



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

3rd Session

Day 21

15th Assembly

HANSARD

Friday, October 15, 2004

Pages 767 - 794

The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

Speaker

Hon. Paul Delorey
(Hay River North)

Mr. Roger Allen
(Inuvik Twin Lakes)

Hon. Brendan Bell
(Yellowknife South)
*Minister of Resources, Wildlife
and Economic Development*

Mr. Bill Braden
(Great Slave)

Hon. Charles Dent
(Frame Lake)
*Government House Leader
Minister of Education, Culture and
Employment
Minister of Justice
Minister responsible for the
Status of Women*

Mrs. Jane Groenewegen
(Hay River South)

Hon. Joe Handley
(Weledeh)
*Premier
Minister of the Executive
Minister of Aboriginal Affairs
Minister responsible for
Intergovernmental Affairs
Minister responsible for the
NWT Power Corporation*

Mr. Robert Hawkins
(Yellowknife Centre)

Hon. David Krutko
(Mackenzie-Delta)
*Minister responsible for the
NWT Housing Corporation
Minister responsible for the
Workers' Compensation Board*

Ms. Sandy Lee
(Range Lake)

Hon. Michael McLeod
(Deh Cho)
*Minister of Transportation
Minister of Municipal and Community
Affairs
Minister responsible for Youth*

Mr. Kevin Menicoche
(Nahendeh)

Hon. J. Michael Miltenberger
(Thebacha)
*Minister of Health and Social Services
Minister responsible for Persons with
Disabilities
Minister responsible for Seniors*

Mr. Calvin Pokiak
(Nunakput)

Mr. David Ramsay
(Kam Lake)

Hon. Floyd Roland
(Inuvik Boot Lake)
*Deputy Premier
Minister of Finance
Chairman of the Financial
Management Board
Minister of Public Works and
Services
Minister responsible for the
Public Utilities Board*

Mr. Robert Villeneuve
(Tu Nedhe)

Mr. Norman Yakeleya
(Sahtu)

Mr. Henry Zoe
(North Slave)

Officers

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Mr. Tim Mercer

Deputy Clerk
Mr. Doug Schauerte

Clerk of Committees
Mr. Dave Inch

Assistant Clerk
Mr. Darrin Ouellette

Law Clerks
Ms. Katherine R. Peterson, Q.C.
Ms. Karen Lajoie

Box 1320
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories
Tel: (867) 669-2200 Fax: (867) 920-4735 Toll-Free: 1-800-661-0784
<http://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca>

Published under the authority of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRAYER	767
MINISTERS' STATEMENTS	767
51-15(3) - MINISTER ABSENT FROM THE HOUSE	767
52-15(3) - GNWT RESPONSE TO THE NWT ACTION PLAN ON FAMILY VIOLENCE	767
MEMBERS' STATEMENTS	768
MR. RAMSAY ON CANADA SENIOR GAMES IN WHITEHORSE	768
MR. POKIAK ON TAKE BACK THE NIGHT AND FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION EVENTS IN TUKTOYAKTUK	768
MR. BRADEN ON INCOME SUPPORT FOR THE CHRONICALLY DISADVANTAGED	768
MR. YAKELEYA ON SAHTU ELDERS' CONFERENCE IN DELINE	769
MR. VILLENEUVE ON HOSTING A MEETING WITH MINISTERS IN DENINU KUE	769
HON. FLOYD ROLAND ON OFFICIAL OPENING OF AURORA CAMPUS IN INUVIK	770
MR. MENICOCHÉ ON RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IN NAHANNI BUTTE	770
MR. ZOE ON FAIR APPLICATION OF SENIORS' FUEL SUBSIDY	770
RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY	771, 783
ORAL QUESTIONS	771
WRITTEN QUESTIONS	781
TABLING OF DOCUMENTS	782
MOTIONS	782
15-15(3) - APPOINTMENT OF A DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RIGHTS	782
CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS	783
REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE	793
ORDERS OF THE DAY	793

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Friday, October 15, 2004****Members Present**

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

ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey): I would like to draw your attention to special guests in the gallery this morning: the senior team for the Canada Seniors' Games. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly.

---Applause

Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**Minister's Statement 51-15(3): Minister Absent From The House**

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise Members that the Honourable Michael Miltenberger will be absent from the House today to attend the federal/provincial/territorial Ministers of Health meeting in Vancouver. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Dent.

Minister's Statement 52-15(3): GNWT Response To The NWT Action Plan On Family Violence

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report on the action this government is taking as we move toward the elimination of family violence in the NWT.

The government of the 15th Assembly has a strong commitment to social issues. One of the goals of the GNWT's strategic plan is to have "healthy, educated people living in safe communities, who are able to contribute and take advantage of life's opportunities." In particular, Mr. Speaker, the strategic plan identifies the need to strengthen support for families in conflict and to support initiatives to build safer communities.

Today I am pleased to release the Government of the Northwest Territories Response to the NWT Action Plan on Family Violence, 2003-2008: A Framework for Action. This is the GNWT response to the NWT action plan on family violence, a report prepared by the NWT Coalition Against Family Violence. The framework identifies 72 actions involving collaboration and partnership by Government of the Northwest Territories departments and coalition agencies.

Mr. Speaker, the development of this framework has taken some time but the work we have done with the coalition is well worth the wait. Our framework for action is strengthened because it builds on the partnership of the coalition and the GNWT.

Our response outlines actions that can be achieved within existing resources to provide better service to victims of family violence across the NWT. Actions such as implementation of the Protection Against Family Violence Act, developing NWT best practices models and an integrated community response to family violence will go a long way toward increasing supports for victims and children who witness violence.

The GNWT has already begun taking actions included in the framework. One of the most significant activities is the intensive and ongoing work we are doing for the implementation of the protection against Family Violence Act. A coordinator has been hired by the Department of Justice to work with the Implementation Advisory Committee. Training activities continue with those who will have a direct role in the legislation, this includes justices of the peace, RCMP, shelter workers and court staff. As well, all communities in the NWT will have an opportunity to provide advice on the delivery process.

The Department of Justice continues to develop a public information campaign for the act. Materials will be in plain languages and will be aimed at those who are particularly vulnerable to family violence. As well, a monitoring and evaluation framework is being developed. All this activity represents over a \$400,000 investment in protection against family violence this fiscal year.

Mr. Speaker, along with implementing the legislation, interagency work has begun in the areas of policy and legislative review, standardizing family violence definitions, intergovernmental funding mechanisms, and training for professionals. Research has begun to examine the issue of gender equity in GNWT policies and programming. More work will begin shortly.

The departments of Justice, Health and Social Services, Education, Culture and Employment, the Executive and the NWT Housing Corporation have all made this work a priority over the next three years. As a first step, Ministers will be required to report on how their responsibilities under the action plan have been incorporated in the business plans for next spring.

I want to echo the Premier's comments on Wednesday and recognize the hard work of the coalition. Their continued support and dedication to improving the lives of all northern families makes it possible to advance this work. Their work is extremely important because of what it means to eliminate family violence in our communities, our regions and our territory. I look forward to working with the coalition and my Cabinet colleagues to implement the commitments the GNWT has made. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On Canada Senior Games In Whitehorse

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to recognize a group of greatly spirited northerners who attended the Canada Senior Games in Whitehorse in September as ambassadors of the Northwest Territories. Team NWT was made up of 28 seniors, those aged 55 and older, from Fort Smith, Hay River and Yellowknife. They competed in seven different categories including golf, bowling, darts, contract and duplicate bridge, Scrabble and curling. The team brought home gold, silver and bronze medals in five of those categories for a total count of 10 medals. Those medal winners include Harry Sudom and Roy Bursey from Fort Smith, Robert Sibbeston from Hay River; and, Fred Koe, Dave Wind, Anne Wind, Brad Whitehead, Darryl Green, Helena Haener and Fred Couch, all of Yellowknife.

I would like to especially mention the oldest player from the NWT to attend, Ms. Prakash Chugh of Yellowknife, who is 83 years old.

---Applause

Prakash competed in the bowling category. Mr. Speaker, the energy and commitment of these individuals in the NWT Seniors' Society as a whole is admirable. They have contributed to the growth and prosperity of the Northwest Territories over the years and continue to be valuable resources for us today. I understand that the NWT Seniors' Society is already starting to work on its team for 2006 in Portage La Prairie, Manitoba. Promoting an active lifestyle in all stages of life is important for one's health and well-being.

