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The Honourable David Krutko, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Friday, May 28, 2004

Members Present

Mr. Allen, Honourable Brendan Bell, Mr. Braden, 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. Premier.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**Minister's Statement 31-15(3): Removal Of Portfolios - The Honourable Henry Zoe**

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I have an emergency statement. Mr. Speaker, since the House met yesterday, I have been provided with new information concerning the conduct of the Honourable Henry Zoe at the Royal Canadian Legion on the evening of May 15, 2004. I have been able to verify this information with those involved in the incident. In light of the new information this morning, I have relieved Mr. Zoe of his responsibilities as Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs and as Minister responsible for the Public Utilities Board.

Mr. Speaker, those of us who have the privilege of serving as a Member of this Legislative Assembly or as a Member of Cabinet have an obligation to uphold a high standard. This standard has not been met in this case and it's for this reason I have taken this action.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that Mr. Zoe has some personal issues that he must attend to and I strongly encourage him to do so. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Allen.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**Member's Statement On Teaching Experiences In The North**

MR. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Being a Friday morning, I also had the privilege doing a job shadow/teaching experience at the Weledeh Catholic School on the afternoon of May 10th. Mr. Speaker, this was the most pleasurable experience I've had in many years. As you are aware, I have spent many years teaching youth across the Northwest Territories, both wilderness and survival skills. Mr. Speaker, what I did find out from sharing our stories is how do we know each other's regions, communities and way of life, although we claim to be true northerners? Since this is a nice, Friday morning, I wanted to reflect back on the many, many stories I have listened to during the course of my lifetime from my own elders back home as I grew up in Aklavik and on to Inuvik.

In my reply to the opening address, I dedicated a sentence to those who were not indigenous to the North but came north to follow the immense opportunities that

are afforded to newcomers. Mr. Speaker, many Members here will not recognize the names, but it's important to speak well of our elders who do tell stories of explorers, trappers, traders and those who immigrated to the east side of the Mackenzie Delta.

So to my friend, Buster McLeod, thank you for educating me on the important role of the now deceased who helped develop the history of our small region. The names he has given me are: Billy Phillips and Mrs. Leyland, Earl Mirander, Old Tom Throne, the Werville brothers, Pierre Tazzi, Lalu, Big Rock, Pierre Coyen from Loche Creek, Pascal Baptiste, Albert Ross, Adolf Koziak, Jim Harris, Jack Billips and the Norris family at east branch.

Mr. Speaker, the members of the pioneers of the east branch of the Mackenzie Delta bring back fond memories for those elders who remain with us today. On behalf of myself and those who participate, I would also like to thank both the teachers at Weledeh and St. Joe's Catholic schools for inviting me to share the history of the Mackenzie Delta. I also look forward to going back on June 14th and 15th to teach more about the Mackenzie Delta and the North. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Member's Statement On Successful Search And Rescue Efforts For Tuktoyaktuk Resident

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is the time of year when nearly everyone in the community of Tuktoyaktuk goes out on the land for their annual subsistence harvest of game, fish and geese. During my travels to Husky Lake, I became aware on Sunday, May 23, 2004, of a local resident who was considered lost. This individual did not report or return home and after he was reported missing, the family was concerned and contacted the local volunteer search and rescue team. The RCMP, the Canadian Rangers and local volunteers put their plan in place and conducted a vast search. On Monday, May 24, 2004, I was in the community of Yellowknife when I heard that they found this individual. He was safe, but tired and hungry. I did not have time to call the parents and give them my regards on the safe return of their son.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize and thank the RCMP, the Canadian Rangers and the local individuals of Tuktoyaktuk and the air charter companies for the successful search and rescue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Member's Statement On Spring Hunt Tradition In The Sahtu Region

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This morning I would like to talk about the importance of the traditional spring hunts we have in the Sahtu as well as other regions in the Northwest Territories. This time of the year, Mr. Speaker, when the days get long, many people across the North are preparing for a spring hunt out in the bush. The signs of the spring unfold before our eyes, especially hearing the geese and the ducks. It brings a lot of joy in people's hearts. For a thousand years, people have enjoyed this tradition and exercise our right to live off the land. Families come together. They work together and, most importantly, they learn to live together. In the bush, each one of us has a very important role to contribute towards survival and the understanding of our culture. The spring hunt is an important time for harvesting from the land, to value our time with family and to appreciate our culture. For thousands of years, people in the Sahtu have participated in the spring hunt. The substance relationship to the land, the animals, defines the spiritual, emotional and physical identity of the people of the Sahtu. The spring hunt is a very special time of the year for my people. I wish all those on the land who go hunting and fishing a safe journey home and ask that they keep this important part of our tradition within our communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

Member's Statement On Strategic Initiatives Required For Aboriginal Language Programs

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, I wish to speak this morning on an issue of aboriginal language and culture. I see that the government's newly released strategic plan calls for NWT indigenous cultures and languages that are a source of strength for present and future generations. Certainly this is a laudable goal that we hope will be achieved. The plans state further that this goal will be accomplished by implementing school programs to support culture, language and partnership with families and communities. I am concerned, Mr. Speaker, what the strategic plan means in terms of concrete action by the government and whether or not it will be enough to provide for aboriginal languages and cultures that are truly a source of strength. If we are going to implement meaningful school programs that support aboriginal language and culture, I wonder who will teach these programs. For any school program to be successful, qualified professionals are needed to teach the program. Yet, Mr. Speaker, I find no mention in the strategic plan regarding professional development for aboriginal language instructors.

Last month, the Alberta government unveiled a new plan to increase language learning in its goals. That plan calls for a regime of scholarships and bursaries that will encourage professional educators to develop language-related teaching skills. I believe we, too, need to take similar measures in the North. Without qualified teachers, what will a school program accomplish?

Already we have a lack of qualified aboriginal language teachers, and in most communities we have at best aboriginal language teaching assistants. Even they are in

short supply. We are also finding that our qualified aboriginal teachers are going elsewhere for education, teaching and for jobs, taking with them what little professional expertise and skills we do have.

In short, Mr. Speaker, I don't believe the government's plan goes far enough. Much more is required in terms of planned action by the government and I will be pressing the Minister of Education to provide us with more. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Alternatives To Mainstream Education

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are some children in our schools today who, for a variety of reasons, have ongoing behaviour problems and just are not able to function and learn in a regular classroom environment. Unfortunately, in some cases, schools are dealing with this by suspending the students, often for long periods of time. The parents of the students are concerned about what kind of education their children will get if they are forced to be absent from school on a regular basis. Parents and teachers are also concerned about how distractions created by these students with behavioural problems are affecting the learning of others, and that's very understandable. Mr. Speaker, suspensions might serve as a deterrent for students who cause occasional problems and in a very few cases, they might be appropriate as a last resort. However, when you have the same students being suspended over and over again, the system is failing. How many of these students are able to complete their Grade 12 and what happens to those who end up dropping out?

