. We are looking at it. We intend to proceed with the development of a new format. We'd like to have that in place at least within the next year. It is something that we tamperproof, bulletproof, digitize, and we will have something to present to the committee fairly soon, as we'd like to have this document in the works and out in the next year or so. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 148-15(3): Incidence of Identity Theft In The Northwest Territories**

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am glad to hear that the department is working on it and hope to have something come forward fairly quickly on this, but it is an issue that I think needs some public awareness on as well, because it leads to not only changes of identity, but also in losses in revenues, and people can access different things with different identities. So I think one of the big areas that is happening is that people tend to leave their driver's licence, their registration, their insurance cards in their vehicles, and the number of vehicles that are being stolen today lead to that information being out there. So I am wondering if the department is doing any public awareness campaign to make owners of vehicles, drivers to not leave those pieces of information in their vehicles for that very reason. Once people have them, they can do all kinds of things with that information. I don't even know what the laws are around leaving all of that information in your vehicle, or taking it out, but I think it is an area that should be addressed. Is the department doing anything to make the public aware of that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 148-15(3): Incidence of Identity Theft In The Northwest Territories**

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated, the Department of Transportation has been working on this issue for a number of years; I believe it is since 2001. However, we are trying to get national consensus from a number of different agencies, and everybody has to be in agreement with these national standards, and we can only operate as fast as those standards are set. We intend to try to get something done in the near future; we are near conclusion. The information that the Member is asking is usually provided at the time of issuing licences. We ask that these documents are kept secure. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 7, oral questions. The Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

**Question 149-15(3): Disciplinary Action For The Conduct Of Minister Zoe**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to follow up on the questions asked by Ms. Lee here with respect to the statement made in the House today by Mr. Zoe, and my questions will be directed to the Premier, as well. I would like to say, also for the record, that I am not satisfied with the statement that was made in the House today. I think it was sugar coated. I think that there are a lot more things that happened. It is not just about an altercation, it is not just about the Royal Canadian Legion. This is not about the Royal Canadian Legion, and I must say I was a little taken aback by the presence of the president here in the gallery today. Certainly it is open to the public, but I don't know what that message is supposed to be. I'm a member of the Legion, too. This is about a Minister's conduct. I'd like to ask the Premier, has he ever specifically talked to and warned Mr. Zoe with respect to incidents of this nature taking place during his tenure as a Cabinet Minister? Thank you.

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

**Return To Question 149-15(3): Disciplinary Action For The Conduct Of Minister Zoe**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, yes, I have spoken to Mr. Zoe about these kinds of incidences. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 149-15(3): Disciplinary Action For The Conduct Of Minister Zoe**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So what I was hearing earlier today was that this sounds like it was an isolated incident, and Mr. Speaker, I don't believe this is an isolated incident. I think that this is something that there has been a series of incidents around, and if the Premier, Mr. Speaker, has already warned Mr. Zoe about this, I am not quite sure I understand what the purposes of the "if it ever happens again." What is the purpose of that? Why are we waiting for another incident before we do something? It's within the Premier's purview to do something about this. Why isn't he doing something about it?

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

**Further Return To Question 149-15(3): Disciplinary Action For The Conduct Of Minister Zoe**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, this is the first incident where I had an official or real complaint. Other than that, I have heard of incidents that have happened about various people, including Mr. Zoe. So this is one where I have met with him. I have followed up in my responsibility to let the Members know. I have followed up with the Legion who had issued the complaint to me. I have discussed this with Members and I have talked to Mr. Zoe. I am doing another letter to Cabinet to remind them that this is not tolerable. Mr. Zoe has indicated to me that he is going to take steps to make sure that this does not happen again. I take him at his word for it. Mr. Speaker, I believe I have done what is within reason in dealing with this incident. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary To Question 149-15(3): Disciplinary Action For The Conduct Of Minister Zoe**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Premier wanted the job as Premier. He wanted to be the leader and now it's time to show some leadership. What is the purpose of delaying action with respect to this conduct that has been displayed by Mr. Zoe? What is the delay? Are you worried about hurting his feelings? Are you worried about embarrassing him? Are you worried that no one else can do the job? What is the purpose of a delay? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Handley.

**Further Return To Question 149-15(3): Disciplinary Action For The Conduct Of Minister Zoe**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I don't think there is any delay in anything. I acted very quickly when I became aware of this incident. I have discussed this with Members. Mr. Zoe has discussed it with Members. I have taken action that I believe is appropriate. Some Members may not agree with me, but I believe what I have done, given the circumstances as I know them, is reasonable. I believe there is nothing being delayed here, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary To Question 149-15(3): Disciplinary Action For The Conduct Of Minister Zoe**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Mr. Speaker, I will ask a question of the Premier. Is the Premier willing to take responsibility for the conduct of his Cabinet Ministers and remove Mr. Zoe's portfolios from him in response to this incident which took place, which is very well known in the public? Will the Premier take action?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Handley.

**Further Return To Question 149-15(3): Disciplinary Action For The Conduct Of Minister Zoe**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I have taken action that I believe is appropriate in this case. I will absolutely, certainly take action as I have said if there is ever any other incident that is like this. I will absolutely take action on it immediately. I can assure the House that I intend to do that, absolutely. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 7, oral questions. Member for Nunakput, Mr. Pokiak.

**Question 150-15(3): Community Freezers In Paulatuk And Holman**

**MR. POKIAK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement yesterday, I requested community freezers for Paulatuk and Holman for the 2004-05 season. I would like to take another shot at requesting this and will continue to, so we can resolve the problem. Mr. Speaker, given the recent response of the Minister of RWED towards the contract offered to the City of Yellowknife for \$15,000 and the city turning down the offer, can Minister Brendan Bell take that \$15,000 and put it towards the community freezers in Holman and Paulatuk? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

**Return To Question 150-15(3): Community Freezers In Paulatuk And Holman**

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Mr. Speaker, that's an interesting question and I would say and restate that I am certainly willing to come to the Member's riding and sit down and better understand the needs of the community as it relates to this piece of infrastructure. We can talk about what it actually costs to run. I would like to see it. Obviously we have concerns about the health risk. We have talked in past about liability. Internally in the department we have had discussions about that. That is becoming more and more of a concern for public governments. I know our Department of Finance risk management division have advised us on several cases. I can't speak specifically to this one, but in other cases there are liabilities that potentially would prohibit us from feeling comfortable with an arrangement of this nature. The earlier point about a contract, stating that that allowed us to be outside of any obligation or liability, there are concerns about any party's ability to contract out of obligations and liabilities. So there were a number of concerns around this. The short answer is I think it would be more appropriate if I sat down with the community and we met and discussed options. As I have said, the preferred option is not to keep this piece of equipment running, and we have made offers to all members of a community who need them of chest freezers at no charge, I would add, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 7, oral questions. The Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

**Question 151-15(3): Health Concerns Of Dust In Sahtu Communities**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now that the dust has settled in Tulita with health concerns with regard to elders, I have questions for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, the Honourable Henry Zoe, with the chipsealing program scheduled for the communities. In 2007-08, the community is going to see some action in terms of the dust. Can I get a commitment from the Minister to work with the hamlet council to find an interim solution to the dust problems in Tulita while the community waits for the chipsealing program? Mahsi.

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

**Return To Question 151-15(3): Health Concerns Of Dust In Sahtu Communities**

**HON. HENRY ZOE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the issue of dust control at the community level, the Member for Sahtu raised with me earlier this week. I have taken it to my department to see how we can assist the particular community that he made reference to, particularly Tulita. The department, through our formula financing, is providing funding to undertake this type of dust control at the community level. With regard to chipsealing, we do have a five-year plan that we jointly developed with the Department of Transportation. Tulita is scheduled for 2006-07. As the Member knows, we try to do chipsealing in each region, so each region has at least one chipsealing program in that particular year.

I informed the Member earlier that also within our chipsealing program we are limited in our funding

pertaining to that program. We have only \$1 million allotted. Because of the previously planned activities within the next five years, chipsealing could not be upgraded or brought forward because of the allocation that we have for this particular year. For the following year, Mr. Speaker, I will seek additional funding to see if we can do more chipsealing in the communities, so we can alleviate the dust. That was the main purpose that the Special Joint Committee for Non-Tax-Based Community Affairs made when they made their report during the 14<sup>th</sup> Assembly. In terms of the additional funding that the Member made reference to, we do provide funding. It's up to the community government to determine the priority of their community. If they wish to use some of their funding towards dust control for chloride -- I think that's what they use on the roads -- the onus is on them to determine that. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I would just like to remind the Ministers if you can answer the questions in a short time. There are six people on the list who would still like to ask questions, so please keep your response short. Supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

**Supplementary To Question 151-15(3): Health Concerns Of Dust In Sahtu Communities**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the last federal budget, the Minister of Finance, Ralph Goodale, announced funding for the Community Infrastructure Funding Program. What this means is \$15 million is allocated to the NWT that was available over 10 years is now available over five years. Can the Minister confirm the implementation of scheduling of the chipsealing program?

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

**Further Return To Question 151-15(3): Health Concerns Of Dust In Sahtu Communities**

**HON. HENRY ZOE:** Mr. Speaker, on that particular infrastructure funding the Member made statements on, it pertains to various municipal infrastructure, and I will take it under advisement and get back to the Member in terms of whether the dust component falls under this particular program.