I commend the NWT Seniors' Society for the dedication and work it devotes to the seniors and elders in the North. I also commend them for the amount of fundraising they do on their own. I think it's important that the government recognize their efforts by continuing to provide funding for their activities. To their credit, Sport North and MACA provided \$10,000 for the seniors' team to attend the Whitehorse games.

---Applause

Thank you, Mr. McLeod. They also provided their uniforms, which were worth \$5,000.

Mr. Speaker, we are fortunate to have many of the members of the NWT Seniors' Society in the House today, many of whom were part of Team NWT. Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time on today's order paper, I will recognize those in the crowd. Thank you very much.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Pokiak.

Member's Statement On Take Back The Night And Family Violence Prevention Events In Tuktoyaktuk

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I am making a brief statement to mention two important events that took place in Tuktoyaktuk. They are the ladies Take Back the Night march and Family Violence Week.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to say that it was a pleasure to partake in these events. It was wonderful to see so many elders, youth, adults and government employees partake in the events that followed, such as food snacks, games and sing-a-longs. Mayor Jackie Jacobson, myself and government employees started off with opening speeches to remind everyone to love, respect and care for one another.

Many thanks should go to the coordinators of these events. Mr. Speaker, we must remember to always start each day by respecting and loving our elders, children, friends and neighbours. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Income Support For The Chronically Disadvantaged

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning. Mr. Speaker, the income support system in the North is one that's received recognition for its philosophy, for its approach, and for its effectiveness. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, we know that for an estimated 80 percent, or about three-quarters of the clients who come onto this system, it does work very well. It is intended to be a temporary hand-up to help people get on their feet, get re-established and into the community and working on their own.

However, Mr. Speaker, there are some people -- and I would suggest that it's about one-quarter of the clients -- who continue to have chronic difficulties and issues with the support system and, I think especially, Mr. Speaker, the way that controls and criteria and limitations are placed on it. For some people, especially those with lifestyle and disabilities issues, they just don't have the skills, Mr. Speaker, to cope with some of these conditions.

Let me give you a few examples. Landlords in Yellowknife, I am told, are very reluctant to accept Income Support clients as tenants, Mr. Speaker. The reason is at least partially because of the systematic way that their payments are administered by the system. Sometimes mistakes are made and landlords do not get paid and they end up carrying the bill.

This is not a healthy situation in an economy and community where housing is at a premium. Mr. Speaker, income tax refunds are continually clawed back. Most Canadians look forward to this kind of thing if they are in that position, even Income Support clients can get income tax refunds, but we claw them back.

Mr. Speaker, even families who have been gifted with things like airline tickets to go to a funeral, in one case, got the value of that ticket clawed back. Mr. Speaker, there are double standards. We in this government, as MLAs, are on this same plan. We get about \$60 a day for

food allowances when we are travelling, but an Income Support client, a single mom with one child, gets \$230 a month. They get the equivalent of what we get in four days for food allowances.

Mr. Speaker, these are chronic issues that continue to be unacceptable and I want to bring them to the attention of the House. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Item 3, Members' Statements. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Member's Statement On Sahtu Elders' Conference In Deline

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will stay on the theme of elders. Mr. Speaker, from August 9 to 11, 2004, the first Sahtu Elders' Conference was held in Deline. The purpose of the conference was to bring elders together to discuss important issues regarding the communities of the Sahtu region and to talk about forming a Sahtu elders' council. That would include elders in a decision-making process on an ongoing basis.

Mr. Speaker, traditionally, aboriginal elders played a key role in our communities. Their wisdom, experience and stories are crucial to the success of our people. During the conference, more than 30 elders from the five Sahtu communities developed a slogan, "Our Life, Our Land." Mr. Speaker, what affects our life, affects our land; what affects our land, affects our life.

Mr. Speaker, it is critical to ensure elders have a role not only concerning seniors' issues, but issues concerning the Sahtu as a whole. Traditions are changing and the threat of losing the traditions, upbringing and the gap between elders and youth because of the wage economy has become a reality and a concern of the Sahtu people.

Mr. Speaker, other concerns revolve around the impact of development and change throughout the region, specifically in the areas of health and social services, the social programs, the education system and the high rate of aboriginal children dropping out of school. In addition, the elders are concerned with the pension clawback and government's policies and laws. They feel that these laws are preventing them from participating equitably in our communities.

Mr. Speaker, recommendations developed by the elders are to create a Sahtu elders' council, hold another Sahtu elders' conference in the winter of 2005 and invite federal and territorial governments, oil and gas industry representatives and Sahtu leaders for the next elders' gathering, and also to work with the Sahtu youth.

Mr. Speaker, the Sahtu conference, in terms of participation, recommended full intentions to be part of the decision-making process and was a huge success and a positive benefit to the Sahtu people. I would encourage other regions to do similar things for their own elders.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Deline First Nation for their hard work in hosting the event and the many sponsors who contributed to this wonderful event. I would like to thank the people of the Sahtu region for making it happen. Mahsi.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Hosting A Meeting With Ministers In Deninu Kue

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this summer, July 13, 2004, I was privileged to hold a meeting in Deninu Kue with the Deninu Kue First Nations, the Metis Nation, the public and six Members of our Cabinet. I wanted to thank Premier Joe Handley, Ministers Bell, Miltenberger, McLeod, Dent and Krutko, for taking the time to visit and discuss many of the issues with the community leadership and the public.

Community leadership was very appreciative of this and looks forward to following up on some of the concerns brought forward. The public is also looking forward to having Minister Miltenberger and Minister Krutko revisit and consult with the community on many important health and housing issues, and also a visit sometime by Deputy Premier Roland to address some property taxation issues and other financial concerns.

Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to point out the significance of this meeting and the fact that the Deninu Kue First Nations and the Metis Nation have actually sat and met is a very big step in improving overall community governance and cooperation in the delivery of community affairs and programs.

I want to commend Chief Sayine and the newly-elected Metis president, Lloyd Cardinal, with their open-minded and respectful consideration of their respective community councils, concerns and direction while working towards a more cohesive working relationship within the communities.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that is also the beginning of a new and improved working relationship between the leaders of Tu Nedhe and the Government of the Northwest Territories, one which encompasses more community input and consideration on government programs, services and initiatives, more effective co-management and fiscal responsibility, and especially more respect and acknowledgement of the hardships people in smaller communities are burdened with on a daily basis.

With that, I am glad to say that I feel optimistic that this government will continue to support and encourage more open communication between government officials and the people in the remote communities. I offer my support to this government to continue to work towards achieving the higher level of remote community pride and confidence in the Government of the Northwest Territories. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

Member's Statement On Official Opening Of Aurora Campus In Inuvik

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I had an opportunity to travel back home on October 8th for the official opening of the Aurora Campus facility in Inuvik. I was joined by Commissioner Hansen; Ministers Dent and Krutko; the president of the Gwich'in Tribal Council, Mr. Fred Carmichael; and a representative of the Inuvialuit, Mr. Eddie Dillon.

Mr. Speaker, in these types of events and facilities that are opened up, we must recognize the hard work and contribution of a lot of individuals. There are far too many to mention at this time, but for sure one of the key players in making sure this went along, and kept reminding members from the Beaufort-Delta that it was an important facility that needed to continue to stay on track, was Ms. Miki O'Kane and the staff of the campus, as well, for making the shift a good one.

Mr. Speaker, it's an important facility and is recognized as such just by seeing how many people came to the turnout. It was a full house. Elders, students, businesspeople and government workers were there to see that this was an important event and open to continue with the education of adult learning. We were reminded that it doesn't matter how old you are, you can still go back and gain more experience and education and go forward with that.

I just wanted to recognize that from the community end, it was a good event, a good time and it was good to see the atmosphere that was created by opening this facility. We were also put on notice, Mr. Speaker, by Mr. Carmichael that the student residence is the next issue that the community intends to bring to the table and push as they see it as an important part of this facility.