In Yellowknife and in the South, there are alternatives to mainstream education for students with behavioural difficulties so they can get the education and help they need to have a chance to becoming productive adults. There is a clear need for similar programs in Hay River and it's something I hope we will see in the near future. Mr. Speaker, all children are entitled to an education and we are giving up on some of our students in Hay River and this cannot continue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Business Development Investment Corporation

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My Member's statement today is going to centre around the creation of the new Business Development Investment Corporation or BDIC. What I find very interesting is at the end of the life of the last government, this initiative had some life. It had some real energy. Six months into the life of this 15th Legislative Assembly, the government has been eerily silent on this subject. It is important to give our residents an opportunity to have the one-window, one-stop-shopping avenue for business matters and concerns. It is also important to me, as a Member, to know what is happening with this initiative; where it is going to be

located, the cost of it, and the impact on human resources that are currently in place. There are many questions that still surround this initiative and I will have some of those questions, Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time in today's proceedings. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Member's Statement On Timely Notification Of Student Financial Assistance Program Changes

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week my honourable colleague, Mrs. Jane Groenewegen, spoke about the government's responsibility to make clients aware of important program rules and criteria changes on a timely basis. It has come to my attention that this is not happening in some cases with the student financial assistance program and that is causing unfair hardship. In one particular case, I am aware that a student has signed a loan, a contract, Mr. Speaker, for 10 monthly instalments of \$1,100 to help fund her education. Unfortunately, she has learned two months before the contract was to end that she would only be receiving nine instead of 10 payments of \$1,100. Her school only runs five days into the month of June. Mr. Speaker, without getting into how the government can get away with the terms of a legally binding contract, I have to question the fairness of what is going on here. Most of us have experienced the stress of exams. I have to say personally, I am glad that they are long past. I know that the last thing that a student needs to go through in the middle of this is to find out that their financial support is being cut off. These students often engage in work placements and do not have time to find work hours beyond their studies. They depend on financial assistance to meet their basic needs while pursuing their studies. Mr. Speaker, this government actively promotes the value of higher education, and the benefits it offers to individuals in this whole Territory. We recognize that education is a worthwhile investment and it pays off many times over. That is why we have student financial assistance programs. Do we really want to create situations where students after months of study, and months of investment by the government, suddenly are faced with sacrificing vulnerable study time, or worse, dropping out so they can find work to pay bills for that last month that they are being cut off? Mr. Speaker, I think this is truly a shame. At the appropriate time, Mr. Speaker, I will be offering questions to the Minister because I am concerned. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On NWT Team Attending Skills Canada Competition

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hope the seniors of the community will forgive me if I speak about something that is not related to seniors this day.

Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday I had the opportunity to attend the good luck send off for the Skills Canada NWT/Nunavut team that are currently, as we speak, competing for the NWT in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Mr. Speaker, this year, the team consisted of 20 gold medal winners from the NWT and six from Nunavut. I have, over

the years, enjoyed observing and partaking in some of the events that they have held. I have watched a lot of territorial games, and I hope that someday I get to go to the national games and cheer them on. I believe that this is a very, very important initiative, and it goes a long way in developing all kinds of trades and skills among our youth. Given the vibrant economy we have, this is more important than ever.

Mr. Speaker, I might also add that even though we are a very small population, Nunavut as well as the NWT have done exceptionally well in past years in these competitions. We have won many gold medals, and second and third places, and personal bests among all of our participants. So on behalf of this assembly, I would like to wish every competitor the very best, and I know that they will do the NWT proud.

I would like to take this opportunity to just recognize by name all of the participants from the NWT: Stephanie Bourgeois in restaurant services from St. Patrick's High School; Mike Broussard in electrical wiring from GAP Electric; Maggie Butz in hairstyling, she works for Essentials 98; Brett Fehr in auto services, he works at Kingland Ford; Chris Fournier for Web page design, he goes to Sir John Franklin High School; Dale Johnson in carpentry, he works for Clark Builders; Mandy Lyons in prepared speech from St. Patrick's High School; Lance Lennie in carpentry from St. Patrick's High School; Olivia Patterson in hair styling from Sir John Franklin High School; Tyler Provincial in TV video productions from Diamond Jenness School in Hay River. Mr. Speaker, may I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement?

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, colleagues. Continuing on with the participants: Kelvin Redvers in TV video productions from Diamond Jenness High School; Justin Shelley in culinary arts from Sir John Franklin High School; Mara Smith for worksite safety from Sir John Franklin High School; Jeremy Studney in aircraft maintenance from Buffalo Airways; Stephen Walsh in welding from Kingland Ford; Kyle Wheaton in small powered equipment from Sir John Franklin High School; Allen Christiansen in heavy duty equipment mechanical from Finning; Duncan Hamre in IT PC network support from Sir John Franklin High School; Henry Saturos in diamond polishing from Aurora College; and, Elizabeth Aitkens in aesthetics from Sir John Franklin High School. So I would like to conclude again, Mr. Speaker, by wishing them very well. I know that they will do very well, and I look forward to hearing their reports. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Item 3, Members' statements. The Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

Member's Statement On Better Relations Needed Between GNWT And Aboriginal Clients

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this morning I received a call from one of my constituents who has a son as a client of Health and Social Services who has developmental disabilities and who is located in an aboriginal institution in Edmonton. Mr. Speaker,

herself, the staff and the clients when they met with one of the government representatives yesterday were very stressed by the process which has been taken by this government in dealing with the clients who are sent to southern institutions to receive proper care. Mr. Speaker, the institution, clients and the staff were meeting with Members who represent this government and were told at the onset of the meeting, and I quote, Mr. Speaker, "I will meet with you to discuss options of relocating, but I will not answer any questions as to why." Mr. Speaker, if this government is to develop better working partnerships with aboriginal organizations and have more transparency, we have to demonstrate some type of initiatives to begin this process. It seems that this government is being directed and manipulated by people who do not have any interest in this government's vision or goals because they do not have to live in the North. Mr. Speaker, I will be asking a number of questions on this matter later in the day. Mahsi.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Aurora World Corporation

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the last few days, we've been advised in the business community in Yellowknife of difficulties encountered by the Aurora World Corporation. This is the leading company, I believe, in Canada for the aurora winter viewing tourism industry, especially associated with the thousands of Japanese who choose to come to Canada in winter to view this natural spectacle. Mr. Speaker, in a previous life, in the late 1980s, I was involved in the tourism industry here in the NWT when this industry was just being created. It was a remarkable thing to watch professionals from the Canadian, the Japanese and the northern tourism industries get together and say there is something here that could work. It is totally unique, it is untried, but we want to give it a go, and we did and have in the space of about 10 or 12 years developed a remarkable piece of the Canadian tourism industry. The difficulties encountered by the Aurora World Corporation are unfortunate, but they are being dealt with, and of course as information has indicated, our government is indeed one of the investors that is exposed here. I think at this time the most important thing that we can do here in Yellowknife, here in the North, is express our confidence and our commitment in this industry, that we have to let the hundreds of workers who are affected in the service industry know that this government and this assembly wants this industry to continue. We want the investors to know that we are on side, and especially at this time, Mr. Speaker, we want the Japanese visitors, the people who are making the choice and putting down the money to come and visit us this coming winter, to have confidence in what we are doing. That is the message I want to put forth and put out today on behalf of this industry. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 7, Members' statements. The Member for North Slave, Mr. Zoe.