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

**Supplementary To Question 151-15(3): Health Concerns Of Dust In Sahtu Communities**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister. The bottom line is at the end of the day when the dust settles, they want to know what can happen this year in terms of the dust. It's very high. So I guess I am seeking some commitment from the Minister and his department to come into the community and talk to council and say we have some interim solutions, let's work it out. Can the Minister give that commitment to me today? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 151-15(3): Health Concerns Of Dust In Sahtu Communities**

**HON. HENRY ZOE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can assure the Member that I can have my regional staff from Municipal and Community Affairs visit with the municipal

councils to see what is the best alternative to curb the dust control in Tulita. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 151-15(3): Health Concerns Of Dust In Sahtu Communities**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in light of the acceleration of funding from the federal government, I want to ask the Minister if he would inform the people of the Sahtu when they can see the first phase of the chipsealing program and we can get some commitment for the people to look forward to in the Sahtu. Mahsi.

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

**Further Return To Question 151-15(3): Health Concerns Of Dust In Sahtu Communities**

**HON. HENRY ZOE:** Mr. Speaker, I have already provided all Members of the assembly the five-year capital activity plan that we outlined and developed with the Department of Transportation. All Members have that in their briefing book that I provided earlier, but I can assure the Member that for 2005-06, if we do have additional funding, I will try to convince my colleagues to see if we can enhance that particular program.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 7, oral questions. Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

**Question 152-15(3): Treatment Of Persons With Developmental Disabilities**

**MR. VILLENEUVE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Minister of Health and Social Services with regard to some recent meetings we've had over the last week concerning persons with developmental disabilities from the NWT who were sent to an Alberta institution to receive care and treatment for their disabilities. I do realize they were being sent to an Alberta institution, but the NWT has to abide by some policies and directives as set out by the Alberta government to legislate these institutions so they are run appropriately in the policy framework. I know that this government does spend well over \$1 million a year over the 10 years to send these patients south to these Alberta institutions. We have northern concerns which are not included in the Alberta legislation to deal with aboriginal clients. I just wanted to ask the Minister if he will commit to a comprehensive review of the feasibility and practicality of construction an institution in the NWT for the NWT, so we can meet the needs of these persons with development disabilities who are from the North in the North.

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

**Return To Question 152-15(3): Treatment Of Persons With Developmental Disabilities**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as a department, as a health and social services system, we are looking at how we do business on a constant basis. This issue with Alberta clients in Edmonton has brought a particular component of that system into close scrutiny. As I indicated to the Member this morning and in our meetings, we are prepared to look at the repatriation in the short term of

those who are able, and in the longer term of those who have higher needs. We will also be looking at how we, as a system, can provide the service in the North, keep the dollars in the North, and address the issue of the northern and culture aspects of the supports. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 152-15(3): Treatment Of Persons With Developmental Disabilities**

**MR. VILLENEUVE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to state that the government is basing its decision on a cost basis and it is costing us quite a bit of money to send less than 10 patients to a southern institution, which I think the North could probably benefit from. I just want to ask the Minister if while these residents with disabilities are going to be relocated, will the Minister assure the families and the parents of these members, that they will be receiving daily if not weekly monitoring reports of the new institution and the redress of the patient care in Alberta due to the relocation and the setting up of the patient care? Mahsi.

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

**Further Return To Question 152-15(3): Treatment Of Persons With Developmental Disabilities**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I indicated as well this morning, we commit to keeping the concerned parties in this situation fully apprised of the events as they unfold. Once the transitions are made, we will continue to monitor very closely and continue to provide that same information. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 152-15(3): Treatment Of Persons With Developmental Disabilities**

**MR. VILLENEUVE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to ask the Minister if he would give us clarification on any reviews or any studies that have taken place to address the issue of methodologies in which rehabilitation and repatriation and such or whatever Health and Social Services has to do to deal with persons with developmental disabilities, and if there are any reviews insofar as why they are being sent to Alberta to receive a non-aboriginal rehabilitation program when we are dealing with aboriginal persons? Is there any review on that? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I heard two supplementaries. Mr. Minister.

**Further Return To Question 152-15(3): Treatment Of Persons With Developmental Disabilities**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we look at the needs of the clients. The clients who are sent to southern facilities, it's done because they have a lot of needs, in many cases needs that are not able to be met in the Northwest Territories or at the facilities we have, we have no more room. So, Mr. Speaker, we have committed to look at the particular situation of clients who are down there, and the possibility of repatriation both for the long term and short

term. We will be very cognizant of the issue of the cultural and northern component. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 7, oral questions. Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

**Question 153-15(3): Mould In Housing Units In The Communities Of Nahendeh**

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation with respect to my Member's statement. I spoke about mould. It really poses a serious health problem and given that, the problem seems to be increasing with time. I just wonder if the government or the department has an existing policy in place to address this growing problem. Thank you.

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

**Return To Question 153-15(3): Mould In Housing Units In The Communities Of Nahendeh**

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I am trying to recall if I ran across a mould policy...

---Laughter

I don't believe we have a policy specifically dealing with mould. We do, however, deal with deficiencies in our units. There is a problem and we recognize that there is a problem in the Nahendeh riding. At this point we believe it's in Fort Liard. There are a number of units there that are causing concern, and we totally agree that there are health issues surrounding the problem with the mould in the units. We are looking at them and we have reviewed the situation in all the different units that are there. We are compiling a report and we will be developing a plan and a way to deal with this whole issue of mould.

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

**Supplementary To Question 153-15(3): Mould In Housing Units In The Communities Of Nahendeh**

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Does the Minister responsible for housing have any specific contingency plans in place to get rid of the problem as it exists now and as it occurs? Thank you.

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

**Further Return To Question 153-15(3): Mould In Housing Units In The Communities Of Nahendeh**

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the mould problem in Fort Liard is an issue that is isolated to a number of houses that are managed through a co-management agreement with the community and a non-profit society there. These units were built in 1991 and they were transferred over to the NWT Housing Corporation in 1997, so the houses have been under our management, along with the community, for roughly seven years. The issue of construction and the issue of upkeep is something we're looking at. We are preparing a work plan. We are providing some of the costs and we're looking at what some of the causes may be with this issue, and we're also looking at putting together a time frame and different recourse we have to eliminate this

problem and to identify the cause so that we won't see this return. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary To Question 153-15(3): Mould In Housing Units In The Communities Of Nahendeh**

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister speaks about the assessment of the problem being highly technical and scientific. I'm just wondering if the department or the Minister has any plans to provide people who have this problem with information that they can easily understand. Thank you very much.

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

**Further Return To Question 153-15(3): Mould In Housing Units In The Communities Of Nahendeh**

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, we have hired an environmental specialist to look at this whole issue. As I said earlier, we are compiling a report that will deal with the cost, the time frame, the causes and some of the solutions. I certainly will commit to providing that to the community, to the people who live in the units, to our partners in the...(inaudible)...Housing Association, and also to the Members as they desire. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I would just like to recognize the clock. The time for oral questions has expired, but I will allow the Member to ask his final supplementary. Mr. Menicoche.

**Supplementary To Question 153-15(3): Mould In Housing Units In The Communities Of Nahendeh**

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. My final question is certainly the government is aware of the problem that exists in my riding, and probably other communities as well. I'm just wondering if they have in place any plan to raise public awareness of the problem and to educate people about the dangers and perhaps ways to avoid mould problems within their homes. Thank you.

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

**Further Return To Question 153-15(3): Mould In Housing Units In The Communities Of Nahendeh**

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the issue of contamination or safety or health issues in our units are always a very great cause for concern. We have standard procedures within the corporation for dealing with these issues. In this case, we have hired an environmental specialist to look at the situation. We would like to identify the cause of the problem, we would like to look at a number of issues that revolve around this whole mould issue. We are also looking at maybe upgrading our mechanical systems in the units which may be contributing to this whole issue. We take it very seriously. We will share all our information with the community, we will share all our information with the people in the units, and we also share our information with the Member and keep him up to date on what the status is of this issue. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 8, written questions. Mr. Allen.

**ITEM 8: WRITTEN QUESTIONS****Written Question 20-15(3): Income Support Clients**

**MR. ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a written question to the Minister of Justice and Education, Culture and Employment, in reference to an article in the Inuvik Drum on May 20<sup>th</sup>. A constituent of Inuvik Twin Lakes was profiled showing a \$5 cheque. This incident cannot go unnoticed as the recipient has been diagnosed with a terminal illness by the Inuvik health authorities.

My written question to the Minister, in his dual role as the Minister of both departments of Justice and ECE, is will he provide a detailed written legal summary as to whether the indemnification clause in the Public Service Act gives statutory powers to all officers of this government, including the income support workers?

If so, what powers does an office have to deny a client the level of services and entitlement that is constitutionally entrenched in the Dominion of Canada?

Will the Minister provide a detailed report to this assembly on what action he took to remedy this situation, i.e. a formal apology to this client?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 8, written questions. Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to return to item number 7 on the order paper. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** We are dealing with written questions, so when I conclude. I have Mr. Yakeleya on the list for written questions. Mr. Yakeleya.

**Written Question 21-15(3): Land Access Agreements**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is to the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, the Honourable Brendan Bell.

Today the Sahtu leadership are meeting in Tulita to discuss, plan and work on the Sahtu Regional Access Team to negotiate a regional approach to land access agreements for the Mackenzie gas pipeline.

Can the Minister tell us what RWED is doing to assist the Sahtu communities:

- in preparing community positions on impacts and benefits of the pipeline;
- to complete community consultation to ensure public support for the regional plan adopted by the Sahtu leadership this week; and
- to prepare for community development which will be made possible from the access fees and community benefits of the pipeline?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 8, written questions. Mr. Menicoche.

**Written Question 22-15(3): Guidelines For Contractors To Deal With Mould**

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

Given that the problem with mould in houses is, in some cases, attributable to homes being constructed during off season in wet conditions, does the government have guidelines or schedules in place for contractors to follow to prevent the problem from occurring?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 8, written questions. Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Mr. Speaker, thank you. I seek unanimous consent to return to item 7 on the order paper.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Member is seeking unanimous consent to go back to oral questions. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You have unanimous consent. At this time we'll take a short break for 10 minutes, and then we'll get back into oral questions.