Congratulations to the campus and their new environment, the new building, and thanks to all those who turned out and made it a success. Again, thanks to our government for meeting with the community and addressing the needs of that community and region. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Recreational Opportunities In Nahanni Butte

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak today on the issue of recreation and recreational facilities, specifically in the community of Nahanni Butte. It is a well-known fact that a good, comprehensive education requires not only academic or vocational instruction, but recreational opportunities as well. More than that, the provision of recreational opportunities is a necessary part of helping people make healthy lifestyle choices. I am pleased to see that the government recognizes this fact. In the 2004 strategic plan, which the Minister of Education earlier referred to in his statement, the government promises to support recreation and sports initiatives that provide opportunities for physical activity and personal development. Further, the government supports initiatives that encourage individuals, especially youth, to make

positive lifestyle choices. My concern, Mr. Speaker, is that these recreational opportunities and choices that are necessary for well-rounded education and a balanced lifestyle are not being provided equally to all residents of the Northwest Territories. In the community of Nahanni Butte, in my riding, there is no school gymnasium. More than that, it appears the government has no plans to provide the community with a gymnasium for at least another 13 years; in the year 2017, Mr. Speaker. Nahanni Butte may be the only community in the whole of the Northwest Territories that does not have a school gymnasium. This is an unacceptable state of affairs.

Elsewhere in the North, existing schools and recreational facilities are being expanded and upgraded. Recreational opportunities and facilities are being improved for certain residents, while the residents of Nahanni Butte are completely denied the same opportunity to participate in life. They don't have a choice, and they are not being offered one, Mr. Speaker. I believe it is a simple matter of fairness and equality in a democratic society that all residents receive the same basic level of service before we consider increasing or improving services that others already receive. The youth of Nahanni Butte need a gymnasium. If this government is serious about supporting recreation initiatives for everyone and about helping everyone make healthy choices, then now is the time to do it. Give the youth of Nahanni Butte what everyone else has and don't wait 13 years to do it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Zoe.

Member's Statement On Fair Application Of Seniors' Fuel Subsidy

MR. ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in our vision for the 15th Legislative Assembly, we talk about people making productive lifestyle choices for themselves and their families and elders being supported by their community. The Government of the Northwest Territories has also included these goals in the strategic plan. Productive lifestyle choices and employment opportunities are nice words, Mr. Speaker, but these things are not going to happen if the system continues to discourage people from working.

Mr. Speaker, I want to give you a little example here. I am aware of an elderly couple in Wha Ti who have been denied their seniors' fuel subsidy because they have been assessed on overall household income. Mr. Speaker, this elderly couple has their daughter and granddaughter living with them, who is currently working at a local store for a minimum wage. Their daughter wants to work and is using her income to buy groceries and other household items for herself, her parents and her child. Yet we are penalizing the elders who are not receiving their fuel subsidy and also the young daughter who wants to work, by discouraging her from working in order for her parents to receive the seniors' fuel subsidy. Mr. Speaker, what incentive is there for her to keep working and helping her parents out?

Mr. Speaker, this is just one of the many flaws in the income support system that needs to be addressed, and it should be addressed soon. We can't keep asking people

to make productive choices on one hand and punish them with the other. This is exactly what the government, with their Income Support, is doing to them. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Zoe. Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to recognize some competitors from Team NWT that we have here in the audience with us today. I will go through the list: Sandra Taylor, welcome; Howard and Josie Gould, David and Anne Wind, Mr. Fred Koe, Mike and Helena Haener, Albert and Gladys Eggenberger, Brad Whitehead, Prakash Chugh, Helena To, and Liz Bailey-Hopf. Also, I would like to mention Barb Hood, the team manager. Welcome, Barb. Also, present today with us is Ms. Beatrice Campbell. She is the president of the NWT Seniors' Society from Fort Smith. Welcome, Beatrice. Also, Mr. Speaker, I would like to just make a mention of Mr. Fred Couch who is one of my constituents and also won the first gold medal for Team NWT. He could not be with us today because he is recuperating from surgery at Stanton Territorial Hospital. Thank you, everybody.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, it is a real pleasure to repeat what my colleague has said on behalf of some of my constituents: Mike and Helena Haener and Josie and Howie Gould. Congratulations. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize the president of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, Mr. Fred Koe, and also Bea Campbell, the president of the Seniors' Society. Welcome to the House, and all the elders up there. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be brief. I, too, wish to acknowledge the great efforts that the NWT seniors' team put forward by recognizing them, as well. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to also recognize the elders. Way to go.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. I would also like to welcome all the seniors here. When I took the job of Speaker, I was registered to compete as part of that team. I would like the seniors up there to know that I would be very proud to sit up there as part of the seniors' team. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly.

---Applause

Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 223-15(3): Legal Aid Office Lease In Yellowknife

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I have a few questions for the Minister of Justice, Mr. Charles Dent. I would just like to know how it is the new family Legal Aid office ended up leasing space in what amounts to a retail mall in Yellowknife. Perhaps between him and Minister Floyd Roland, Minister of Public Works, they could explain how that transaction transpired. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Minister of Justice, the Honourable Mr. Dent. Mr. Premier.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, the question should be referred to Mr. Roland, the Minister of Public Works and Services. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Minister of Public Works and Services, Mr. Roland.

Return To Question 223-15(3): Legal Aid Office Lease In Yellowknife

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am aware of the concern that is being raised. For that office space, a request for proposals went out in late summer. It was issued, and a number of parties put in proposals. What had happened was the space that was required in the RFP was not met, and based on the number of calls that were made trying to secure the location, it was decided at that point that one of the proponents did have a suitable space, but didn't make the cut-off time for the RFP. It was contacted and discussions were entered into and an agreement was made. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

Supplementary To Question 223-15(3): Legal Aid Office Lease In Yellowknife

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks, Mr. Minister, for the response. I find it hard to believe that this government would put a Legal Aid office in a retail mall and pay top dollar for the rental space when there are other options out there, Mr. Speaker. The retailers in that mall are not happy that a Legal Aid office is going into prime retail space, and I know and I've heard that leasehold improvements won't start on that space until November 1st. Mr. Speaker, is it too late to look at a different location for this office? It just doesn't fit in a retail setting. I mean, the clientele who will be attending it...It just shouldn't happen that way, Mr. Speaker, and I'd like

the Minister to let us know if it's not too late to have another look at another location. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 223-15(3): Legal Aid Office Lease In Yellowknife

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess number one is from the Public Works and Services end when we were reviewing the request for space, preferred locations, we don't put a lot of weight on who the clientele might be going into that space. What we did look at was the request for the space, storefront or easy access by disabled persons. So in reviewing the proposal that came out, it was determined that that space wasn't adequate. There were discussions held with those who did put in proposals and found out there was still not adequate space that could be suitable for this location. The one party that did have adequate space that was in the area of downtown and accessible by disabled persons, discussions were held with them and an agreement was made and a contract was entered into. So at this point the contract has been signed for an initial five-year lease, with options to extend. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

Supplementary To Question 223-15(3): Legal Aid Office Lease In Yellowknife

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a five-year lease, but it amounts to a 15-year lease, Mr. Speaker, because they have a five-year lease and two options for five additional years each, for a total of 15 years in a retail setting. I'm just wondering, Mr. Speaker, what the premium is that this government is going to pay. I know dollars are at a premium. What is that premium that we're going to pay to put an office in a retail mall? There has to be a premium that we're paying. It's top dollar, it's prime retail space, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to know what that is and is that going to cut into the services that are going to be offered through this office? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 223-15(3): Legal Aid Office Lease In Yellowknife

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have the information on the actual dollar figures at this point. I can share with the Member or committee members if there is a concern about that, but what we've done is work with the Department of Justice who required this space, who knew there was a budget to operate within, and based on those parameters with the results that came back with the RFP, had discussions with the proponent, being the Department of Justice, and there was agreement that this was the best avenue to work in. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Final supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

Supplementary To Question 223-15(3): Legal Aid Office Lease In Yellowknife

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For a government that purports to support small business, this is a major step backwards, Mr. Speaker. I'm wondering if the government has taken any consideration into the fact that it's harming, by putting a Legal Aid office into a retail mall, the small businesses that are located in that mall. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 223-15(3): Legal Aid Office Lease In Yellowknife