Member's Statement On Apology For Personal Conduct

MR. ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I listened to the debate in the House yesterday, and I would like to address a number of issues raised by Members. First of all, questions were raised about my attitude towards this matter in the House yesterday. I want to assure all Members that I consider this matter very serious. I would like to once again, Mr. Speaker, offer my sincere apology to the staff and members of the Royal Canadian Legion, and to any other people that I may have offended by my conduct on May 15th. I have also considered the concerns and questions raised by Members in question period yesterday concerning the steps I am taking to ensure that this incident does not occur again. Over the past couple of days, I have sought guidance from my family, my colleagues in this House, and from a number of my constituents about this matter. I have reached a decision to seek treatment and personal healing to deal with my problems. Mr. Speaker, effective immediately I will be leaving to begin this healing process. I've asked all Members for their forgiveness for my actions, and for my absence to deal with my healing. Thank you.

---Applause

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

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take the opportunity to recognize a friend of mine, Richard Archer, upstairs. Thank you very much.

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

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to recognize two of the Pages in the House today from Deninu K'ue, Elizabeth Giroux and Tyler Yuremchuk who are both Grade 8 students who attend Deninoo School in Fort Resolution. They will be working as Pages for the duration of this Third Session of the 15th Legislative Assembly. Mahsi.

---Applause

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Along with my friend, the honourable colleague from Tu Nedhe, I would like to also recognize the Pages from the Chief Albert Wright School in Tulita, Karen Iliopoulos and Brendyn Lennie, also Vital Manual, and the chaperone George Iliopoulos from Tulita. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. At this time I would like to recognize the people in the gallery who haven't gotten recognized, and I would like to welcome you to the House. Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Hawkins.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS**Question 165-15(3): NWT Student Loan Agreement**

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement I spoke about the NWT student loan agreement that was cut off on short notice. The students that sign these contracts are in real need of financial support, and they count on the money that they are promised by the government. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. In what circumstances does he consider it appropriate for his department to change the amount of a student loan agreement, a signed contract, without the student's knowledge or consent? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 165-15(3): NWT Student Loan Agreement

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would expect that the only occasion we would see that sort of incident happening would be if it was found out that some information was wrong in the application or that the funding had been improperly accessed. If there was some reason to believe there was a problem with the way in which the funding was allocated, that might be the situation. It is difficult to respond to a general question of that nature, and it is unfortunate that I don't have the specifics of this case to be able to follow up on it. Of course, it would be difficult to give a precise answer without knowing the particulars. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Supplementary To Question 165-15(3): NWT Student Loan Agreement

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell me what efforts his department takes to warn students that the amount of their loans may be reduced later on in the year, and what do they do to notify students on a timely basis that their loan amounts may be addressed? What notice do they provide if any? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 165-15(3): NWT Student Loan Agreement

HON. CHARLES DENT: Mr. Speaker, it is clear in the regulations that if the information provided by the student in their application is wrong or if there has been a mistake made, that the amounts can be changed. Typically, there would be no notice given that the amounts would be changed because unless there was something wrong they wouldn't be changed. So my understanding of the program is if there has been a change, it must have been because someone was unaware of the full particulars, and maybe they weren't set out properly in the application. But the role of the student financial assistance officers should be to help counsel people to make sure that they make as few mistakes on their applications as possible. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Supplementary To Question 165-15(3): NWT Student Loan Agreement

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'd like to thank the Minister as well. Mr. Speaker, what I am trying to describe here is we have a signed contract where students are supposed to receive 10 payments, but they are receiving nine. They are officially being cut off, and it has been put into writing because technically they are one day short of attendance into the June month period. So they are attending five days, whereas they need to be attending six days to receive any money. So that was the reason they are being cut off from any future payments. Would the Minister commit today to investigating and addressing this situation that I have described here, where we have students in the middle of their exams and this support is needed at this time? Would he consider reinstating a signed contract for the original loan amount? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 165-15(3): NWT Student Loan Agreement

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister has no flexibility in student financial assistance. The regulations must be followed explicitly. The Minister cannot bend the rules. So I would be quite happy to investigate the situation if the Member would subsequently provide me with the name, and certainly follow up. The student always has the right of appeal to the Student Financial Assistance Appeal Board, and I would encourage the student to make that appeal. Again, just from what I've heard, it sounds like someone made the inadvertent mistake of not recognizing part of the regulations, because the six-day rule would have to have been in the regulations, and there should have been some awareness about that on filing of the application. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Supplementary To Question 165-15(3): NWT Student Loan Agreement

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the willingness, Mr. Minister, I can hear in your voice to address this matter. Mr. Speaker, I guess lastly, does the Minister consider it serious that a signed contract is broken? Does the Minister take that very seriously? Thank you very much.

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

Further Return To Question 165-15(3): NWT Student Loan Agreement

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I take very seriously the issue of providing student financial assistance to people who qualify for it. We need to have as many people who are enrolled in post-secondary opportunities as possible. But as I said, the only reason I am aware of for changes is if something is wrong in the application or the regulations are not being met. So in that case, it would be clearly laid out in the

regulations that there could be changes if the application hasn't been done correctly or there is some other problem. So, yes, I take student financial assistance very seriously, but I expect that all of the rules and regulations have been followed in this situation and there has probably been no breach, but an appeal to the Student Financial Assistance Board would answer that question too. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 6, oral questions. The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Allen.

Question 166-15(3): Enhancement Of The Northern Studies Curriculum

MR. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As well, I have a question to the Minister of ECE and it is with regard to my earlier statement. On May 10th I was privileged to address over 70 students and a number of staff at Weledeh Catholic School. I wanted to ask the Minister today if his department is willing to produce an enhanced northern history curriculum component into the teaching modules so that the students may get a better awareness of each other's regions, communities and lifestyles? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 166-15(3): Enhancement Of The Northern Studies Curriculum

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in fact through our participation in the Western Canadian Protocol we have enhanced the curriculum across all western provinces in both territories to include more history of the North, and in the social studies curriculum you will find that in particular starting even as early as Grade 4 that there is a fair emphasis on northern history. In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, through the teacher education program at Aurora College there is again a significant emphasis on northern history so that teachers who come through the northern system are even more aware of the history of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Allen.