---SHORT RECESS

**REVERT TO ITEM 7: ORAL QUESTIONS**

**MR. SPEAKER:** We are on item 7, oral questions. I have Mr. Ramsay on my list.

**Question 154-15(3): Staff Morale Concerns At Yellowknife Correctional Centre**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have some more questions, in terms of the staff morale at YCC, for the Minister of Justice. This goes back to a few months ago when I asked similar questions about staff morale. Maybe he can help me out. I wonder why it is aboriginal employees in particular at YCC are being overlooked for advancement. Some of these aboriginal employees at YCC have over 15 years of experience and they are continually being denied advancement. I just wonder if he has a comment on that.

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

**Return To Question 154-15(3): Staff Morale Concerns At Yellowknife Correctional Centre**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Mr. Speaker, without having some names to address, it's a difficult one to have some comments on. I guess I should point out though that the Member makes it sound like there are no aboriginal employees in corrections. In fact, our department is ranked third in government, in the last report on affirmative action, at 34.2 percent of its employees being aboriginal. Corrections services, since that time, has increased the number of aboriginal managers by 35 percent. So of the current 46 manager and supervisor positions, 57 percent are staffed by aboriginal persons and an additional 21 percent are staffed by northern, non-aboriginal people. So, Mr. Speaker, it's difficult to say that we are ignoring aboriginal people. I think the department, particularly corrections, has a very good record at ensuring that aboriginal candidates can advance.

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



**Supplementary To Question 154-15(3): Staff Morale Concerns At Yellowknife Correctional Centre**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's fine and good to say that the department has a good track record in terms of aboriginal employees, but given the fact that the YCC has an inmate population of about 90 percent aboriginal -- and that's unfortunate in and of itself, Mr. Speaker -- it would make sense that we try to advance aboriginal employees into management positions. How many aboriginal employees are currently in permanent supervisory roles at the Yellowknife Correctional Centre? Thank you.

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

**Further Return To Question 154-15(3): Staff Morale Concerns At Yellowknife Correctional Centre**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Mr. Speaker, that level of detail I don't have in terms of the staff complement of each facility, but I am sure the Member is aware of the corrections entry level training program which is in place at the facility and the practice has been to help people advance. There are other initiatives. We are, for instance, even in other facilities, working to provide mentorship and training for candidates to make sure they are prepared to become wardens. It's not something new to the department or that facility. There is, in fact, a considerable amount of work that goes into providing assistance and training so that candidates can advance. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 154-15(3): Staff Morale Concerns At Yellowknife Correctional Centre**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There seems to be a tactic employed by management at the centre. That tactic is to put a person in acting capacity until they have enough experience to compete for the position. This completely shuts out a fair and competitive job competition because management has hand-picked the candidate already. Is the Minister aware of this tactic being employed at YCC and does it concern him? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 154-15(3): Staff Morale Concerns At Yellowknife Correctional Centre**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Mr. Speaker, in fact, it's not a tactic to stop people from advancing, it's a tactic to ensure that people can advance. Rather than filling those positions with long-term employees, we have two positions that have been supervisory positions that have been used to rotate a number of people through so they are prepared to apply for supervisory jobs when they come open. So it's an effort to provide some experience while people can have an active position to improve their skills.

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

**Supplementary To Question 154-15(3): Staff Morale Concerns At Yellowknife Correctional Centre**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was wondering when the last operational review was done at the Yellowknife Correctional Centre. Given the trouble

with the health services unit and indications of many other concerns and issues with the centre, I wonder if the Minister will commit to a full operational review of this facility. Thank you.

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

**Further Return To Question 154-15(3): Staff Morale Concerns At Yellowknife Correctional Centre**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, I won't. I am satisfied that other than the usual problems you can expect when one facility shuts down and people are moved into a new facility, that there is nothing out of line there. The Member talks continually about morale problems, but the turnover at YCC has been less in the last fiscal year than the government-wide average is. So that doesn't point to an issue of there being a widespread morale problem. So I don't see the need for it right now. There were some concerns that the Member brought to the department about the operations of the health services, and that is being investigated. The department is reviewing the report and I am satisfied when we are able to implement the recommendations there, we will have dealt with all of the outstanding issues. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 7, oral questions. Mr. Hawkins.

**Question 155-15(3): Conduct Of Minister Zoe**

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, following the line of other Members with regard to conduct to one of the Members here in the assembly, my question will be directed towards the Premier and it's in reference to Mr. Zoe. I will not be questioning his quality of work and dedication because we know it's there to a high standard. Yet, we have concern with regard to the moral perception to some of the issues that have transpired. Mr. Speaker, as you very well know, like everyone here, that as leaders of this House, sometimes we are seen as role models, sometimes we are seen as heroes, sometimes we are loved and hated. Like in many circumstances, we can be ants under a microscope because the public eye is always watching us 24/7. Mr. Speaker, to sum it up quite quickly, I have drawn a line, not in the sand, but I have cut it into stone and I feel that there will be no second chance. Part of that, to restore credibility in my view, will be a treatment aspect of this Minister. In order to continue my support, is the Premier aware of Mr Zoe's personal commitment for this issue not to happen again? Will he be seeking any type of treatment in order to continue that confidence, so we can move beyond this situation and get back to the government work at hand? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Return To Question 155-15(3): Conduct Of Minister Zoe**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, yes, Mr. Zoe, has told me and has also told other Members that he will be taking action to make sure this doesn't happen. Exactly what kind of action that is, what kind of treatment it is, that's a personal thing and I don't want to get into any of the details of that. That is something that is Mr. Zoe's responsibility. He has told us that he will take action to make sure this does not happen again. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 7, oral questions. Mr. Braden.

**Question 156-15(3): Conduct Of Minister Zoe**

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, along the same lines of several of my colleagues on the issue of conduct and Mr. Zoe, indeed this is a serious matter as has been well acknowledged and it's also an extremely difficult one for everyone in this assembly. You know, when a friend or a colleague has difficulty, one of the things that is incumbent on us as peers or co-workers or friends or neighbours is to do what we can to be supportive of another person who intends to get back on the right track in life. That is where I would like to be with our colleague, Mr. Zoe. In order to say that, especially in this political environment where accountability, openness and transparency crosses over very much into our personal lives, at least I believe it does. That's a condition I understood and I accepted when I took this job. I would like Mr. Zoe to consider the same thing, and my question to the Premier is very much like what Mr. Hawkins was pursuing. What steps is Mr. Zoe planning on taking? I would like to know more about this because I still need to know if I am going to be supportive of Mr. Zoe. I need to have some satisfaction that the steps he is going to undertake are ones that I can understand and have confidence in in order to support him. Thank you.

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

**Return To Question 156-15(3): Conduct Of Minister Zoe**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, as I said to the Member who had a question previously, the kind of steps Mr. Zoe is taking is something that is very personal to him. It's one that he has to deal with. This has not been easy for him, for me or for any of us. I would encourage Members if they want to know more, that they take the opportunity to speak to Mr. Zoe privately about what he intends to do. I don't think it's something I should spell out the details of here. I don't feel that's my responsibility. The important thing to me is that Mr. Zoe has told me, and I accept his statement, that he is going to take steps to make sure this does not happen again. The exact nature of that is something that may be better dealt privately with Mr. Zoe. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 156-15(3): Conduct Of Minister Zoe**

**MR. BRADEN:** Okay, Mr. Speaker. I won't pursue that line of questioning anymore. The Premier has made it abundantly clear that the decision is to keep that private. However, I would ask the Premier again, related to this, would these steps require that Mr. Zoe be absent from his job for any substantive period of time, and over what period of time might these steps be required? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Handley.

**Further Return To Question 156-15(3): Conduct Of Minister Zoe**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, Mr. Zoe has indicated to me that he is taking personal time to do this. Yes, he will be away. Whether he chooses to do it during his holiday time or other days off, then that's something that needs to be clarified further. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 156-15(3): Conduct Of Minister Zoe**

**MR. BRADEN:** Mr. Speaker, has the Premier considered, given his knowledge of these steps and what's involved, that an option that he has would be to ask Mr. Zoe to temporarily step aside from his duties so he could concentrate on this? Is this something that is relevant to the situation, a temporary absence from the portfolio? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Handley.

**Further Return To Question 156-15(3): Conduct Of Minister Zoe**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, that is certainly something that has crossed my mind. I have told Mr. Zoe that I believe he is a very good Minister in carrying out his job. He has other difficulties to deal with and I will be there to provide all of the support I can to help him overcome those difficulties. If it means that he is going to be away, if it came to that, then certainly I would support that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 7, oral questions. Ms. Lee.

**Question 157-15(3): Conduct Of Minister Zoe**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier and it's with regard to the statement made by Mr. Zoe. I have been listening to the answers being provided by the Premier and the questions being posed. I am a little confused about where we are here.

First of all, it's highly regrettable that we have to spend this sort of time and energy addressing something that could have been dealt with in a more responsible manner by the Member in question. I just want to put that out there. The second thing is, for me, the whole discussion came about because of the fact that Mr. Zoe himself did not indicate anything in his statement about treatment or any kind of action. I didn't hear that. In my private conversations with the Premier, it was my understanding that Mr. Zoe is not prepared to do that. If he was, I would not be asking any of the questions that I am today. So what is his understanding? For me, my problem is that Mr. Zoe has not taken responsibility for what he has done and he is not prepared to do any kind of treatment. Could the Premier clarify what his understanding is of Mr. Zoe's position? Thank you.