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess I would have difficulty in recognizing how we are harming the operations of a company that did put in a response to an RFP. This company had put in their response. All three were actually deemed not to make the cut, but when we looked at what was on the table and the request for the space, and this was seen as adequate space in a downtown location where people can easily access the service that's been asked for, it was felt that this was the avenue to go. Again with discussions with the Department of Justice, we felt that this was the avenue we go with. It may not be the best and the 15-year term the Member refers to, again, it's a five-year lease with an option to extend. If we find that it's just not fitting or the Department of Justice finds that it is not working there, at that point we can review the options that are available to us. We all know that here in the city of Yellowknife space is very, very tight and everything is going at a premium. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Question 224-15(3): GNWT Position On Deh Cho Legal Action

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is to the Premier of the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, Nellie Cournoyea, the chair and CEO of IRC; Fred Carmichael, president of the Gwich'in Tribal Council; Grand Chief Frank Andrew of the Sahtu Dene Council; and the interim president Raymond Taniton, chair of the Sahtu Secretariat, put forward their views on the circumstances surrounding the recent court decision by the Deh Cho. In response, the leaders of the three settlement claims expressed their opinions that the legal actions taken by the Deh Cho represent a threat to the Mackenzie gas project and deliberately undermine the rights of the claimant group and future economic well-being of the three regions. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Premier what is the position of the Government of the Northwest Territories on the Deh Cho First Nation's legal action? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The item you referred to, Mr. Yakeleya, is presently before the courts and should not be discussed in this House. So I'm going to rule that question out of order.

---Ruled Out of Order

Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Question 225-15(3): Concerns With Income Support

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, thank you. I would like to follow up on some issues raised regarding Income Support. Sir, this is with the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent. These are chronic issues and it has had an effect on, certainly not all, but a substantive number of clients on an ongoing basis. We have so many rules in place regarding clawbacks and income levels, timelines and deadlines, and repetitive and sometimes very invasive reporting requirements, and it amounts really to controlling, not helping these people. What are we doing, or are we doing anything, Mr. Speaker, to change the way we do business in our approach to supporting these clients? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Could you clarify to which Minister you are referring your question? Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The question is directed to Mr. Dent, the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

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

Return To Question 225-15(3): Concerns With Income Support

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the department responds to comments, suggestions and criticisms that may come from non-government agencies or from standing committees of this House or Members of this House by checking to see whether or not the policies need to be revised or reviewed. So there is a constant process of examination to see whether or not the process that we undertake in the income support field is proper and adequate. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary To Question 225-15(3): Concerns With Income Support

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This gets us part way into the area that I would like to explore. The Minister is quite correct. You know it is in our policies and the limitations that we design and then we set in those programs. The people who actually deliver these, I have the highest praise for. They handle a difficult job and most of the time, Mr. Speaker, they do it very well. We have ways of monitoring those kinds of things that I have illustrated and that my colleague Mr. Zoe talked about, that have been there for years, Mr. Speaker. What are we doing to really address these issues? As I have asked previously, will you change the way we do business to look after these clients who have different sets of circumstances than the majority? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 225-15(3): Concerns With Income Support

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As well as the ongoing regular consideration of our programs and policies and the response to comments or criticisms, there have been, over the past five, six or seven years, a number of reviews of the program that have resulted in changes; for instance, the way in which we deal with those who have handicaps. They are now treated significantly differently than they were a number of years ago. The program has changed to respond to different needs and different circumstances. As I said, sometimes there have been formal reviews, more often the reviews have been as a result of internal examinations. Some of the issues, though, there haven't been any changes to because the policy hasn't been seen as required to be changed. For instance, if we have a policy that says that somebody's household only qualifies for assistance if they have lower than this income, that policy doesn't tend to change as quickly as the way in which the program is delivered. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary To Question 225-15(3): Concerns With Income Support

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, I take up the example that my colleague Mr. Zoe raised, I guess as an illustration of our approach. Of course, it does make sense to have limitations on the amount of support that taxpayers' money goes into in a given household. We have to have some way of measuring and keeping some measure of sound management on this kind of thing. Does it really amount to helping people, or have we simply designed, got our system designed, so that it works very well for us, as legislators and budgeters and policy people, or have we really designed something that looks at this through the eyes and the lives of -- we call them clients -- but they are residents, they are people, they are constituents? When are we going to adjust our systems so that we can accommodate that point of view? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 225-15(3): Concerns With Income Support

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think it does right now. I think our system does accommodate differences, but there has to be a policy base for all that we do.

Ten years ago the policy was...For instance, the Seniors' Fuel Subsidy was a universal program. Everybody in the Northwest Territories who was a senior got the program, no matter what their income was or whether they needed it. This Legislative Assembly made a policy change to say that government funds would only be provided to assist seniors for fuel when there was fiscal need, and set the standards then for that fiscal need. There are three different standards, depending on the community in which a senior lives. That was a policy decision. It was set in this Legislative Assembly and agreed to by the Assembly, and the budget is passed for that program based on what is presented in this Assembly. So we as legislators have made those changes to policy in the past and can again

make those changes in policy where they are seen as necessary. Those are the sorts of ways in which a policy can be changed, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Final supplementary, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary To Question 225-15(3): Concerns With Income Support

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the answers from the Minister. He did, I think in response to an earlier question, say that there is a process of monitoring and checking and vetting and confirming that what we are doing is indeed the right thing. Can the Minister advise of perhaps the most recent report that there may have been on that, or when the next monitoring or reporting cycle will come up? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 225-15(3): Concerns With Income Support

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there were program reviews in 1995, 1996, another one in 1996, three in 1998, a further one in 2001. Those were the formal ones. We have the ongoing ones. I have had some ongoing discussions with the Standing Committee on Social Programs, as to the operation of our current Income Support program, and will continue to have that dialogue with them to find out their opinion on our programs and policies.

I am also committed to bringing forward to the standing committee a policy framework for income security and how this government delivers that to the standing committee this fall. So sometime before Christmas I will present to the standing committee a policy underpinning, if you will, for all of our income security programs, just to make sure that we are offering our programs in a consistent and fair manner.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

Question 226-15(3): Addressing Income Support Inconsistencies

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to follow up on some of the issues that honourable Member Bill Braden has been raising with the Income Support program. I believe the Minister was talking about the program itself. I think that the program, the low income and the Income Support program today has to start focusing on what people need instead of what the government currently has to offer.

Just to follow up on the point I was making in yesterday's session, Mr. Speaker, about the option where the households all get to lose their eligibility for income support, when one member of the household or the head of the household reaches the ineligibility threshold, this policy basically works against anybody who wants to get out of income support. If a member of the household suddenly goes out and makes a productive choice, carries through with some education, goes out and gets a job and goes beyond the income threshold, that would make them ineligible for income support. Now everybody that is on

income support or receives income support in that household is suddenly ineligible, because of this policy that says that the government is saying that families have to start relying on family members for support. I don't think that that policy stands too well with anybody who wants to go out and get a job and then come home and all of a sudden they are the breadwinner of the family.

I just want to ask the Minister if he would commit to reviewing and clearing up the many inconsistencies between the current Income Support program, and target more support to meet the individual needs in the communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 226-15(3): Addressing Income Support Inconsistencies

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this House helps me set the policies for Income Support, and I would have to work with Members in this House to review the policy if that is the will. I am quite prepared to embark on that initiative. I have, in fact, started some of that work with the standing committee; it started some time ago. The Standing Committee on Social Programs and I have met several times to talk about the policies, the underpinnings for the program and how it is delivered.

I think one of the things we have to first of all decide is, is this program an entitlement? Right now, our government's philosophy is that you are not entitled to income support. It is a program of last resort, only provided to make sure people are not going to freeze to death or starve to death. It is not an entitlement program where people are guaranteed a minimum income. That is the basic philosophy that underpins the program right now. If that is the type of program, then all of the income that is available to an individual is assessed before this government then tops up what else is available, or tops up what is available to them to bring them up to the absolute minimum. That is all the program has been designed to do right now. If Members want to talk about the philosophy of the program and whether it should be a guaranteed minimum income, or the kind of program we have now, I'm quite prepared to embark on that discussion. We have to remember, of course, that every time we change the philosophy of the program, we're also going to change the cost of the program, and perhaps significantly. So that all has to be worked into our discussions, as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Mr. Villeneuve.