Supplementary To Question 166-15(3): Enhancement Of The Northern Studies Curriculum

MR. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am glad to hear that, because I think the teachers of those who teach northern culture would be very pleased that the Minister had responded positively. I just wanted to ensure that he continued to work with his curriculum consultants, that teachers may broaden their teaching modules so that it may be extended right from K to 12. It enhances the post-secondary component of our education system. If I could get that commitment from the Minister, would he make that in the House today? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 166-15(3): Enhancement Of The Northern Studies Curriculum

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are certainly prepared to continue with our commitment to make sure that northern teachers are

better prepared to teach about northern culture and history, and we will continue to work with our partners in the Western Canadian Protocol to strengthen significantly, where possible, the curriculum, or, where appropriate, the curriculum to deal with northern history. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 167-15(3): GNWT Involvement In The Aurora World Corporation

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, thank you. My questions this morning are for the Honourable Brendan Bell, Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, and our Minister responsible for the tourism portfolio as relates to the difficulties now encountered by Aurora World Corporation and the GNWT's involvement in this corporation. I would like to ask the Minister what is the Government of the Northwest Territories' exposure in the difficulties encountered by this corporation? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 167-15(3): GNWT Involvement In The Aurora World Corporation

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Obviously this is a difficult situation, but I think it's going to eventually be a good-news story going forward for the industry. We know that aurora visitation numbers have declined drastically, after 9-11 and other geopolitical events: the war in Iraq, there was also SARS and a number of events I think Mr. Braden has alluded to. Things have been a little more difficult since then, obviously. I think things are starting to turn around. I'm hopeful; I'm optimistic. Obviously this company had a couple of choices to make while things were improving. I think they felt that there was just too much to overcome, so they filed for protection from creditors under the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act. Hopefully a workable business model will emerge from that. Obviously our exposure as a territory is twofold. There are a lot of people employed in this industry. We want to see it successful. We want to see it back up to pre-9-11 levels and even better in the years beyond. There are a lot of businesses that rely on this tourism. There are a lot of people whose jobs are at stake if the tourism sector isn't viable. As well, we are also a creditor, as the Member knows, so there is financial exposure in that respect, and obviously I have an interest in seeing us protect the public purse. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary To Question 167-15(3): GNWT Involvement In The Aurora World Corporation

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the Minister for that response. I had asked what is the GNWT's exposure. There may be conditions in the business agreement that do not permit the Minister to disclose that. I would like to leave that question on the table, and further ask, Mr. Speaker, is the GNWT considering investing any new money in this corporation? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 167-15(3): GNWT Involvement In The Aurora World Corporation

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the Member is looking for the amount of money owed to the government, or the BCC specifically, from this company. I am unable, because of our legislation, to give the Member the number. The Member will remember we have had many past discussions about the need to balance the privacy and the protection of proprietary interest with the need for the public to know. This is a difficult balance. I think it is a discussion that we'll continue to have going forward. I look forward to that discussion, but without the agreement of the parties involved, I can't divulge the amount of money. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary To Question 167-15(3): GNWT Involvement In The Aurora World Corporation

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What is the Government of the Northwest Territories doing to promote and sustain the continuation of the aurora tourism industry? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 167-15(3): GNWT Involvement In The Aurora World Corporation

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you. The Member will remember the \$250,000 contribution that this government made at the end of the last assembly. It was for aurora recovery. That money was further levered through the Canadian Tourism Commission and amounted in what we believe is around \$900,000 in investment spent both domestically and in Japan to try to reinvigorate the industry. We are hearing from the NWT Arctic Tourism Association and others that they believe this has been very successful. They are thankful for the support. Really the proof will be in the pudding with the upcoming season in terms of visitation numbers, but we're very optimistic that with this level of support that we'll have made significant inroads. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplementary.

Supplementary To Question 167-15(3): GNWT Involvement In The Aurora World Corporation

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It might be a bit early yet, but from my experience in the tourism industry, now is when the sales teams should be out there filling the order books for the coming season. Given the trends in world tourism, in local tourism and the situation at hand, Mr. Speaker, what information could the Minister provide on the viability and strength of this industry going into the winter of 2004-05? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 167-15(3): GNWT Involvement In The Aurora World Corporation

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would say that the individual tourism providers, I believe, are out at tourism shows. I know they will participate going forward and are out, as the Member indicates, with their sales books and trying to book tours for the upcoming season. My information, looking at the numbers from this past season, is that things are improving, if only slightly. We haven't seen the dramatic recovery that we were looking for, but I have spoken with two of the three operators who are involved in aurora visitation, and they are optimistic about the numbers and recognize that this may be a slow recovery but we're going in the right direction. Thank you.

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

Question 168-15(3): Moving Health Canada Office To The North

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Honourable Michael Miltenberger, Minister of Health and Social Services. Mr. Speaker, I understand that Health Canada has an office in Ottawa that administers non-insured health benefits for the people in the Northwest Territories. My question to the Minister is has there been any discussion in terms of the GNWT and the federal government for moving that office to the Northwest Territories?

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

Return To Question 168-15(3): Moving Health Canada Office To The North

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have had discussions with Minister McLellan before she moved from her portfolio, with Minister Pettigrew, about the possibility of moving those people from the northern secretariat who administer programs in the health area on behalf of the people in the Northwest Territories to the North. At this point they are only discussions, but the intent across the board is as we look at devolution in talking with DIAND and in talking with Health Canada is to have those services and programs that are administered by federal civil servants as close to the people they serve as possible, which would mean to the North. So, yes, there have been discussions. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

Supplementary To Question 168-15(3): Moving Health Canada Office To The North

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's good to hear that there are discussions happening. I would like to ask the Minister a more specific question in terms of what guidelines this government may look at in terms of having these services moved to the Northwest Territories. It's a crying shame that in today's day and age that is operating out of Ottawa, whereas the Government of the Northwest Territories is looking at becoming more administrative as a territory. I would like to ask the Minister of some timelines that we could possibly see some actions where these

services would be transferred to the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 168-15(3): Moving Health Canada Office To The North

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this issue has been on the government agenda for many years. In fact, my recollection is the federal government itself did a review of the positions that could be moved north and there were a substantial number, but the federal government decided not to move on that, the main rationale being that the public didn't really want to move out of Ottawa and other southern jurisdictions where they currently did their business. It's not an option that was given in '67 when they moved the capital north, but it was the one that the federal government used.

Mr. Speaker, this is going to be an ongoing issue as we discuss this. There are no set timelines. It's on the table as an ongoing part of discussions with the federal government. I know on the health side we also want to look at the supplementary health benefits and exactly how non-insured health benefits are provided. Is the vehicle of the federal government the best way to do it? We are now a program administrator. Should there be discussions through this supplementary health review to in fact look at a possible different arrangement which would see that program fully taken over by the territorial government, is one possible suggestion. There are a number of options out there that are going to require our attention over the coming months. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

Supplementary To Question 168-15(3): Moving Health Canada Office To The North

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the delicate discussions happening with Health Canada in terms of the northern secretariat being moved to the Northwest Territories. I would like to see this government take some leadership of some of the positions of some people who do not want to be moved to the Northwest Territories. We have enough qualified people in the Northwest Territories to take on those positions. Once and for all we should be able to say, if it's part of the discussions, that we have qualified people in the Northwest Territories. It requires some delicate negotiations, however, I think this government needs to take a stand in saying that we have people here ready to take over those positions if people in Ottawa do not want to move. I would like to ask the Minister if he would look at this strategy in terms of having some commitment to having this office moved here and not having the negotiations held up because a few people in Ottawa do not want to move to the great white Northwest Territories.