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

**Return To Question 157-15(3): Conduct Of Minister Zoe**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, as I indicated earlier, Mr. Zoe has indicated to me that he is prepared to take steps to ensure this will not happen. I have also indicated to Mr. Zoe that I will do whatever I can to support him. I think all of us feel that we want to resolve this issue. Exactly what that is, that's something I have to say that is a personal matter with Mr. Zoe and I really urge Members to talk to him privately. I don't think Mr. Zoe wants to lay out exactly what he is planning to do in the House here. That is a private, personal matter. It's not an easy one and, Mr. Speaker, I say to Members talk to Mr.

Zoe and he will be able to tell you. It's not my place to get into the details of something that is very personal. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary To Question 157-15(3): Conduct Of Minister Zoe**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that the Premier's statement is very, very problematic. This is not a family of 17 brothers and two sisters. I understand there is a personal matter and a personal suffering here, but this assembly is a public body. We are talking about actions that were taken by a public person in a public forum in a very public event. North of 60 Idol had at least 200 people present and the Premier is not Mr. Zoe's father, brother or uncle. He is the leader of this government. He is my leader. I wish Mr. Zoe wouldn't be smiling. I am sorry; what's going on here? It matters what a Member here does. Mr. Premier can be a personal friend to Mr. Zoe, but as the Premier, he has got to show more leadership and be prepared to do...So why is he insisting on doing this dance of "I hear your pain, do whatever you can and I am with you?" Where are his obligations to the public? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 157-15(3): Conduct Of Minister Zoe**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I am at a bit of a loss as to what it is the Member wants us to say. What is the magic word? Mr. Zoe has told me that he has taken steps to ensure that this does not happen again. The details of those steps are very personal to Mr. Zoe. If Members want to know more, then I encourage them to talk to Mr. Zoe, but I am comforted to take Mr. Zoe at his word that he is taking steps. If he does not follow through on that, then he knows what the consequences are. I have told the House earlier today what those are. All I can say, if you want to talk about this, which to me is a very personal thing, talk to Mr. Zoe privately is my advice. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary To Question 157-15(3): Conduct Of Minister Zoe**

**MS. LEE:** Mr. Speaker, the Premier should be totally ashamed of that answer. Mr. Speaker, we know the Premier of Alberta had to make a public apology and say he was seeking treatment when there was a problem like this. If this happened to any other Minister in any other government, that Minister would be at least suspended if not gone. If this happened to any other senior officials in this government and they said and did what Mr. Zoe did, that person would not have a job right now. I would certainly hope that. For the Premier to say this is a personal matter, why is it so difficult for him to say I support you, take time and in the meantime you are relieved of your responsibilities until you have dealt with it. Isn't that the proper public action to take by a Premier who has worked so hard to be the leader of this government? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I didn't hear a question. That was more of a statement. Item 7, oral questions. Mrs. Groenewegen.

**Question 158-15(3): Nature Of The Conduct Of Minister Zoe**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in follow-up to the questions to the Premier with respect to the Member's statement and the response of Mr. Zoe to this very serious matter, I would like to ask the Premier more questions.

As a preamble what I want to say is I don't think we can negate the body language we are getting from Mr. Zoe in the House here, for which I also call the Premier responsible. I am not seeing a person one bit sorry or taking responsibility. I am seeing someone sitting over there shaking their head at me with a big attitude. That is not helping his case, might I say.

I would like to know if the Premier is aware of the nature of the comments Mr. Zoe made in this very public incident which took place at the Royal Canadian Legion. I concur with Ms. Lee. He can stand up and say this is a personal and private matter, but Mr. Zoe is the one who chose to make this a public matter when he decided to do what he did, and now all of a sudden we are being viewed as uncharitable about this. He was responsible for his actions. You are saying he is giving you his commitment? He gave you his commitment before. What happened to that commitment? Is the Premier aware of the nature of the comments that were made? Thank you.

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

**Return To Question 158-15(3): Nature Of The Conduct Of Minister Zoe**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I am aware of the nature of the comments. I am not aware of the exact wording of the comments. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 158-15(3): Nature Of The Conduct Of Minister Zoe**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, without the exact wording, would the Premier share with the House what were the nature of the comments that Mr. Zoe made? Thank you.

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

**Further Return To Question 158-15(3): Nature Of The Conduct Of Minister Zoe**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, the comments, as they were relayed to me, were comments that were found to be offensive. They were comments made against people who come from Newfoundland, and people were offended. They relayed that to the management. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary To Question 158-15(3): Nature Of The Conduct Of Minister Zoe**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What does the Premier have to say to the people of the Northwest Territories who come here from other jurisdictions who are hardworking contributors to the northern society? What does he have to say to those people about whom these comments were made? Thank you.

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

**Further Return To Question 158-15(3): Nature Of The Conduct Of Minister Zoe**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I am sorry that these comments were made. I have tremendous respect for all people, no matter where they have come from who live and work in the Northwest Territories, and without any hesitation at all I can say that I apologize to anyone who may be offended by things that are said by individuals in Cabinet, or individuals anywhere. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary To Question 158-15(3): Nature Of The Conduct Of Minister Zoe**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Mr. Speaker, maybe the Premier could share with us his understanding of a Cabinet Minister's responsibility as to when they are on duty, and when are they representing this government and the views of this government. Is this just during working hours, or what obligations does a Cabinet Minister have in terms of the things that come out of their mouths and the actions that they take in public? Thank you.

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

**Further Return To Question 158-15(3): Nature Of The Conduct Of Minister Zoe**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, for all of us who take responsibility for public office we, whether we are MLAs or Cabinet Ministers or Premier, are on the job 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and I think during the last few days that lesson has certainly come home to all of us, that we do not have a period on any day where we can just sort of opt out into a private life. That doesn't happen in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 7, oral questions. Mr. Yakeleya.

**Question 159-15(3): Update On The TI'oondih Healing Society**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is to the Minister of Justice, the Honourable Charles Dent. Mr. Speaker, I understand that some time ago the TI'oondih Society had a program for inmates in the North. I wanted to ask the Minister, could he inform the House as to the program and give the House an indication in terms of how the program went with TI'oondih Healing Society and the inmates from the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

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

**Return To Question 159-15(3): Update On The TI'oondih Healing Society**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, the TI'oondih lodge was used in conjunction with corrections. The goal was to run a program that would help offenders reintegrate back into the community through a program that was tied to the land, and the program started I believe in late March and ran for several weeks. The early reports that I have received are that the program was seen as very successful by both the inmates who went through the program and by the staff. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 159-15(3): Update On The TI'oondih Healing Society**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the honourable Minister. I applaud the government for taking an initiative like this to have bush camps out on the land, and run by aboriginal groups or communities. The TI'oondih Healing Society and staff have made this a successful program. Can the Minister inform the House if a report is going to come out of his department in terms of other specifics we are going to ask about the TI'oondih Healing Society and the Justice department program? Thank you.

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

**Further Return To Question 159-15(3): Update On The TI'oondih Healing Society**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am not sure when we expect the final report. The TI'oondih Wellness Society is working on that report, and once we have received the report we will review it, meet with them and discuss future options. One of the other things that we are going to be doing though is monitoring the progress of the people who have gone through the program, and how they make out in their home communities over the next months and years. I hope we demonstrate that there has been some long-term success to this program.

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

**Supplementary To Question 159-15(3): Update On The TI'oondih Healing Society**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again, I was really quite happy when I heard about the TI'oondih Healing Society and the partnership with the Department of Justice. Is this program going to be considered to be used across the Northwest Territories for other regions or communities that may wish to enter into arrangements similar to the TI'oondih Healing Society and the Department of Justice in terms of reintegrating our own people back in our communities? The best way, and I applaud the department again, is on the land. The elders have always said to have more of these types of program on the land, and I wanted to thank the Minister. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 159-15(3): Update On The Ti'oondih Healing Society**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the goal of setting this program up was to find out whether or not it would improve results. So certainly we would look at this as a pilot project. Of course we will have to examine how many inmates there are in the system at any given time who would qualify for this kind of program, and how many programs like it we can run would be somewhat dependent on that. So I can't predict whether or not there will be opportunities in other regions, or how often we will be able to do it, but certainly we were looking at this as a pilot project and we will want to examine our options for continuing the approach.

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

**Supplementary To Question 159-15(3): Update On The Ti'oondih Healing Society**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My final question to the Minister is could we use the Ti'oondih healing model in the communities for early prevention as a first option for people, rather than sending them to a facility here in Yellowknife? Can we use this type of model in our communities to have them out on the land, rather than having them flown down to the facility here in Yellowknife? I would encourage something like that from this department. Thank you.

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

**Further Return To Question 159-15(3): Update On The Ti'oondih Healing Society**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the department has had a number of on-the-land programs available for inmates for quite some time. There has been some problem though finding enough inmates who are interested in taking this approach, or even getting themselves involved. So it hasn't been one where we've had more inmates wanting to do it than we have space. It has been the other way around, unfortunately. I would agree with the Member that this would be a very good approach, and I think that it has a lot of long-term prospects for rehabilitation over straight incarceration, but we have to have the right mix of inmates and people who are prepared to undertake that kind of programming before it can be used. So we certainly encourage it, but it takes full size willingness to see the approach.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 7, oral questions. The Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

**Question 160-15(3): National Sex Offender Registry**

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the federal Sex Offender Information Registry Act passed third reading in the Senate, and received Royal Assent on April 1<sup>st</sup> of this year. Mr. Speaker, when it comes into force, the act will require sex offenders in the NWT to register with police in designated centres. Their personal information will be recorded, and their whereabouts will be monitored for the well-being and safety of the NWT residents. According to Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada, the Sex Offender Information Registry Act will come into force in the fall of 2004, and all jurisdictions across Canada will be ready to

implement the act at that time. I understand there have been ongoing negotiations between provinces, territories, the RCMP and the federal government about the implementation of the sex offender registry. Mr. Speaker, my question for the Minister of Justice is will the Minister please tell the assembly if the GNWT will be ready to implement the act this fall? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Return To Question 160-15(3): National Sex Offender Registry**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that no one is going to be ready to implement by this fall. I understand that the most recent meeting to discuss the implementation of this act, the RCMP has indicated for instance that they can't be ready by this fall. There are a number of issues that have to be addressed, so the committee is working at moving the process along. There is a committee made up of representatives from all jurisdictions, and my understanding is now that we are looking at early 2005 for the registry to become active.