Supplementary To Question 226-15(3): Addressing Income Support Inconsistencies

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Minister for his response. Talking about costs of the program; Income Support beneficiaries and Income Support dollars have been going out to the recipients and beneficiaries and clients in the Tu Nedhe region. Actually, from 1999 to 2003 it has gone up by \$50,000, Mr. Speaker. I don't think the program is designed to spend more money for income support, as the Minister has stated. Since 1999, there has been a lot of economic

development in the Tu Nedhe region and in the surrounding regions in the NWT, and it seems like there's more Income Support money going out to the communities now than there was in 1999 since all this activity began. I want to ask the Minister if the policy is really to top up everybody's income, then there must be more people unemployed. In the current economic situation that we're in, I don't see how that could happen. I just wanted to ask the Minister if he will put something on the record that says we should revisit the whole Income Support program and maybe split it up into separate programs for disabled people with permanent disabilities, for instance, and...

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. There was a question there; I'll put it to the Minister. Thank you. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 226-15(3): Addressing Income Support Inconsistencies

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member talked about the increase in payments in income support in the region. One of the things that have driven up the payments is that benefit levels have substantially increased since 1999. The amount that is paid for food, the amount that is paid for accommodation, all of those payments have gone up substantially since 1999. We have a very rich program in comparison to the rest of Canada. Is it rich to people who have to try and get by on it? No. It is a program of last resort. But, yes, the costs have gone up in some regions because the benefits have increased substantially.

The issue of whether or not we would separate it into a number of different programs; in fact, one of the issues that I will be talking to the Standing Committee on Social Programs about is reducing the numbers of programs that we have, because as a policy the government should have a consistent approach to how benefits are provided to people in the Northwest Territories. Therefore, in fact, the policy framework that I mentioned to Mr. Braden that I will be presenting to the standing committee will propose that there be fewer categories, not more. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Mr. Villeneuve.

Supplementary To Question 226-15(3): Addressing Income Support Inconsistencies

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad to hear that the Minister is looking forward to making some changes in the program. I just wanted to ask the Minister about some of the client information that trickles down to the grassroots level from the policies that are in the Income Support program. A lot of the income support officers in the communities don't have the information available to them to present to clients to make a lot of productive choices. They don't have information on human resource capacity building programs with the federal government; therefore, they can't pass them on to the clients to make some productive choices, and they don't have information on the jobs available in the mines, training programs and such. So a lot of these officers basically are being blamed by their clients for the lack of information they receive and the lack of support and reassessment in the whole program that they're delivering.

I just want to ask the Minister if he would be willing to provide some direction to the Income Support program management that information for human resource capacity building, job creation, education and all that, that he makes sure that all this information does get down to the grassroots where the people really need it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 226-15(3): Addressing Income Support Inconsistencies

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our income support workers undergo regular training, they have a number of occasions a year in which they are provided with information to make sure that they can pass this on to their clients. If the Member has a concern about a particular community, I hope that he will come and talk to me about it and we will address that as quickly as we can. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Your final supplementary, Mr. Villeneuve.

Supplementary To Question 226-15(3): Addressing Income Support Inconsistencies

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would be glad to meet with the Minister sometime to talk about some new policy initiatives that I would have in mind on how we could better support individuals' needs, as opposed to just offering people what the government has to offer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. I didn't hear a question in there. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Question 227-15(3): Social Housing Policies For Persons With Disabilities

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise because I have some serious concerns with our social housing policy in my constituency. Mr. Speaker, I have been invited to go downtown to visit some of my constituents who are disabled, and they showed me personally the access they have into their homes, and showed me the difficulties they have with living in these horrific circumstances. I think the policy, as it's designed right now, if there is a policy -- which I will be asking the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation -- is very degrading, because I don't think folks are living in good circumstances. So I will be asking a question of the Minister in reference to a person in a wheelchair who has difficulty getting onto a toilet; I have people with MS who can't even get their scooters into their apartments so they can get charged, because they can't walk, they can't open the doors to the laundry. I guess with all of those points said, to the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Speaker, my question is do we have a policy with regard to accessible living for people with disabilities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Krutko.

Return To Question 227-15(3): Social Housing Policies For Persons With Disabilities

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as a corporation, we do have units that are designated for people with disabilities. The people who do come forward through the corporation to access our units are given priority, and there are units that are designated for people with disabilities. I'm not too sure if the Member is talking about clients in the Housing Corporation units through North Slave housing or other housing co-operatives that are here in Yellowknife, or if you're talking in general. Maybe the Member could clarify his question.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Supplementary To Question 227-15(3): Social Housing Policies For Persons With Disabilities

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure if it really matters, because the fact is accessible living should be accessible living, so it should be considered a standard regardless of which envelope they fall under. Mr. Speaker, I will make a true commitment that the landlord did make an effort: they widened doors and they put in bigger showers. But, Mr. Speaker, when I have a person in a wheelchair who can't even reach his towel, he has to throw it on the floor or half in the shower. My question really is what policy do we have under the responsibility of the Housing Corporation, under their arm, their ability, under their policy wing, for accessible living for people who are disabled? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Krutko.

Further Return To Question 227-15(3): Social Housing Policies For Persons With Disabilities

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we do have programs to assist the private sector, seniors and people with disabilities, with regard to different maintenance programs. If that means assisting them by way of having the equipment there that will make life easier for people with disabilities by way of bathroom attachments to the walls so they're able to have access to get in and out of the washrooms, I think those types of things we do have different programs through the corporation, through the home repair program, through the maintenance program for seniors and people with disabilities. So with regard to the Member's question, we are working with the people in the private sector who are able to access the different programs that we deliver. I think it's incumbent upon ourselves here, as Members of the Legislature, to improve the lives of people with disabilities. We do have arrangements, but again they are programs that people have to apply for through the corporation to be able to facilitate and also make these adjustments. So we do have programs through our different maintenance programs to assist in that area.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Supplementary To Question 227-15(3): Social Housing Policies For Persons With Disabilities

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate what the Minister is saying, but, Mr. Speaker, my constituents have bare cupboards. Their cupboards are bare. I will say clearly why: because they can't reach them, Mr. Speaker. I went into one unit; the dishes were dirty because they can't wash them. Every time they reach over the counter, their arms are halfway in the buckets of water in the sink. Mr. Speaker, if you were one of these constituents of mine, and you are trying to get food out of the oven, and you are in a wheelchair or on a scooter or stroller because you have MS, you can only reach with one hand. How do you wheel yourself back to the counter with those things out of the oven? It is impossible. So, Mr. Speaker, we have to be looking at some type of audit on these units. I would certainly like to hear today, because these folks are not living with pride, Mr. Speaker. These folks are living in almost horrific conditions. So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to hear from the Minister today that he would commit to do an audit on these units and deliver a clear policy in the Housing Corporation that demonstrates accessible living as meant to be done in a safe and healthy fashion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Krutko.

Further Return To Question 227-15(3): Social Housing Policies For Persons With Disabilities

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would direct the department to look into that and see how many units we do presently have that have accessibility for people with disabilities. I know we do have them in most of our communities, so I won't have a problem getting that information to the Member.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Final supplementary, Mr. Hawkins. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

Question 228-15(3): Gymnasium For Nahanni Butte

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. I was going to follow up with some questions to the Minister of MACA with regard to my Member's statement. MACA officials and the Minister met with the community of Nahanni Butte. The community had indicated that this particular item is a high priority for them. It is my thinking that a community's priority is our priority. Can the Minister confirm that the government still has no plans to provide the residents of Nahanni Butte with a gymnasium until the year 2017?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. McLeod.

Return To Question 228-15(3): Gymnasium For Nahanni Butte

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member is correct. We have looked at the situation with the community of Nahanni Butte. Unfortunately, capital projects of that nature have to compete with other infrastructure needs in the communities. At this point, there is no intention of trying to move that facility up. We are working with the community. We have provided some funding for a youth

facility through our Community Initiatives Program. But, at this point, we haven't been able to commit to requesting that facility be moved up. It has to compete with other infrastructure and makes it very difficult. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

Supplementary To Question 228-15(3): Gymnasium For Nahanni Butte

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister promise to the youth in Nahanni Butte that they will be provided with the same recreational opportunities that all other youth of the Northwest Territories enjoy before all the students currently attending school in the Nahanni Butte have graduated? Mr. Speaker, we have a whole generation that will graduate before even getting a gymnasium. They can't even play volleyball and indoor soccer. I would like the Minister to look at getting us a gymnasium. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. McLeod.