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

Further Return To Question 168-15(3): Moving Health Canada Office To The North

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories, like the other 12 provincial jurisdictions will all be getting their lists ready for post-June 28th when we know who in fact the government in the land will be at the federal level. So I can assure the Member that the issue he has raised in this House is one that is on our list and we will be moving on that when we, once again, know who the government of the day will be at the federal level. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Colleagues, I would like to direct your attention to the presence in the visitors' gallery of a Grade 5 class from St. Joseph's School and their teacher, Ms. Chiasson. I would like to welcome you to the Legislative Assembly. I know you received a little tour of the House, and I would like to welcome you back. So welcome to the Legislative Assembly.

---Applause

Item 6, oral questions. Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

Question 169-15(3): Qualified Language Instructors In NWT Schools

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, mahsi cho. My questions are directed to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Given that the government's strategic plan calls for implementation of school programs that support indigenous language and culture, does the government's strategic plan include measures for the training and professional development of qualified aboriginal language instructors to teach these school programs?

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

Return To Question 169-15(3): Qualified Language Instructors In NWT Schools

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the strategic plan may not specifically mention that sort of program, but it is certainly one of the basic tenants of the teacher education program and one of the reasons for offering the program right through to the baccalaureate or bachelor degree stage in the Northwest Territories. We are anxious to see more teachers who are born in the Northwest Territories and conversant in the language of their community who have been able to go through the process and become fully qualified teachers with a B.Ed. to work in the North. That's one way in which we are strongly continuing this. While it may not be mentioned in the strategic plan, it is certainly something that has been in the business plans of Education, Culture and Employment, so it is an ongoing process that we continue to support.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

Supplementary To Question 169-15(3): Qualified Language Instructors In NWT Schools

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, does the government and the Department of Education, Culture and Employment have plans to provide bursaries and

scholarships to encourage teachers to develop aboriginal language teaching skills at the college level?

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

Further Return To Question 169-15(3): Qualified Language Instructors In NWT Schools

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the college has an aboriginal language and culture instructor program which is designed to prepare aboriginal language teachers to deliver aboriginal programming in NWT schools. This is a program that is offered on top of the teacher education program and it can be supported through the student financial assistance program, which also offers access to scholarships, as well. We find that many employers are prepared to support their employees to access this kind of program, as well. So the answer is yes, we make this programming available to assist teachers to become better qualified, and we do support it financially. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

Supplementary To Question 169-15(3): Qualified Language Instructors In NWT Schools

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps the Minister could clarify for me again that the government does provide bursaries and scholarships to encourage more aboriginal language professionals with teaching skills and just to develop the capacities that I know are lacking in the regions and the communities. If the Minister can provide that answer for me. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 169-15(3): Qualified Language Instructors In NWT Schools

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We don't have a program of scholarships and bursaries that are specifically limited to teachers who want to take this kind of upgrading or training. There is, however, a fairly large pot of money, which is part of the collective agreement with the NWTTA, that is available for teachers for upgrading purposes. What has been found to work best with courses like the aboriginal language and culture programming is part-time delivery in the regions, so that it can be delivered close to the workplace. Often this kind of upgrading doesn't require a huge investment of time or money on the part of the teacher. But if the teacher were to sign up for a full-time instruction course and were to take time off to do it, they would qualify for support. If they have gone to school in the Northwest Territories, they would qualify for student financial assistance if they weren't able to access the professional development funding that is part of the collective agreement. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

Supplementary To Question 169-15(3): Qualified Language Instructors In NWT Schools

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just one further point on that is I was saying language and culture are very important to our government. Is the department looking at providing incentives and bursaries or a new

initiative to reach out to our teachers to say, look, this is important to us, here are additional bursaries and scholarships that are available to you, rather than to just access the current pool but to create a larger pool of aboriginal language instructors for the North and our students? Mahsi cho.

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

Further Return To Question 169-15(3): Qualified Language Instructors In NWT Schools

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will certainly discuss this further with the Member. It is my impression that we do offer that kind of support, if it's necessary, right now. If the Member has examples where he feels we are not following through, I would like to hear about them. So I will commit to discussing with the Member his recommendation and we'll take it from there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 170-15(3): Business Development Investment Corporation

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, also the Minister responsible for the BCC and the Dev Corp. During the life of the last government, the issue and initiative concerning the amalgamation of these two arms of this government was front and centre. In the last six months, much talk took place in the House with regard to the development and the BDIC initiative. I'm just wondering, Mr. Speaker, why there has been a delay in the department giving this legislature an update on where this initiative is at. In the last six months when you mention the word BDIC you can hear a pin drop. There just hasn't been any information forthcoming from the government and I'm just wondering where it is at. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 170-15(3): Business Development Investment Corporation

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I assure the Member we're not and I'm not potentially trying to withhold information from the Members. The Member is certainly right; within the life of the last assembly, at the end of the last assembly there was a legislative proposal and a bill drafted. There was insufficient time, unfortunately, for introduction and passage in the 14th Assembly. That does not mean that this discussion and this initiative about the need to better rationalize our resources in terms of how we deliver economic development programs and services is dead. We had the common ground strategy which talked about the need to do this. We had a business program review committee that made some recommendations. Those have been endorsed by a bankers' commission. So we are in discussions about those issues.

The delay, Mr. Speaker, has really been due to the fact that we've been tasked with analyzing and discussing potential reorganization options for the entire department.

I have described them as being on a continuum. But it's all about most effective program and service delivery and what model will provide that. So we will come forward with that analysis, and really felt it was premature to talk about the BDIC or any other program delivery agency in isolation without this broader review. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

Supplementary To Question 170-15(3): Business Development Investment Corporation

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister makes light of service delivery and ease of service for clients, and I'm just wondering during the life of the last government there was much discussion with regard to the location of the BDIC offices. I know the community of Hay River, and I am a champion of the town of Hay River and what they're trying to do there, but now they're referring to the town of Hay River as the business capital of the Northwest Territories, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister what he will do to ensure that this important role and function of government stays in the capital city where there are accountants, there are many lawyers, banks and services to cater to business needs of this territory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 170-15(3): Business Development Investment Corporation

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am sure that if I get Cabinet support for a single agency, and I would indicate, Mr. Speaker, I still have to go forward to Cabinet with a proposal and receive an endorsement of that proposal prior to coming forward to committee, but if and when that happens, I am hoping that we can do something very quickly here. If and when that happens we will have, no doubt, a very good and I am sure heated exchange at the committee level about potential locations for a new agency. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