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

**Supplementary To Question 160-15(3): National Sex Offender Registry**

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, would the Minister be willing to tell us some of the hurdles that we are receiving, so, therefore, essentially are causing the problems for implementation and be specific as to proposed timelines? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 160-15(3): National Sex Offender Registry**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The biggest problem, as I understand it, is with the RCMP being ready to implement. They need to have adequate, or their system upgraded somewhat in order to be able to provide access to the system, and it is through their computer system that this system operates. So until that is done, we are at a bit of a stalemate. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary To Question 160-15(3): National Sex Offender Registry**

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Minister, for your answer. Mr. Speaker, my last question I believe at this time is will the Minister take any additional steps or actions to ensure the protection of the NWT citizens from convicted sex offenders during the delay of the implementation of this act? Is he willing to take any additional steps? Thank you.

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

**Further Return To Question 160-15(3): National Sex Offender Registry**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the issue of protection of the public is one that we take very seriously at all times. The RCMP is certainly

aware of the concern and is very careful to monitor convicted sex offenders as they do normally, and as we do through the parole system. So I think that over the last few years there has been a change in the approach and it has gotten more rigorous. I think that while standards have changed, monitoring of the sex offender registry will provide one more tool that we'll be able to have. Until the computers are updated, and there is adequate training and we have the forms in place to deliver, we will have to work on the programs that we have been working on to date. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 7, oral questions. Mr. Yakeleya.

**Question 161-15(3): Condition Of Fort Good Hope Bridge**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I want to ask a question to the Minister of Transportation. Things are happening in the Sahtu, and especially in light of some recent news over the last couple of days. The community of Fort Good Hope's bridge was shut down, their bridge is falling down. The people over there are quite concerned with the situation and they have to take some extraordinary steps to ensure that transportation flows freely in Fort Good Hope. There are quite a few concerns from the people. I want to ask the Minister if he would inform the House in terms of the status of the bridge in Fort Good Hope, and what can the people of Fort Good Hope hear from the House today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Return To Question 161-15(3): Condition Of Fort Good Hope Bridge**

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the issue with the bridge in Fort Good Hope is something we have been working on for the last couple of days. We have sent engineers into the community to do inspections, and as of today we are still looking at our options. The first one is to create a bypass around the existing bridge, and the other one is to do something more long term. Until we come to a firm decision on that issue, we continue to keep the facility closed. Thanks.

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

**Supplementary To Question 161-15(3): Condition Of Fort Good Hope Bridge**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the bridge has been closed in Fort Good Hope, it becomes quite difficult for people to travel to and from the airport of the community, and the community has gone to some creative and extraordinary measures to make sure that people come from the airport, get across the bridge hauling freight and mail, and it has caused some expenses by the community to ensure that things are taken care of in Fort Good Hope. I am going to ask the Minister how he is going to deal with the incurred costs to the community. I know that it is a concern for them, and I am not too sure how this government is going to deal with it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 161-15(3): Condition Of Fort Good Hope Bridge**

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Right now our priorities are to ensure that there is still access to the airport, and getting the bridge repaired or a solution to some of the damage that was done to the structure. We do recognize that there are additional costs because of this issue, and we encourage the community to keep track of the costs, and we work with all of the other departments involved to see how we can accommodate some of these additional costs, unforeseen costs, that this bridge has caused. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 161-15(3): Condition Of Fort Good Hope Bridge**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Mr. Minister. The bridge, I understand, without having the information in front of me, is fairly new. Again, I have had enquiries about the bridge and why this has happened. Would he consider that those that are made from this type of model or the type of design that is in other communities, it may have been caused by just the erosion of the banks that are situated in Fort Good Hope? Would the Minister inform or advise us that he would look at other bridges of similar design that maybe have some similar incidences in other communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 161-15(3): Condition Of Fort Good Hope Bridge**

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member is correct. The Jackfish Creek Bridge in Fort Good Hope is fairly new. It was constructed in 1995. A big concern to us is this facility has experienced a number of problems in the last little while. So we do monitor all of our infrastructure. We have regular maintenance, regular inspections. However, we will step up those inspections, especially bridges of this nature. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 161-15(3): Condition Of Fort Good Hope Bridge**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Speaker, I am glad it is called the Jackfish Bridge rather than the London Bridge. Mr. Speaker, my last question to the Minister is in terms of the environmental impacts of the erosion of the bridge, and there is some concern about the potential for environmental impacts to the river and to the jackfish. The river is used by the community during the fall and springtime. Can I ask the Minister, Mr. Speaker, for a commitment that all precautions will be looked at in terms of the potential for the environmental impacts in terms of the reconstruction or the assessment of the new bridge that may be going in to Fort Good Hope? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 161-15(3): Condition Of Fort Good Hope Bridge**

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We certainly will commit to that. The environmental concerns are always issues that we take very seriously. We also are looking at what environmental issues come about as a result of any bypass or any alternate routes that we build. So as with any other project, we would certainly keep the environmental concerns in the forefront. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 7, oral questions. Mr. Ramsay.

**Question 162-15(3): Conduct Of Minister Zoe**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Premier and it is in regard to the statement that was issued by Minister Zoe earlier in today's proceedings. This prefaced my question, being of Maritime decent I did take quite an issue with the statements that were supposedly made that night at the Legion. It causes me a great deal of concern. Mr. Zoe, to his credit, came to see me. We had a good discussion. What I am hearing from the Premier today, Mr. Speaker, is he is confident in Mr. Zoe's ability to not let this type of incident take place again. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Premier if he is so confident, would he himself resign if indeed there is another incident of this magnitude because of its severity? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Return To Question 162-15(3): Conduct Of Minister Zoe**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, if there was to be another incident like this I would deal with the incident, but I don't think resigning is the way to deal with it. But absolutely, as I told you, I will deal with it.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 7, oral questions. Mrs. Groenewegen.

**Question 163-15(3): Premier's Confidence In Minister Zoe**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just in follow-up to that, the Premier is asking the Members of this House to have confidence along with him that something like this is never going to happen again. Mr. Speaker, we all know that these kinds of issues do not go away by themselves. People struggle with these kinds of things their entire lives. This is not something that you can just wave a magic wand. It takes serious effort, serious commitment and serious work in order to overcome some of these things. We know that. So the Premier is asking us to have confidence in him, but how confident is he? He was just asked a question by Mr. Ramsay. Is he confident enough to assure us and get us on board and say let's do this? Is he confident enough to say he's willing to put his job on the line to convey that commitment to Mr. Zoe? Thank you.

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

**Return To Question 163-15(3): Premier's Confidence In Minister Zoe**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, whether I am Premier or not is a decision the House has to make here. If they are not satisfied with the actions that I take and the

decisions that I make, the judgements I make, then it's up to the House to make that decision. Mr. Speaker, if there were to be another incident like this, then let's deal with it at that point. I have made it very clear what my position is as I have no tolerance at all for anything further. Mr. Zoe has told me that he is taking steps. He has told the Members in this House in other discussions that he is seeking help. I can't get into exactly what that is, Mr. Speaker, but I can assure you that we are working to make sure that this does not happen again. I am going to do everything within my power and authority to make sure this does not happen, but I can't control everything every day. I will deal with the consequences as they happen, if they happen again. I am confident by working together we can be fairly sure that this is not going to happen, but if it does, we will deal with it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary To Question 163-15(3): Premier's Confidence In Minister Zoe**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like the Premier to spell out for me what "we'll deal with it" means. What will he do?

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

**Further Return To Question 163-15(3): Premier's Confidence In Minister Zoe**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, when this incident we are talking about with Mr. Zoe came to my attention, I, within hours, sent a letter to all the Members to advise them of what had happened. I could have just talked to Mr. Zoe or written a note to him and dealt with it privately. I chose to apprise all of the Members because I thought it was serious. Mr. Speaker, I have also told the Members here that if there is an infraction of this and if Mr. Zoe doesn't live up to his word or other Cabinet Ministers don't live up to their word, then there is no toleration at all. In that case, I don't have the authority to remove a Minister, but I certainly would make a recommendation to the Members that this is not acceptable and here is the course of action that I would take, which would be to recommend that the Cabinet Minister be reviewed by the assembly. Thank you.

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

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am astounded at the Premier's willingness, given the track record here and given the circumstances; I am still baffled by the one-more-time concept. I don't know why he would put himself in that kind of exposure. It's a job. What Mr. Zoe does for this House is a job. We place confidence in people to do certain jobs. Amongst ourselves we say let's give that person that job. I don't think he's doing Mr. Zoe any service by putting this kind of pressure on him. This is not something that somebody has within their own power to change. I think he is putting Mr. Zoe in a terrible situation. That's a tremendous amount of pressure for somebody. I think that if Mr. Zoe really wanted treatment - which has been brought up here today -- it would have been brought up in his statement today. I don't think he wants to make that kind of public declaration. I would like to know if this comes to a vote in this House...When this comes to a vote in this House, which it surely will, is the Premier prepared to allow his Cabinet Ministers over there

who are looking a little uncomfortable today, a free vote on this matter? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The question is a new question from your original statement. The statement you had originally was directed to the Premier with regard to his conduct. Now you are asking about a question on a vote. So that's a new question. Final Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

**Supplementary To Question 163-15(3): Premier's Confidence In Minister Zoe**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Premier in his last response, said that he immediately took action to inform the Members of what happened. Yes, he could have buried this and tried to hide it. I don't think that would have done any good. This is a small town. It's a small territory. I do commend the Premier and I did tell him after I received the letter, I did commend him for taking the action that he did and not ignoring the situation. However, I still fail to see why he is putting himself and his government and his Cabinet under this kind of pressure to say one more chance. Could he explain to me what is the purpose and merit of another chance? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Handley.