Further Return To Question 228-15(3): Gymnasium For Nahanni Butte

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, during our tour this summer with the communities in Nahendeh, we had discussed this issue. We had committed that we would work with them to see what is available. The issue of a gymnasium and a standard across the board, I am not sure how many other communities don't have gymnasiums. In some communities, it is attached to the school. In this case, there is no intention for a facility to be attached to the school. There are only 25 students in the school. We would like to sit down and talk to the community about a multi-purpose hall as soon as we get a chance and look at what we can do. But, at this time, we have no plans to put in a school gymnasium. It is in the capital needs. However, as the Member has indicated, it is quite a ways down the road. It would be very difficult to move forward. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

Supplementary To Question 228-15(3): Gymnasium For Nahanni Butte

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, I find it quite outrageous that the Minister would reference how many students are in that school when communities of even smaller sizes do have school gymnasiums. I would like to ask the Minister if he is willing to undertake a feasibility or engineering study to at least cost out this project. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. McLeod.

Further Return To Question 228-15(3): Gymnasium For Nahanni Butte

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we would certainly commit to looking at the options and meet with the community to talk about what we can do there, if it is feasible or viable to look at a multi-purpose hall or continue working with the youth centre or to even discuss what it would entail to put in a school

gym. We certainly could commit to doing that. We will have our regional staff discuss this with the community. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Final supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

Supplementary To Question 228-15(3): Gymnasium For Nahanni Butte

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I do believe that I stand firm that it certainly is one of the communities or probably the only community that still doesn't have this facility. I would like to ask the Minister, will he provide the same recreational opportunities to the students of Nahanni Butte that others have in the Northwest Territories, and will the Minister commit to undertake a feasibility or engineering study to cost out this project in this fiscal year?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. McLeod.

Further Return To Question 228-15(3): Gymnasium For Nahanni Butte

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I certainly want to indicate to the Member that the department recognizes a need for recreation infrastructure, and we encourage recreation programs. We invest a lot of money into recreation programs across the North. Not every community has a gymnasium. The process for recreation facilities has to go through the capital planning process. It has to compete with water, sewer, solid waste, and all these other infrastructure needs across the Territories. The demand is high. We have had to cut and look at ways we spend money and reallocate. So it is very difficult for me to say yes, we can commit to putting a school gymnasium in the community of Nahanni Butte. We would like to have a good discussion. We would like to look at all the options that are available. We may not be able to do a gym, but we may be able to identify something else that the community would like to do. I have indicated that I would commit to looking at the options that are available to us, including the scoping out of what it would cost for a gymnasium and present that to the community. I think I have already made that commitment. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

Question 229-15(3): Addressing Tourism In The NWT

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I listened quite intently to the sessional statement the Premier gave a couple of days ago. There was something that wasn't in that. I just wanted to question the Premier today about a glaring omission from that sessional statement, and that was the fact that it didn't mention tourism.

My question isn't related to the sessional statement itself, but I have a question for the Premier. I believe that is an affront to the tourism industry in the Northwest Territories. For a government that purports to support tourism, leaving that out was definitely a mistake. I wanted to know what value Mr. Handley's government puts on tourism. Where

does it fit in the grand scheme of things with this government? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

Return To Question 229-15(3): Addressing Tourism In The NWT

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to assure the House and the public that even though we may not have mentioned some areas in the sessional statement, that does not mean it is no longer a priority. As I have said many times, most of our economy right now is based on non-renewable resource development. We have to use this opportunity to develop our renewable industries, and that includes tourism.

Mr. Speaker, I have been personally a strong advocate of the tourism industry, I remain that way and I can assure you that from our government's perspective tourism is very much a part of our economy. I wish to assure the Member and the public that that remains a high priority. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

Supplementary To Question 229-15(3): Addressing Tourism In The NWT

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Here's where I can't get into what transpires in business plans and committee meetings and things of that nature, but I just want to ask, perhaps transferring from the Premier to the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, what his department is going to do in the coming year to address the marketing needs and the promotion of this territory to the rest of the world. What are we going to do here in the next little while? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, that question is getting very near to our business plan but, Mr. Speaker, I'll refer the question to the Minister responsible for tourism. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley, the honourable Minister of RWED, Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 229-15(3): Addressing Tourism In The NWT

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Premier said, tourism is very important to the government and coming from our strategic plan, our 10-year plan, linked to that are a number of initiatives. We've had a good discussion around this area, both with committee and also with Caucus, and developed a number of theme areas. One of them is the diversification of the economy, and we see tourism as something that has great potential for all regions of the Northwest Territories and we can provide business opportunities for northerners from coast to coast to coast and I think that there are a number of key priorities going forward. We are currently undertaking several initiatives. One of them is some revision to our Travel and Tourism Act, and this is to streamline that act and clear up some duplication.

We're also doing a product inventory with our partners at Aboriginal Business Canada and at DIAND to make sure that we have the product available and on the ground when we get people here. It doesn't make sense, I think we've realized, to drive people and to focus solely on marketing and destination marketing if, in fact, you don't have a tourism product available for people when they get here. So it's important to have both those areas covered when you are talking about tourism. The last thing that we are doing currently is working with the NWT Arctic Tourism Association to look into issues concerning the mandate of our department and that organization to make sure that there isn't duplication and to make sure that we're properly coordinated to focus on tourism most effectively with the money that we do have. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

Supplementary To Question 229-15(3): Addressing Tourism In The NWT

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Mr. Premier and Mr. Bell, for your responses. The next question I have is when will the government actually put its money where its mouth is and actually take a look at the funding it supplies to the tourism industry and increase that funding? It hasn't happened for a number of years and if we are going to say we support the tourism industry here in the Northwest Territories, it's time to put our money where our mouth is and look at some increased funding. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'm wondering when that might happen. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 229-15(3): Addressing Tourism In The NWT

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that we want to be able to focus more keenly on tourism, and that, I hope, will involve more money going forward, but I need to be able to go back to the Financial Management Board with a compelling case given the strain on resources and the competing needs for resources. That case, I think, will be built around this product inventory. I need to be able to explain to my colleagues that we do need to focus as much resource as possible on helping people in communities develop product. This is one of the reasons we talked around the BDIC and the flexibility that that new mechanism will allow, because really small business opportunities, many of them, we believe and hope, we'll be able to focus on the tourism area. So we think there's a lot of potential there; but as I sit down to make this case, I need to be able to explain that we've dealt with overlap issues in relation to the NWTAT and the department and make sure that our delivery mechanism makes sense. My colleagues are going to want to hear that as I make the case for new resources that we've thought this through and we know how to most effectively spend the money that we're hoping to get. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Your final supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

Supplementary To Question 229-15(3): Addressing Tourism In The NWT

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks, Mr. Minister, for the response. That's all fine and good, but this report that's going to be done on the duplication may be between NWT Arctic Tourism and the department that's going to happen and that's going to roll out, but when? When is the government going to put more resources and more money into tourism? That's the question I have for the Minister. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 229-15(3): Addressing Tourism In The NWT

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can't get into the business plan discussion for this year and the specifics of that, but I can say that I'm expecting the results of this review, this tourism programs and services review, before Christmas. That will allow me to get this into the machinery for the business planning cycle for next year. It will be in with a number of competing needs, but I'll strongly advocate for and make the case that we need to focus on this in the upcoming business planning session. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Question 230-15(3): GNWT Position On Disputes Respecting The Mackenzie Valley Pipeline

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Premier of the Northwest Territories, does the government have any concerns about the views of the Deh Cho First Nations regarding pipeline development? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

Return To Question 230-15(3): GNWT Position On Disputes Respecting The Mackenzie Valley Pipeline

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, the government is certainly a strong supporter of the pipeline and we certainly do have concerns anytime any of the parties that may be impacted by the development have concerns or issues that need to be resolved. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

Supplementary To Question 230-15(3): GNWT Position On Disputes Respecting The Mackenzie Valley Pipeline

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Premier what steps is this government taking to resolve concerns of all the interested parties with regard to pipeline development?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 230-15(3): GNWT Position On Disputes Respecting The Mackenzie Valley Pipeline

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On a regular basis we are meeting with all of the parties that are requesting meetings, or where we feel it is appropriate to have a meeting. Yesterday we met with Imperial. I have talked with representatives of the aboriginal governments up and down the valley within the last two weeks. Mr. Speaker, we're doing everything we can to try to resolve any differences or any issues that may be arising. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

Question 231-15(3): Income Support For Elders

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, I would just like to follow up on the honourable Member for Great Slave Member's statement with regard to income support. Part of the current public debate over health care in this country is the provision of homecare services to the sick and elderly. There is widespread agreement that homecare services are a necessary part of a health care plan. It is my understanding that plans are being made that are considered to increase the amount of money available for homecare services. In light of that, I wonder why we in the Northwest Territories are not following suit. In fact, Mr. Speaker, it appears that we are penalizing certain citizens who are trying to take care of their elders at their home. People who can afford to pay for homecare services can deduct those expenses from their taxes, but people on income support who attempt to secure the same services for themselves through family members are being penalized by this government by having their social assistance cut off. Will the Minister rectify this situation and allow families to help their elders without being penalized?