Supplementary To Question 170-15(3): Business Development Investment Corporation

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I find it hard to believe that we're even considering potential locations for the new entity of BDIC. I think it belongs in one place, and that's in the city of Yellowknife. I'm just wondering -- and I know my colleague, Mr. Braden, was speaking to this earlier in terms of getting information from the BCC and the current legislation making it impossible for an MLA to find out where the funds are being invested -- who is getting what money, under what terms and conditions. I'm wondering if the Minister believes that we can get some movement or a shift from this current practice of keeping the information secret, to a more full disclosure of accounting through the entity and if that's going to be part of this proposal that we'll be seeing hopefully soon, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 170-15(3): Business Development Investment Corporation

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's difficult for me, without the Cabinet endorsement of said

proposal, to theoretically discuss and indicate exactly what that will include. No doubt, it will include a range of options and a range of suggestions. We have had some discussion in the past about our legislation being as open as possible, as transparent as possible. I have no doubt that that discussion will take place again and we will have that committee. Certainly I will indicate to the Members on the other side of the House that I will take their recommendations in this regard very seriously. So if it's important to them, I would suggest that it would be important to the government. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

Supplementary To Question 170-15(3): Business Development Investment Corporation

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm just wondering when might the regular Members and the Governance and Economic Development committee, in particular, be able to receive a full and updated information package from the Minister with regard to the BDIC initiative. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 170-15(3): Business Development Investment Corporation

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the next couple of weeks I will be before Cabinet and be making a presentation to Cabinet. Assuming endorsement of that presentation and assuming there aren't significant changes, I will very quickly then be able to come to committee. We will work with the Clerk's office to schedule something as soon as possible. I appreciate that summer is coming and it will be more and more difficult to get Members together, so I understand the urgency and will move quickly on this. Thank you.

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

Question 171-15(3): Community Freezer Needs In Paulatuk

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During oral question period yesterday I made a request of the Minister of RWED to consider reallocating the \$15,000 towards the community freezer of Paulatuk for the 2004-05 season. Once again, I may sound like a running record, Mr. Speaker. With the warm weather fast approaching and the concern the residents of Paulatuk have for the storage of their subsistence food and because of my persistence to continue this important issue for the residents of Paulatuk, my question is for the Honourable Brendan Bell, Minister of RWED. Will he consult with his department and Cabinet to provide the appropriate funds for the O and M for the Paulatuk community freezer for the spring and summer of 2004-05? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 171-15(3): Community Freezer Needs In Paulatuk

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I assure the Member that I don't consider his questioning a running record. I understand that this is very important to his community. He has made that point abundantly clear to me and to the public, I believe. I also understand the

urgency and understand the cultural implications here and the willingness to not be seen to be wasting any meat in the community. I appreciate that and respect that. Last night, after the discussion in the House, I asked the department to sit down and come up with a proposed solution to this. What we're prepared to do, Mr. Speaker, is to fund the operation of this freezer for the upcoming season. We don't want to see any delay, we don't want to see any meat wasted. This would be the last season though, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to get the Member's acceptance that if we fund the operation of this freezer for this season, that we also agree that in following seasons we'll move to having people have chest freezers in their homes. If the Member is amendable to that solution, I think we need to get moving quickly so that those freezers can make the barge this season and that there be no interruption of service delivery. So I'm hopeful that that will be an acceptable solution to the Member, and maybe he can indicate if that's the case. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Pokiak.

Supplementary To Question 171-15(3): Community Freezer Needs In Paulatuk

MR. POKIAK: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much to the Minister for providing funds for 2004-2005. However, I will consult with my constituents in Paulatuk with regard to upcoming years. I will do that once I get back to Paulatuk during our tour. I would just like to say again thank you to the Minister for providing funds for the 2004-2005 season. Again, we will work with the community. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: That's more of a statement thanking the Minister, so there's no question there. Item 6, oral questions. Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

Question 172-15(3): Treatment Of Clients With Developmental Disabilities

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. As I had stated in my Member's statement today with regard to the six or eight clients that the NWT sends down to an institution called the Aboriginal Partners and Youth Society in Edmonton which currently houses and treats our northern persons with developmental disabilities, I just wanted to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services whether looking at this report which was developed by the Office of the Public Guardian, which is the public guardian for the five disabled persons residing in the group homes and also we have six adult clients who are housed in the same residence. In the document, there are several interviews which were conducted with professionals involved, supporting the individuals served by the agency and represented by the Office of the Public Guardian. Responses focussed on the impact or the difference in progress toward treatment, goals and assessment or risk, and general comments and observations about the agency. Mr. Speaker, a lot of the interviews are with certified psychiatrists and psychologists such as, Mr. Speaker, Dr. Oto Cadsky, a psychiatrist who has been working with the institution for the past three years. He says one of his clients has fewer problems and critical incidents since being with this agency and has been making excellent progress since he started to receive services through APYS. He also remarks that he did not have any concerns regarding the allegations of inconsistencies in administering medication and that if his

client is moved at this time or if any other major changes are made, he will go nuts.

Another interview with Dr. Dale Parr, another psychologist who has been working for APYS for a number of years, feels that the environment and individuals are clean and well taken care of. I want to ask the Minister of Health how his department is going to deal with the fact that six of the clients that were scheduled to be moved yesterday and had an interview with the CEO of the Edmonton board of the Persons with Developmental Disabilities and a representative from the Department of Health and Social Services, how the Department of Health and Social Services will deal with these six clients who are refusing to leave this agency and how will they be taken care of. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 172-15(3): Treatment Of Clients With Developmental Disabilities

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in the House yesterday, integrated services and housing is available with all the other professional supports that are required. We have meetings today with the individual clients, outside of the glare and pressure cooker intensity of group meetings, but we have been approached. They were talking to clients on an individual basis. So I am confident that as this issue moves through its transition phase that we will be able to make sure that all the clients we have down there are successfully integrated into the alternate placements that have been found for them.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Villeneuve.

Supplementary To Question 172-15(3): Treatment Of Clients With Developmental Disabilities

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to ask the Minister again whether the individual interviews take place, or whether it's in a group interview with the CEO and the representative from the Department of Health and Social Services. I have been assured that these clients will not be moving anywhere, Mr. Speaker, and that they refuse to go to any other institution, especially an institution which they have been removed from because of abuse and mistreatment. How is the Department of Health and Social Services going to ensure that these clients who do not want to move out of this institution are going to be adequately treated and taken care of? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 172-15(3): Treatment Of Clients With Developmental Disabilities

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are the last funding agency left with APYS as far as we know. The Nunavut government and the Alberta government have taken steps to relocate their clients for the issues that have been discussed for some time now. Mr. Speaker, we have arranged alternate placements. At the end of the day, as adults, if they refuse to move, we will work with them to ensure that they are connected to Alberta Health and Social Services, that they

take advantage of the services that are available within the city and provided by the Alberta government. We will also be retaining the space in the integrated services for these clients to come in and take advantage of the services that are there waiting for them.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Villeneuve.