**Further Return To Question 163-15(3): Premier's Confidence In Minister Zoe**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I can only repeat that Mr. Zoe has told me that he is taking steps to make sure that this will not happen again. He has told me that he is seeking help. I take him at his word. I believe he is a good Minister in carrying out his responsibilities. Mr. Speaker, all I can say is I take his word at it. I have also assured the House that if this is happening again, I will have no tolerance at all for it. Mr. Speaker, it's my judgement, based on the incident that this is one that deserves the action that we have taken. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 7, oral questions. Ms. Lee.

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Premier also. As I was listening to the questions and answer to the statement made by Mr. Zoe, I think the Premier is getting very close to giving misleading information if it's not inaccurate.

**MR. SPEAKER:** That comment is unparliamentary and I would like to ask the Member to withdraw it by saying that a Member is misleading the House. Ms. Lee.

**MS. LEE:** Mr. Speaker, I apologize and I would like to retract that statement. What I wanted to say is I have information from being what is being said here and what I have heard and gotten notes from the Premier, it indicates two different things. The Premier just indicated in his answers to Mrs. Groenewegen that he is confident that Mr. Zoe is seeking help. I believe that is true on the information I have. I am not saying Mr. Zoe is...The information I have from what the Premier has said to me in private, what Mr. Zoe had to say in private, that is not true. I would like to know from the Premier what evidence does he have? Why is he saying Mr. Zoe is seeking help or seeking treatment? What evidence is there? My information is that that isn't the case at all. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I would just like to remind the Members if you receive a note or something that only you are privileged to and no one else is, any items which are discussed in this House should be at the knowledge of the Minister or other Members by way of statements, tabled documents. We can't state a note unless it's publicly tabled in this House, so we have something to go on. I don't think we are privy to the note that you mentioned. I would ask Ms. Lee to restate your question.

**Question 164-15(3): Conduct Of Minister Zoe**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me just get back to the basics here. As I sit here, I can't help but notice we are engaged in a very well-known dance, a dance that happens in families when you have a family member in trouble. Somebody does something wrong and they say I am sorry, I won't do it again. I don't think that should be enough. I think we have to, as a body responsible for public interest and public integrity and the high standard that we must uphold, the Premier has to have that X-factor, that information that tells him that goes beyond I am sorry, I won't do it again. So I need to hear from the Premier; maybe he knows something that I don't know. What gives him the evidence to say Mr. Zoe is seeking help or seeking assistance or anything? That is not what he has indicated. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Handley.

**Return To Question 164-15(3): Conduct Of Minister Zoe**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, Mr. Zoe has said in his statement that he is taking steps to ensure this type of incident is not repeated. Okay, that one we know. Second is that he has told the Members in this House. He hasn't told them in this House, but he has told them in another circumstance that he is taking action, that he is seeking help. I won't get into that detail but, again, Mr. Speaker, that may be ruled out of order. He has told all of us that. So, Mr. Speaker, I have to take his word. If Ms. Lee is asking me, and I don't want to project things into her question, if she is asking me did Mr. Zoe say to me that he is going to completely refrain from any use of alcohol in future, then no. I don't think that Mr. Zoe has said that, if that's what she is asking. I have not heard that from Mr. Zoe, but he has told me he is seeking help. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 164-15(3): Conduct Of Minister Zoe**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the life of me, I don't understand when every Member in this House knows as much as we do about what we are dealing with here, we just relieve ourselves of all our responsibilities as Premier. I don't think we are doing anybody any favours here. We are not serving the public, we are not serving Mr. Zoe, we are not serving the Cabinet. It's just kind of denying that there is that serious problem here and we could just deal with it by hoping that it won't happen again. Mr. Speaker, could I ask the Premier's commitment for him to speak to Mr. Zoe again? I don't believe that statement says enough about taking actions to make sure that this doesn't happen again, and I would like to ask the Premier if he would make the commitment to sit down with Mr. Zoe and ask him exactly what those steps mean. What does it mean? Does it include treatment? Does it



include self-help? What does it really mean? We go back to the Members and I would also like to have a commitment from the Premier that he will seek advice from this side of the House to address this. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Premier. I heard three questions, so basically all the supplementaries have been used up, plus one.

**Further Return To Question 164-15(3): Conduct Of Minister Zoe**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, first of all, will I speak further to Mr. Zoe? Yes, I will want to seek clarification on what it is he intends to do in terms of seeking help. When you ask is he taking treatment, I am not sure whether you are asking if he is taking treatment in the conventional sense of going to an alcohol treatment centre or whether he's using an alternative, but those are things that are choices that Mr. Zoe has to make himself. I am sure there are many ways of getting help for the difficulties that Mr. Zoe has acknowledged. In terms of reporting back to the House and laying out Mr. Zoe's personal intentions, that seems to me to be something that Mr. Zoe should make a decision on himself. I have confidence in talking with Members. I am open to sharing information, but in terms of laying out personal plans, treatment or help, that is not something that I feel is my responsibility to make public. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 7, oral questions. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Mr. McLeod.

**ITEM 9: RETURNS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS**

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

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Allen on March 31<sup>st</sup> regarding rent assessment or seniors in public housing.

The Member asked a question about a proposal on a flat rate rent scale. Mr. Speaker, a flat rate rent sale would involve the assessment of rents for seniors. Under the current system, seniors are not charged rent. However, seniors do make partial payments for power for their units. The Member also enquired as to whether it would be a major policy shift to begin charging rents to seniors. Mr. Speaker, this would be a major policy shift to reintroduce rent to seniors. A previous government made a policy decision to cease charging rent to seniors living in public housing. At this time, there is no contemplation of another policy change.

Further, Mr. Speaker, I wish to reassure the Members of this House that no major policy shifts will occur in the public housing rent scale without adequate consultation with Members and with all stakeholders. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 9, return to written questions. Item 10, replies to opening address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents. Mr. Dent.

**ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS**

**Tabled Document 38-15(3): Statistical Data For Sahtu Schools**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have five documents to table, Mr. Speaker. First of all, Mr. Speaker, further to my Return to Written Question 11-15(3), I wish to table a document with statistical data for the Sahtu schools.

**Tabled Document 39-15(3): Status Of Women Council Annual Report, 2002-2003**

I wish to table a document entitled Status of Women Council for the NWT Annual Report, 2002-2003.

**Tabled Document 40-15(3): Northwest Territories Law Foundation Annual Report For The Year Ending June 30, 2001**

I wish to table a document entitled Northwest Territories Law Foundation Annual Report for the Year Ending June 30, 2001.

**Tabled Document 41-15(3): Northwest Territories Law Foundation Annual Report For The Year Ending June 30, 2002**

I wish to table a document entitled Northwest Territories Law Foundation Annual Report for the Year Ending June 30, 2002.

**Tabled Document 42-15(3): Northwest Territories Law Foundation Annual Report For The Year Ending June 30, 2003**

I wish to table a document entitled Northwest Territories Law Foundation Annual Report for the Year Ending June 30, 2003. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Tabled Document 43-15(3): Agreement Between The GNWT And The City Of Yellowknife Re Lifeguarding Services**

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table the agreement made between the Government of the Northwest Territories and the municipal corporation also know as the City of Yellowknife. It's an agreement made with regard to lifeguard services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 13, tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Mr. Dent.

**ITEM 15: NOTICES OF MOTION FOR FIRST READING OF BILLS**

**Bill 7: An Act To Amend The Legal Profession Act**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, May 31, 2004, I will move that Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Legal Profession Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 15, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Mr. Dent.

**Bill 8: Miscellaneous Statutes Amendments Act, 2004**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, May 31, 2004, I will move that Bill 8, Miscellaneous Statutes Amendments Act, 2004, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 15, notices of motions for first reading of bills. Mr. Roland.

**Bill 9: Write-off Of Assets And Debts Act, 2004-2005**

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, May 31, 2004, I will move that Bill 9, Write-off of Debts Act, 2004-05, be read for the first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 15, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Mr. Roland.

**Bill 10: Forgiveness Of Debts Act, 2004-2005**

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, May 31, 2004, I will move that Bill 10, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2004-05, be read for the first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 15, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Mr. Roland.

**Bill 11: Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2004-2005**

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, May 31, 2004, I will move that Bill 11, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2004-05, be read for the first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 15, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Mr. Dent.

**Bill 12: An Act To Amend The Education Act**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, May 31, 2004, I will move that Bill 12, An Act to Amend the Education Act, be read for the first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** 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 and other matters: Bill 5, Tlicho Community Government Act; Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Payroll Tax Act, 1993 and the Income Tax Act; Committee Report 4-15(3), Report on the Review of Bill 5, Tlicho Community Government Act; and, Committee Report 5-15(3), Report on the Review of Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Payroll Tax Act, 1993 and the Income Tax Act, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

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

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

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Bill 6.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** So is the wish of the committee that we would consider Bill 6 and Committee Report 5-15(3) concurrently first?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you. I would like to ask Mr. Roland if he has opening comments.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I do have some comments on Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Payroll Tax Act, 1993 and the Income Tax Act.

Thank you for the opportunity to present Bill 6, the government's proposed changes to the Payroll Tax Act, 1993 and the Income Tax Act.