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

---Applause

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

Return To Question 231-15(3): Income Support For Elders

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe that our system does allow families to support seniors to a much greater extent than what you would find in other jurisdictions, but I would be happy to review the situation with the Member and take a look at his specific recommendations and consider them. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

Supplementary To Question 231-15(3): Income Support For Elders

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. I would like to take the Minister up on that invitation as I am unaware of that guideline. Speaking of guidelines, does the Minister have any plans to review the current guidelines with respect to this issue?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 231-15(3): Income Support For Elders

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said in response to Mr. Braden earlier, the issue of reviewing guidelines for the program is one that is open at all times. If a Member comes to me and says here is what I see as a problem, I will take a look at it, I will discuss it with personnel in the department and we will get back to the Member as to whether or not we will consider revising the guidelines. I will also discuss them with the standing committee. It's this House that has to ultimately agree to any changes in guidelines, because when I change the guidelines, or when we change the guidelines, that changes the cost of the program. That means I then have to get a change in the budget. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

Supplementary To Question 231-15(3): Income Support For Elders

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In light of that, will the Minister also look at helping people on a fixed income at increasing their requests for fuel subsidy for this winter as the cost of living promises to be even harsher in this particular year?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 231-15(3): Income Support For Elders

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our standards for all programs are adjusted regularly, based on the cost of living. The cost of food is surveyed on a regular basis. The amount that is included in income support for food allowance is adjusted regularly. The same happens with the levels for the fuel subsidy. So I think that's already being accomplished. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

Supplementary To Question 231-15(3): Income Support For Elders

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would be just as interested to partake in those discussions, as well. In fact, there is thinking out there that our current guidelines will be below the standard of other jurisdictions. Is the Minister willing to sit down with Members on this side of the House? When will he be discussing changes to guidelines? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 231-15(3): Income Support For Elders

HON. CHARLES DENT: Mr. Speaker, that is, in fact, not right. Our guidelines and policies are more generous than any other jurisdiction in Canada. I have sat down with the Standing Committee on Social Programs and have run through our program in considerable detail to show just that. I would be happy to continue my work with the Standing Committee on Social Programs. They have had

this presentation. I would be happy to offer it to other standing committees, if they are interested, and would certainly be prepared to demonstrate that we have a good program in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

Question 232-15(3): Review Of Human Resources At North Slave Correctional Centre

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Justice, Mr. Charles Dent. I have brought up the issue about a health services audit at the North Slave Correctional Centre that was conducted by a health care specialist from the Drumheller institution. This was five months ago, Mr. Speaker. The Minister has mentioned getting some answers as to what that health services audit contained. I have been waiting for whatever version, watered down or not watered down, from the department for over four months now. I wonder when the Minister might be able to supply me with whatever version his department can come up with on that health services audit at the North Slave Correctional Centre. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Minister of Justice, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 232-15(3): Review Of Human Resources At North Slave Correctional Centre

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to make it clear that I never did offer Mr. Ramsay a copy of the report or a watered-down copy of the report. I did say to Mr. Ramsay that I would endeavour to advise him in a general manner, if I could, what some of the recommendations were. The report is one that will not be made public because of the implications to personnel. It's personnel related. At this point, the report has been received by the department. Initially, as Mr. Ramsay said, it was received some time ago. It was referred to personnel at Stanton who had experience with this area and we had asked for their advice. We have just recently received their advice on the report and are currently considering it. Until this whole process is finished, it will be impossible for me to respond to the Member, even in a general way, what we are going to do to address the concerns that were raised.

If I could, Mr. Speaker, there is one other item I would like to address that the Member brought up yesterday. I may have misled him slightly in my response when he was asking about the human resources review. In that response, I said that the Department of Justice officials were working with corporate human resources. In fact, it is an entirely independent operation. Corporate human resources is not working with the Department of Justice officials. They are conducting this review on an independent basis. What they are finding is that people, while initially concerned about talking to them, once they find how independent they actually are, are having no trouble speaking to the reviewers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

Supplementary To Question 232-15(3): Review Of Human Resources At North Slave Correctional Centre

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Minister, for your response. That will lead me to the next question and I am glad the Minister started speaking about the review of human resources at the North Slave Correctional Centre. Yesterday he was asked to produce a terms of reference for this review and seeing that its out of his department's hands as far as that goes, maybe that discussion that he was going to have with his deputy might fall under the mandate of Mr. Roland and whether we can get a copy of that terms of reference. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 232-15(3): Review Of Human Resources At North Slave Correctional Centre

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The review was requested by the department and the report will be delivered to the department. So, no, it wouldn't fall under another Minister's responsibility. I am quite prepared to meet with the committee and discuss with the standing committee the terms of reference for the review. We will do that at their convenience. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

Supplementary To Question 232-15(3): Review Of Human Resources At North Slave Correctional Centre

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wonder when we might know some of the results of this internal review and how any recommendations flowing from it might be adopted. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 232-15(3): Review Of Human Resources At North Slave Correctional Centre

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I expect that within a matter of weeks, the report, or at least the first draft of the report, will be delivered to my department and I would expect that we would start to -- if there are recommendations for approval -- act on this fairly quickly. It is not our intention, because if you want people to be able to respond openly and freely to this, they have to know that the information they are giving us is going to be kept confidential. There is no intention to release this report, otherwise you put people at risk for not feeling that they can freely participate in the interview process. So this isn't going to become something that is going to be evident who has said what. The intention of this is not to release this report. It's an internal report to help us do the job better. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Final supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

Supplementary To Question 232-15(3): Review Of Human Resources At North Slave Correctional Centre

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's where I disagree with the Minister. People want to speak up because they want something done. I think they would feel better taking part in this review if they knew that their

concerns would be acted upon. By keeping the report confidential, I think that might even scare people into not saying anything, because then they will feel that their concerns aren't going to be acted upon. I would like to ask the Minister -- he's already answered it -- how come his department can't black out the names? There are ways this report can get into the hands of the Members of this House so that some corrective action can and will be taken, so the staff at the centre feel confident that their participation in this review isn't done in vain. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 232-15(3): Review Of Human Resources At North Slave Correctional Centre

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I understand it, Mr. Speaker, close to 40 percent of the personnel in corrections from Inuvik through to Fort Smith have participated in the survey process already. That was done under some expectation of how the information would be handled. I don't think at this late date of the process, we can go back and change that. It is a small population. It would be very easy to figure out who said what about whom, depending on what the recommendations may be. So we have to make sure we are protecting the integrity of the process and the privacy of the individuals involved. So we don't have any intention to release that information. I'm happy to sit down with the committee, talk about the terms of reference, and I can assure this House that if there are recommendations for improvement that they will be followed up on. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The time for oral questions has expired. Item 7, written questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

ITEM 7: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Written Question 35-15(3): Incarceration Of Sahtu Residents

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my written question is to the Minister of Justice. The Sahtu elders were concerned about the placement of our people who are incarcerated in correctional institutions in the North and outside the Northwest Territories. The elders would like to have a proposal for an on-the-land project in the Sahtu.