Supplementary To Question 172-15(3): Treatment Of Clients With Developmental Disabilities

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not sure what the Minister was referring to, but I don't think he has really answered my question as to how the Government of the Northwest Territories is planning on abandoning these clients and leaving them at the disposal of the city of Edmonton and the services that they provide. How can the Minister tell these people that the government who supported them for the last 10 years in numerous institutions is now suddenly pulling the rug out from underneath an agency which has provided them with a very improved quality of life resulting in reduced risk behaviours? I am quoting Mr. Paul Kohl, which is the Office of the Public Guardian. How can the government sit back and say they are just going to have to go to the city of Edmonton and take advantage of the services available to them and we will just keep track of what they are doing? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 172-15(3): Treatment Of Clients With Developmental Disabilities

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, let me be as clear as I can on this issue. We are not abandoning anybody. We have made all the appropriate arrangements. We have had staff down there for the last few weeks trying to work through this transition. The reality is, at the end of the day, APYS has to get its house in order with the Alberta government so they are duly licensed and they comply with all the other hearings where they have to, and at which time we will consider doing business with them. Until that is done, we have an obligation to ensure that the people from the North are given assurance of the highest quality of service that we can get, that standards are met, that they have all the due licensing and other permits they need to do the business that they are in. So that is what we have done. We are being very diligent about this. We are putting many resources to this. My hope was that APYS would do the work necessary to get its house in order with the Alberta government. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Final Supplementary, Mr. Villeneuve.

Supplementary To Question 172-15(3): Treatment Of Clients With Developmental Disabilities

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With reference to getting their house in order with the Alberta government, I think APYS is finding it very difficult to get their house in order when they are dealing with a CEO of the Edmonton board of Persons with Developmental Disabilities that couldn't provide any real substantial reason as to why he was refusing APYS certification to deliver the agency's programs to the clients and to the staff at yesterday's meeting. He refused to answer any questions as to why the Edmonton board of Persons with

Developmental Disabilities was refusing the agency's certification and would not answer any questions relating to that. So I am just wondering why the Minister is basing our decision to relocate and put undue stress on a lot of clients and families on a decision by someone who may have a personal vendetta or be biased towards aboriginal organizations in general and not take the interviews with certified doctors, staff and clients' feedback on the agency's programming and success. Why are we saying one guy's refusal to certify an agency is the basis for refusing proper treatment to NWT clients? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 172-15(3): Treatment Of Clients With Developmental Disabilities

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member has made a number of allegations against some of the officials in Edmonton that work for government. Mr. Speaker, we are a contracting body that are buying a service. We have certain obligations. It is not our role to get involved in the disagreements and the internal wranglings and differences between APYS and the Alberta government and whatever other agencies are in Alberta. It's an Alberta run operation that runs out of Edmonton. They have to comply with the laws of the land, the standards of the land, and their obligation was to do that. We are looking after the residents of the Northwest Territories. We are committed to buying that service and ensuring that they are put into facilities that meet the basic standards so that we can contract in confidence, knowing that their needs will be met. APYS has their obligation to sort things out. I am not in a position to comment or determine what caused the breakdown between APYS and the Alberta government. It has happened. It has caused the situation we are in today and we have been doing our best to respond in the most constructive way possible. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 6, oral questions. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Allen.

Question 173-15(3): Impacts On Social Housing In The North

MR. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation. This morning I raised a very important question to the Minister of RWED with regard to the impacts the industry will have on the Government of the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, transitional housing and homelessness is one of the major social programs that will be impacted. The Member stated that he will work with other departments to try to mitigate those impacts. Also in the 14th Assembly, we worked very closely with several proponents to try to eradicate the high cost of delivering housing to NWT residents and one of the areas was to try to pay the premiums on the development of housing, which would be a turnover to the Government of the Northwest Territories completion of the Mackenzie Valley pipeline. I would like to ask the Minister this morning what the status report is on whether he has followed up on this initiative. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 173-15(3): Impacts On Social Housing In The North

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the issue of homelessness is a very large, broad issue across the board. We share responsibility through a number of different departments, including ECE, Health and the Housing Corporation. We have set up a social Ministers' committee to work more as a team, to talk about the issues that we have across the North. We also have a Minister responsible for homelessness. Having said that, the NWT Housing Corporation plays a large role when it comes to addressing homelessness. There are two categories as part of that definition: the relative homelessness and the absolute homelessness. We certainly have a number of people who can be defined as relative homeless across the North. Most of the people who are in our social housing programs fit that definition. We continue to make housing more available. Our goal is to follow through with a number of the initiatives that were started in the 14th Assembly and to meet all the challenges that are being placed in front of us, such as declining funding from CMHC and also the current Government of the Northwest Territories fiscal situation. So we have huge challenges. We have industry that is developing across the North. We are looking at pipeline projects. We are doing analysis. We are just currently packaging up our core needs assessment for 2004. We will be making that information known and will set our government direction based on that information. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Allen.

Supplementary To Question 173-15(3): Impacts On Social Housing In The North

MR. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think I memorized that line as well, but my question is in the context of social impacts on residents of the Northwest Territories brought on by industry, diamond mining, oil and gas. Mr. Speaker, it's in the context of affordability. I was glad to see the Minister has afforded the initiative for removing the BIP for economic housing. Precisely what kind of mitigation is the Minister prepared to do to ensure the continuation of the liaison between the proponents, and is he willing to give the residents of the Northwest Territories affordable housing once projects are completed and once his department would like to entertain in terms of the redesign and also the engineering of those homes so they can be moved from a camp setting to the community at a reduced cost to those who are prepared to buy those units? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 173-15(3): Impacts On Social Housing In The North

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess there are a number of different questions that the Member raised. Mr. Speaker, we have programs in place. We are looking at affordable housing. Our strategy is still there and is continuing from the 14th Assembly. We still provide funding to developers. We have our corporate loan guarantees. We also provide our social programs. In terms of what we are doing for converting, I think the word the Member used was economic projects and using those facilities; we have not developed that any further. It's not

something we are currently looking at. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Allen.

Supplementary To Question 173-15(3): Impacts On Social Housing In The North

MR. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that was one of the very few initiatives that had potential for NWT residents in terms of affordability. It also had merit in the sense that the costs would be reduced. I am going to ask the Minister again if he is prepared to re-enter into those forms of negotiations and discussions with those proponents that will see affordable housing delivered to the people of the Northwest Territories outside of existing programs? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 173-15(3): Impacts On Social Housing In The North

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, we are engaged in discussions throughout the North with developers, with the development corporations, with the private industry. We are talking to a number of people who are interested in new concepts. I am not clear what the Member is referring to, but I would be willing to take any proposals or any contact names that the Member is referring to and take it under advisement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 174-15(3): Devolution Of Government Programs To The Sahtu Region

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I stand alone on behalf of the people of the Sahtu to ask about the possibility of this government moving towards more recognition of the Sahtu with regard to a stand-alone region. My question is to the Premier. I am making a request of this government to devolve some programs from Ottawa to the Northwest Territories. I was asked this request by the Sahtu region, that this government takes the leadership in setting the example that the Sahtu also becomes a stand-alone region where decisions are being made in the Sahtu by the Sahtu people. Right now, it has to go to Inuvik and come back. I would like to ask the Premier to inform the House and the people of the Sahtu what his plans are in terms of developing more authority into the Sahtu region. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Premier.