In my budget address, I proposed an increase to the payroll tax rate from one percent to two percent effective January 1, 2005. To minimize the negative impacts of this change on lower income NWT residents, I also proposed that the personal income tax rate for the lowest bracket be decreased from 7.2 percent to 5.9 percent and the second lowest bracket be decreased from 9.9 percent to 8.6 percent also as of January 1, 2005. Furthermore, the cost of living tax credit will be increased from 1.6 percent to 2.6 percent of income up to \$12,000 and the minimum credit will be increased from \$250 to \$350 for singles and from \$500 to \$700 for couples. Bill 6 will accomplish these measures.

These tax measures will be effective in 2005. Because of this, the federal Minister of National Revenue will need to be advised of the changes to the Income Tax Act before October 15<sup>th</sup> of this year so they can be administered by the Canada Revenue Agency. In order for these changes to be implemented, they must be enacted by that date.

These tax measures are part of a package of revenue and spending measures necessary to meet our target of a balanced budget by 2006-07.

The change to the payroll tax rate from one percent to two percent is expected to raise \$13.9 million annually. This would be partially offset by a \$3.2 million increase in the cost of living tax credit and a \$7.9 million decrease in personal income tax revenues.

The interrelationship between the payroll tax, personal income tax and cost of living tax credit means that some taxpayers will benefit from the changes and some will lose. Although each taxpayer's circumstances are unique, it is expected that most of those that have a total income of less than \$66,000 and those who are self-employed or receiving pension income will benefit, while non-residents and most of those in the higher tax brackets will see an increase in tax paid.

The personal income tax impacts of Bill 3 and Bill 6 will result in the Northwest Territories' highest combined marginal tax rate for 2005 being set at 43.05 percent; well below the Canadian provincial average of 45.76 percent.

The GNWT stands to generate significant payroll tax revenues from the construction phase of the proposed Mackenzie Valley pipeline and new mine development. Although some of the payroll tax gains will be offset by increased cost of living tax credit payments, the offset depends on the number of workers who make the NWT their home.

These measures are necessary for long-term fiscal stability. They will contribute to our government's balanced approach to tackling our fiscal challenges; that is, both spending reallocations and revenue initiatives. These measures, coupled with the previous two revenue initiatives enacted in March, indicate that we are not relying solely on increased federal support to address our fiscal challenges, but recognize that we must bear some of the rising cost of the programs and services that we receive.

I would be pleased to answer any questions the committee has on these two measures.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Roland. At this time, I will ask Mr. Menicoche, as the Chair of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight, if he would like to provide the committee's review of this bill.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight is pleased to report on its review of Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Payroll Tax Act, 1993 and the Income Tax Act.

Committee Report 5-15(3) is a matter of record, Madam Chair, however Members of the standing committee may have additional comments on Bill 6 as we proceed here in Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. I would like to ask the Minister if he has witnesses he would like to bring into the Chamber.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Yes, Madam Chair, I do.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you. I will ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to escort the Minister's witnesses in.

Mr. Minister, for the record, would you introduce your witnesses, please?

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. To my immediate right is the deputy minister of the Department of Finance, Ms. Margaret Melhorn; to my immediate left is Ms. Rebecca Veinott from the Department of Justice; and, further to my right is Mr. Gerry Gagnon, manager of tax policy. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Roland. General comments on the bill? Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I will speak in favour of the bill. As the committee's report noted, this is the last tax impact bill that this assembly will deal with on the revenue initiatives in the 2004-05 budget address. It was presented to us very responsibly by the Minister in the budget when we looked at doing a number of things that were required or seemed to make good sense for us. Two things stand out for me in support of this bill, Madam Chair. One is that with our very limited ability to raise or generate a lot of our own revenues through taxes, we can only make very minor amendments in revenues compared to our overall requirements. We are a government that now spends over \$1 billion, but we are within fractions of a

percent of that overall impact with these tax measures, but we still have to try to make some effort, not only to the people of Canada but also to see where taxes can be fairly distributed. I think that's where this bill for me comes out on the right side. Although certainly there are some in the middle and higher income levels who are going to be losing something in a net way at the end of the year, there are more people who will gain from these tax measures than people who will lose. In that effect, Mr. Chairman, this does help people who don't have a lot of resources to get a little bit ahead of the game. Because of the impact of this, they will be left with a bit more cash in their pocket.

The other thing that causes me to want to support this is a bit on the optimistic side, but it is that continuing large-scale development will mean large numbers of non-resident workers who will be required here in the NWT. I would sure like to see a lot of them become residents in the NWT, but in reality there will not be a large resident population resulting from continuing diamond development and pipeline development. What the increases in the payroll tax will do potentially is generate many millions of dollars, tens of millions of dollars in potential revenue from the very large workforces that we anticipate coming up here.

So those essentially were my remarks, Mr. Chairman, in support of this. I have said in this assembly before and I will say it again today and I will say it again in the future that anything that is considered by this assembly that increases the cost of living or the cost of doing business has to be considered very, very carefully. I think in this case, we have done so and this bill has my support. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Roland, would you like to respond?

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to thank the Member for his comments. We've covered the area fairly thoroughly and put out the information that we have on the estimates we've used. This being the third piece, it's one of the ones where we have an ability to ensure the lower income residents of the Northwest Territories don't feel the impact of the changes, and that's one of the considerations taken to this package. Any effort that we make in the sense of our own revenue sources impacts on us positively when we go to the federal government, through our tax effort in the formula situation we are in. Every little measure counts in helping our position. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Mr. Chairman, if I were to put one question forward it would be to see if the Minister could give us a snapshot given that all our optimistic forecasts come to bear and we have projects like Snap Lake, like a Mackenzie River bridge, like a Mackenzie Valley pipeline come into reality. What kinds of revenues potentially could this payroll tax net for the NWT? Could you paint us a picture of that benefit?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Roland.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There would be a number of factors we would have to take into consideration and look at what specific point of

time we would be looking at. For example if we used a total labour income over a 31-year span of looking at all the development, that's the building of the pipeline, the continuation of running that operation as well as our mining operations, we would look into the area of \$2.5 billion being raised totally for income. You break that down into an annual income ranging of about \$9 million to about \$561 million, again that being total labour income. The estimates we've used, if the pipeline is to proceed, we would see a very large spike happening in about 2009. That range again is where you see the high numbers of about \$561 million annually, and that being total labour income.

When you look at it and take the two percent off of that figure and that's how much we would generate on the payroll tax side. So it fluctuates. There is a spike year, but it would continue to grow from that point on. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Minister is well aware of my stand on tax initiatives. Being a new Member and only being here for six months, I don't think I have been given the opportunity, and I mentioned it during committee, that going through the draft main estimates, for all intents and purposes, was a waste of time. I don't think this government in six months has made any clear indication to me that it's intent on cutting spending. I think that's the crux of our problem, Mr. Chairman, is our spending habits. I certainly am looking forward to the business planning process and going through that process with the Minister to try to identify some areas that I do believe this organization, the Government of the Northwest Territories, can indeed cut some spending and not have to dip into the pockets of its citizens, whether they are the high income earners or not. It costs enough to live in the Northwest Territories. I don't care what income tax bracket you are in; if you increase the cost of living here, we are going to have trouble attracting nurses, doctors, highly-skilled labour and the list goes on, Mr. Chairman. That causes me a great deal of concern.

The tax initiative looks like Robin Hood, much like the New Democratic Party platform here in the federal election, robbing from the rich and giving to the poor. It smacks of that. It's not something that I think is worthwhile doing. It just shouldn't be allowed to happen. I am going to voice my opposition to this happening. I was opposed to the other tax initiatives when they were introduced at the beginning of the year. Every time folks looked around, the government is trying to dip into people's pockets. To me, it's just the wrong thing to do and I don't understand why this government doesn't take a long, hard look and start looking at some of the sacred cows that are out there, like the size of our civil service. Mr. Chairman, every time I look around there are new positions sprouting up like mushrooms in every department in the government. You look at the newspaper on Monday, there are positions being filled left, right and centre and it has been allowed to grow unchecked, Mr. Chairman. That causes me a great deal of concern. I think we have to look at our own organization and streamline what we are doing as a government.

Another Member mentioned during a committee meeting that in 1999 the Government of the Northwest Territories, prior to division, had 3,300 employees and today we have 4,400 and we have half the territory. The budget in 1999,

prior to division, was \$1 billion. Today, five years later, it's \$1 billion. To me, that smacks of overspending, Mr. Chairman. Like I said, I am opposed to this tax initiative. I think it's definitely the wrong thing to do and until we can take a good, hard look in the mirror and make some tough decisions on the size of our workforce and other sacred cows out there, the boards and agencies, and I know there has been some work in that regard, but to me it's just not the right thing to do no matter who has to pay it. You can sugar coat it all you want. It's the rich who are going to be paying more taxes. It doesn't matter to me, Mr. Chairman, who pays more taxes. The fact of the matter is that people that live in the Northwest Territories are paying more in taxes and that is the bottom line. This government is going into their pocket yet again without having the decency to look into their own organization first and that bothers me, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Roland.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the two levels that we come on in the 15<sup>th</sup> Assembly is, one, we are faced with a problem and that is we don't have enough revenues to run the existing level of programs and services. We've committed, and in the budget address I have committed and laid out the fact that we've found \$10 million through this existing fiscal year and that we are going forward looking for another \$20 million in the upcoming fiscal year and a further \$20 million. So we are going through the exercise of restraint in the sense of trying to limit the growth of the Government of the Northwest Territories. At the same time, we are getting requests for continuing programs that have either sunsetted or a requirement to enhance or add new programs to the level of service we deliver in the Northwest Territories. So trying to find a balance in that is a difficult one, and it's difficult as Finance Minister to try to find a balance of either restraint measures or trying to find new ways of spending existing dollars we have.