Return To Question 174-15(3): Devolution Of Government Programs To The Sahtu Region

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, over the past number of years, there has been a gradual movement of creating more self-sufficiency within the Sahtu region. Education, for example, has been in the Sahtu for quite a number of years. The last couple of years there have been moves to establish health in the same way. So, Mr. Speaker, there has been considerable work done on this already. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

Supplementary To Question 174-15(3): Devolution Of Government Programs To The Sahtu Region

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I applaud the 14th Assembly and this government to start moving towards the autonomy of the Sahtu region. More specifically, I would like to ask the Premier if he would consider moving FMBS out of the Inuvik area and having the office in the Sahtu region. Right now, we are considered out of the Inuvik region and I would like to ask the Premier to consider moving the Financial Management Board office out of Inuvik into the Sahtu region. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Premier.

Further Return To Question 174-15(3): Devolution Of Government Programs To The Sahtu Region

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, that issue has come up before and our government is currently looking at the workload. We have to keep an eye on our fiscal situation as well, and our capacity as a government, and also the workload that will be generated doesn't warrant a separate office. That is being reviewed right now as we speak. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

Supplementary To Question 174-15(3): Devolution Of Government Programs To The Sahtu Region

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, given the answer from the Premier, I would like to ask would this government consider calling the Sahtu region and these programs... Sometimes we are lumped into the Inuvik region and sometimes we get confused. In some cases, it doesn't make much sense in terms of the programs that are being developed in the Sahtu region. I would like to ask this government if they would consider calling us our own stand-alone region. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Premier.

Further Return To Question 174-15(3): Devolution Of Government Programs To The Sahtu Region

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, certainly the policy of our government is to distribute our services and our programs as equitably as possible. That includes moving some things out to other communities. In the case of the Sahtu, there are some things that may make good sense to move to the Sahtu as a stand-alone region. There are also some other challenges that are very expensive when we try to go in that direction. For example, to try to build a stand-alone hospital in the Sahtu may not make good fiscal sense. Mr. Speaker, I want to say that we are reviewing this. We certainly support developing regional services, and the issues that Mr. Yakeleya is raising are ones that we are reviewing. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Final Supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

Supplementary To Question 174-15(3): Devolution Of Government Programs To The Sahtu Region

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I understand the cost of doing business in the Sahtu is

expensive because we are isolated and we don't have any roads up there going into the Sahtu. Everything is flown in and by summer it's by boat and in the winter we have access to the winter road, but only for a short period of time. Would the Premier consider committing to some good discussions with the Sahtu leadership in terms of moving our region to a stand-alone region that will be fast tracked to the Sahtu leadership in terms of dealing with programs and services with the Government of the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Just recognizing the clock, time has run out for oral questions, but I will allow the Premier to answer the question. Mr. Premier.

Further Return To Question 174-15(3): Devolution Of Government Programs To The Sahtu Region

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I would be pleased and honoured to meet with the Sahtu leadership to discuss this issue further with their MLA and look at how we might work together on it.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to opening address. Item 10, petitions. Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents. Mr. Villeneuve.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 44-15(3): Report To The Office Of The Public Guardian On Aboriginal Partners And Youth Society

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would just like to table a report to the Office of the Public Guardian on Aboriginal Partners and Youth Society. Thank you.

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

Tabled Document 45-15(3): Report On The Staff Retention Policy For The Year Ending March 31, 2004

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document entitled Report on the Staff Retention Policy, Year Ending March 31, 2004. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 13, tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. Mr. Allen.

ITEM 14: NOTICES OF MOTION

Motion 8-15(3): Pursuit Of Provincehood For The Northwest Territories

MR. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, May 31, 2004, I will move the following motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Sahtu, that the Premier immediately signal to the people of the Northwest Territories, to this assembly and to the Prime Minister his intent to pursue provincehood for the Northwest Territories; and further, that the Premier begin immediately to seek the support of provincial Premiers for the Northwest Territories to become a province; and furthermore, that the Premier report back to this assembly

on his progress during the fall session. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 14, notices of motion. Mr. Pokiak.

Motion 9-15(3): Appointment Of Equal Pay Commissioner

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, May 31, 2004, I will move the following motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Kam Lake, that Ms. Nitya Iyer be appointed as the Equal Pay Commissioner, in accordance with the Northwest Territories Public Service Act, by the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories as recommended by the Legislative Assembly; and further, that the Speaker be authorized to communicate the effective date of appointment to the Commissioner. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 14, notices of motion. Mr. Yakeleya.

Motion 10-15(3): Revocation Of Appointment To The Executive Council

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, May 31, 2004, I will move the following motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River South, that this assembly formally revoke the pleasure of the assembly from the appointment of the Honourable Henry Zoe as Member of the Executive Council; and further, that this assembly recommend that a new Member be chosen to be a Member of the Executive Council.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 5, Tlicho Community Government Act; and, Committee Report 4-15(3), Report on the Review of Bill 5, Tlicho Community Government 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 today? Before I ask that, I think we will call a break.

Sorry, I wasn't here for the conclusion of Committee of the Whole yesterday. I am sorry. I thought we were still dealing with something. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: I move that we report progress.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. The motion is in order. It's not debatable. All those in favour of the motion? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress.

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

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

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

MR. SPEAKER: Can I have a seconder for that? Mr. Ramsay. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Item 21, third reading of bills. Mr. Roland.

ITEM 21: THIRD READING OF BILLS

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Payroll Tax Act, 1993 and the Income Tax Act, be read for the third time. 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? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 6 has had third reading. Item 22, 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 Caucus at 12:00 noon today in the Caucus Room and a meeting of the Accountability and Oversight Committee at 9:00 a.m. Monday morning.

Orders of the day for Monday, May 31, 2004 at 1:30 p.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
 - Motion 8-15(3), Pursuit of Provincehood for the Northwest Territories
 - Motion 9-15(3), Appointment of Equal Pay Commissioner
 - Motion 10-15(3), Revocation of Appointment to the Executive Council
17. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Legal Profession Act
 - Bill 8, Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2004
 - Bill 9, Write-off of Assets and Debts Act, 2004-2005
 - Bill 10, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2004-2005
 - Bill 11, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2004-2005
 - Bill 12, An Act to Amend the Education Act
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
22. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Monday, May 31, 2004, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 11:31 a.m.