The Member is correct; when you take in our capital program, we take in over \$1 billion annually. That's a large amount of money for the Northwest Territories. One of those reasons, as the Member has touched on, is the cost of doing business in the North. So it's not without serious thought and consideration as we put these initiatives forward for some new revenue, but without that, Mr. Chairman, we end up getting hit from both ends. One if we aren't seen to be doing our part through the eyes of the federal government when it comes to the formula financing situation, we are penalized. On top of that, we continue to deal with existing growth and having to try to scale that back. The exercise in the 13<sup>th</sup> Assembly started with major reductions right from the start and by the time division came, I think numbers were provided to Members what our workforce was like. We continue to do that through the geographic tracking cost exercise that I have just recently signed off and gave to Members for their information.

Yes, we have a number of initiatives going forward and we have to look at all areas to see where we can come up with the savings required to ensure that we end up having a balanced budget. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do appreciate the Minister's comments. I know it's a tough balancing act that he finds himself in and it's not an enviable position. I know he was on this side of the House in the last government and he does know what it's like, so I do appreciate the time he's spending on this. I mentioned this before but the government really has to learn how to say no, no to some of these groups that come forward. During the last sitting of this House, we were discussing the early childhood funding and that was almost \$1 million. I remember the Minister standing up saying we couldn't access the additional money that we got from Ottawa. It wasn't going to happen and lo and behold, a few months later, we are going to spend close to \$1 million on this early childhood program. I am just wondering, Mr. Chairman, when does no mean no? Maybe the Minister can fill me in on that. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Roland.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as the process is when the department feels they are running a program that doesn't have the required resources within that department, they would bring a bill forward and it would, in the sense of money bills or requests for more money, come to FMB, which I am Chair of. We would discuss that request at that table and have a vote on it. If a department is able to justify in the eyes of FMB as a whole, the support would be there to proceed and we would identify where we would come up with those monies. So there is a process. The initial stage when there was a request for money, I would inform them that we are not in a position to say yes to that request at that time and I believe the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, referenced that he would be looking at that initiative and talking with his Cabinet colleagues. In this case, obviously he garnered their support and it has come forward on that basis. So it is still a time of debate that requires decisions to be made.

We have, as chairman of the FMB, been tougher on those requests that have been coming forward. We only have a \$20 million supplementary reserve and that's meant for unforeseen emergencies and we are sending the message back that a lot of times the requests that are being made need to go into the business planning process. Members, again, when we get to that process, will be much more involved. I have just updated Members as to what we would be looking to develop as information and going forward on the basis of further reductions. So I continue to work with Members in that area. Ultimately my goal is to try to come up with a balance that we can operate as a government, still provide an adequate level of service and not burden the taxpayer significantly in the Northwest Territories, but unfortunately there are times when we have to. It wasn't my goal in becoming Finance Minister to lead the charge on taxes, but it seems like that is the situation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Minister. The issue I have here goes back to the federal government in terms of their revenue resource sharing, the money they take out of the Northwest Territories. It seems that we, as residents of the Northwest Territories, always pay for it. We know that doing business in the North, the cost is extremely high in isolated

communities such as my region. Even to attract good workers, you have to do extra initiatives to hold positions of workers in our communities. Also the programs that are dear to people's hearts are sometimes being called into question because of the amount of dollars it costs to do business in our communities. They get quite upset when we see some of the programs that have been cut and they question the government and myself as MLA, asking this government to look at some programs and consider saving them. The one question they have asked me often is the amount of bureaucrats we have with this government. We cut back and look at them again to see where some of those dollars can be pumped into the regions here. The one support I have and I commend the Minister on is the payroll, the fly-in/fly-out. That's one of the things they...(inaudible)...when I say this is something this government will look at because they think it's about time they pay for doing business in the Northwest Territories. We are going to stay here, Mr. Chairman. We pay the consequences. Our workers and the companies that come and do business in the Northwest Territories are going to be here for a couple of years and then they leave.

An example is the pipeline. We are going to have some major work done down the valley. People are going to be using our resources to do the work here. So that's something that I know in my region they support. Also the income tax increase for the rich. As my honourable colleague, Mr. Ramsay, said, the high income earners are supporting the low income people due to the high cost of living in the small communities. At the end of the day, we look at this and all the discussion on this complex issue of finance formulas with the federal government and with ourselves with income tax. The people want to know if they are increasing their quality of living in the communities. We really want to know they are getting a good deal from this government to increase the cost of living. That's what they look at at the end of the day. They can breeze through the Members' presentations, but at the end of the day when they go home, they say are we going to have good services and is our cost of living is going to be looked after. What happens to people who come to our regions, work for two weeks and fly out? Are they paying their dues? This is the Northwest Territories.

We have rich resources here. My question to the Minister, Mr. Chairman, is what type of strategy in terms of working with the federal government and showing that these dollars stay here and they take a lot of dollars out of here, and we are paying for it? I think we are more than a territory. I think we can come up with some creative solutions. I knew when we were coming to this election, if I was successful in getting in as MLA, we would come to a debt wall and the high cost of living and the issues in front of us. How do we deal with it? I want to show the constituents back in the Sahtu that their quality of living is being taken care of and we can ensure that we are maintaining some of the programs. If anything is going to be cut, for goodness sakes don't cut the programs. Those are serving a lot of people.

I think there have been some tough challenges by the Minister to look at departments and positions. I don't envy you being in that position, Mr. Minister, but the people in the communities are the ones who I am more concerned with. That is my comment to the Minister.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Roland.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, there are a number of avenues we continue to work on, not only in our own sources of revenue, but today is the final piece of that package. We continue to work with our partners, with aboriginal governments in the Northwest Territories, when we go to Ottawa and advance the royalty revenue and discussions that are ongoing and try to ensure that the messages goes out that we are, in fact, doing the best we can with what we have. If we are going to be a positive asset to Canada, then the federal government needs to recognize that there needs to be more revenue required to be left in the Northwest Territories, so we can become a positive asset for Canada and not just continually going down hat in hand. So that work is ongoing. As a government, we must look at all avenues we have available to us. If, for example, that area doesn't work out, we have to look at all other areas, and that comes back to the idea of own source revenues or reduction of programs and services. If you look at the increase that has occurred, increases have been in the area of frontline workers over the last number of years. We've supplied that information in the area of nursing, in the area of doctors' support, social workers, probation officers and so on. Those requirements are there and when you add to that workforce, it adds to the requirement for more funds from the Government of the Northwest Territories. So we've been trying to continue that level of programs and services, but at the same time it's prudent on government to look at its way of doing business to ensure we are not spending the money paid to us by taxpayers, not only in the Northwest Territories but in Canada to let them know that we are doing it wisely and spending the money prudently. So we try to come up with a proper balance. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For the record, I do support the initiatives that the Minister is putting forward to this committee here. I guess I am looking at some other initiatives that we will be discussing later on. However, I would just like to state for the record that I have spoken to the people in the Sahtu and they said that they give their support to these two initiatives that are coming forward.

The other one is in some way, I go back to looking at some of the communities and the departments, they can use some real financial planning for programs and services. It goes a long way. One of my constituents mentioned that they managed to have some financial planning workshops in the region for the people. We are going to be coming into some dollars and cents and they are also concerned. It can be done. For the number of people and the potential revenue we may have coming to the Government of the Northwest Territories, one good move might be to consider some financial planning in the regions. We are optimistic. This is a tough time. Go steady and go forward. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Roland.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Yakeleya has touched on an area that I have referenced on my own in the past when we see a large development happening in communities and the cash flow increases. I think it would be good that we could work with communities, either through the Aurora College process

and establish programs, or work with the resource companies themselves when they hire employees to do a part of that. I think there are avenues we can look at and try to encourage that type of service to be available.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Roland. General comments. What is the wish of the committee?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Clause by clause.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Clause by clause. Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Payroll Tax Act, 1993 and the Income Tax Act. We will stand down consideration of the clauses of the bill and consider the schedule of the bill first. Schedule A.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Page 2, amendments to the Payroll Tax Act, 1993.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Let's go back to page 1, Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Payroll Tax Act, 1993 and the Income Tax Act, clause 1.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Clause 2.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Page 3, Schedule B, amendments to the Income Tax Act.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Refer back to page 1 again, Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Payroll Tax Act, 1993 and the Income Tax Act, clause 1.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Bill as a whole.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Does the committee agree that Bill 6 is ready for third reading?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Bill 6 is now ready for third reading. At this time, I would like to thank Mr. Roland and his staff for coming in for the presentation. We hope to see you again some time.

---Laughter

Does the committee agree that consideration of Committee Report 5-15(3) is also concluded?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Mr. Chairman, I move that we report progress.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** We have a motion to report progress, but at the present time I don't recognize a quorum so I'll have to press our little button here, the bells, to get a quorum.

---Ringing of Bells

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you. I call the committee back to order. We do have a quorum now. There is a motion to report progress. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

I will rise to report progress. Thank you very much.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Can I have the report of Committee of the Whole? Mr. Pokiak.

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

**MR. POKIAK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Payroll Tax Act, 1993 and the Income Tax Act, and Committee Report 5-15(3), and would like to report that Committee Report 5-15(3) is concluded and that Bill 6 is ready for third reading. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The motion is in order. Do I have a seconder for that? Mr. Yakeleya.

**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. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

#### ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Mr. Speaker, there will be a meeting of the AOC committee at adjournment today, and another meeting of the AOC committee tomorrow morning at 9:00 a.m.

Orders of the day for Friday, May 27, 2004, at 10:00 a.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions

11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motion
15. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
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
  - Committee Report 4-15(3), Report on the Review of Bill 5, Tlicho Community Government Act
20. Report of Committee of the Whole
21. Third Reading of Bills
  - Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Payroll Tax Act, 1993 and the Income Tax Act
22. Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Friday, May 28, 2004, at 10:00 a.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 5:38 p.m.