1. How many Sahtu people are incarcerated in correctional institutes in the Northwest Territories and outside the Northwest Territories?
2. How many people from the Sahtu are considered territorial or federal offenders?
3. What types of correction programs are offered to inmates?
4. Which on-the-land program today is working with the department and are there possible future programs?
5. What steps are there in place to reintegrate inmates back into the community, family, and society as a whole?
6. How much of the aboriginal concept of beliefs and values are integrated into programming in our NWT facilities?

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Item 7, written questions. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

Written Question 36-15(3): Need For A Youth Centre In Deninu Kue

MR. VILLENEUVE: My question is to the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, the Honourable Michael McLeod. The youth centre in Deninu Kue has been on blocks and boarded up for the past year-and-a-half.

1. What steps has the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs taken to address this issue?
2. How is the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs assisting the Deninu Kue Community Council to make this youth centre a reality?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Item 7, written questions. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

Written Question 37-15(3): Communities Without Gymnasiums

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

Will the Minister provide me with a list of communities that do not have a gymnasium? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. 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. The Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board, Mr. Krutko.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 65-15(3): Workers' Compensation Board 2003 Annual Report

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled Workers' Compensation Board 2003 Annual Report.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

Tabled Document 66-15(3): 15th Annual Report Of The Victims Assistance Committee Of The NWT, April 1, 2003 - March 31, 2004

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have four documents I'd like to table today. I wish to table the document entitled 15th Annual Report of the Victims Assistance Committee of the Northwest Territories, April 1, 2003 to March 31, 2004.

Tabled Document 67-15(3): Letter From The RCMP To The Department of Justice Re: Willow Lake River Investigation

I'd also like to table a letter from the RCMP to Ms. Jones, who is the assistant deputy minister at the Department of Justice, regarding the Willow Lake River investigation.

Tabled Document 68-15(3): Fair Practices Office 2003 Annual Report

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table the document entitled Fair Practices Office 2003 Annual Report.

Tabled Document 69-15(3): Annual Report On The Activities Of The Rental Office, 2003

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table the document entitled Annual Report on the Activities of the Rental Office, 2003. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

ITEM 16: MOTIONS

Motion 15-15(3): Appointment Of A Deputy Director Of Human Rights, Carried

MR. RAMSAY: WHEREAS the Northwest Territories Human Rights Act received assent on October 30, 2002;

AND WHEREAS section 23.(1) of the Human Rights Act provides that the Commissioner, on the recommendation of the Legislative Assembly, may appoint one or more deputy directors of human rights to carry out the responsibilities set out in the act;

AND WHEREAS the Board of Management was tasked with implementing the Human Rights Act and has recommended an individual to the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Assembly is prepared to make a recommendation;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Nunakput, that Deborah McLeod be appointed as the deputy director of human rights for the Northwest Territories 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.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. A motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

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

---Carried

I'd like to congratulate Deborah McLeod on her appointment.

---Applause

Item 16, motions. The honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to return to item 5.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Handley.

REVERT TO ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to recognize in the gallery today the Honourable Maynard Sonntag, the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Minister of Transportation for the Government of Saskatchewan, and Norah Saunders, who was with our government for a number of years and is now deputy minister for the Aboriginal Affairs department. I apologize if I have the names not quite right. Mr. Speaker, I might say Minister Sonntag is from my home town. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The Honourable Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to recognize Ms. McLeod, the new deputy director of human rights.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. I'd also like to recognize in the gallery Ms. Therese Boullard and Dennis Marchiori.

---Applause

Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. I'd also like to recognize anybody else in the gallery who has not already been recognized. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly.

---Applause

We will go to 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: Minister's Statement 48-15(3), Sessional Statement; Minister's Statement 49-15(3), Fiscal Update; 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 12, An Act to Amend the Education Act, with Mr. Ramsay in the chair.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Chairman, we wish to consider the sessional statement, as well as Bill 9, Bill 10, and Minister's Statement 49-15(3), Fiscal Update.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thanks, Mr. Menicoche. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Maybe we will take a short, 15-minute break and come back at 12:00. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. I would like to call Committee of the Whole back to order. The first order of business is Minister's Statement 48-15(3), Sessional Statement. I would like to open up the floor for comments on that statement. Any general comments? Is it the wish of the committee that we proceed with the next order of business?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): That order of business would be Bill 9, Write-off of Assets and Debts Act, 2004-2005. We are going to start with the Minister responsible, Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The purpose of the Write-off of Assets and Debts Act, 2004-2005, is to authorize the write-off of debts listed in the schedule to the act. Pursuant to section 24 of the Financial Administration Act, the write-off of assets or debts exceeding \$20,000 must receive Legislative Assembly approval.

Pursuant to section 82 of the Financial Administration Act, the write-off of debts owed to a public agency exceeding \$20,000 must receive Legislative Assembly approval.

The write-off of debts owed to the Workers' Compensation Board exceeding \$50,000 must receive Legislative Assembly approval.

The write-off being proposed in this act will not require a new appropriation. The write-off will be charged against allowances for bad debts, which were established in the department budget at the time it was determined that collection of the debt would be unlikely.

I wish to emphasize that the write-off of a debt does not relieve a debtor of the liability for repayment or mean that the government will not continue to attempt to collect the outstanding amount.

Through continued reviews by my staff, future recovery of the debt may still be achieved. In addition, in the case of debts owed by companies, we track the principals of each firm for future credit reference.

Mr. Chairman, I or the appropriate official would be prepared to answer questions on the proposed write-off at the appropriate time. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight reviewed Bill 9, Write-off of Assets and Debts Act, 2004-2005, at its meetings of August 24, 2004, and October 12, 2004. This bill will write off \$576,096.10 in assets and debts owed the Government of the Northwest Territories, its agencies and boards.

The committee would like to thank the Minister and his officials for presenting this bill. The bill authorizes the

write-off of debts in accordance with sections 24 and 82 of the Financial Administration Act which requires legislative approval to write off debts of more than \$20,000.

Mr. Chairman, no debt or obligation or part of a debt or obligation that is written off shall be remitted, satisfied or forgiven as a result of the write-off. The debt still exists, but is no longer carried as an asset by the government and interest no longer accumulates.

The write-off will not require a new appropriation as the departments have already established an allowance within their budgets once the debt was determined to be uncollectible.

Mr. Chairman, the committee had concerns with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment providing grants to cultural organizations when they had not received a proper accounting of the grant money provided in previous years. The committee will be looking for evidence that this situation will not occur again.

The committee is also pleased to hear that the Minister is looking at providing the names of directors of organizations who default on loans, as part of the schedules attached to the bill. This may help in ensuring that government money is properly accounted for.

Mr. Chairman, following the committee's review, a motion was carried to report Bill 9, Write-off of Assets and Debts Act, 2004-2005, to the Assembly as ready for Committee of the Whole. Individual members of the committee may have comments or questions as we proceed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Any comments? Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just looking at the debts written off and the total of the bill of \$576,000, it's good to know that the debt will still be an outstanding amount in the government's books, but there will be no interest accumulating and the government will still look for ways to collect the money.

I just wanted to comment on the Minister's initiative at looking at providing names of directors of organizations who default on loans. I want to remind the Minister that I will support that initiative and I think it's something we should do because the organizations all want to remain confidential and not be made public with respect to any loans they have outstanding or loans they have in the works or any loans they are defaulting on.

I know with FMBS, and as far as the debts of residents of the NWT that own taxation money to the GNWT, there is no scrutiny for the government in releasing their names or the amounts owing to the government. I just wonder what the difference is when dealing with individuals who owe \$3,000 to \$10,000 to the GNWT, that their names are splattered all over the News/North every year and there is a full page on all people who have outstanding taxes owed to the GNWT, and why people that are having half a million dollars written off are getting more consideration and less transparency for the public to have any input on what they owe, what they borrowed, and what the government is writing off. I would like the Minister's opinion as to treating these individuals who owe just a few dollars and why they are treated differently from

organizations that borrow millions of dollars from the government. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Roland, would you like to bring in any witnesses at this time?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I would.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Can the Sergeant-at-Arms escort the witness in, please? Thank you. Thank you, Sergeant-at-Arms. Mr. Roland, can you introduce your witness, please?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, with me this afternoon is Mr. Lew Voytilla, secretary to the FMBS.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Were you able to hear the question that Mr. Villeneuve asked earlier? Thank you. Would you like to respond, please?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Villeneuve raised a couple of examples in the sense of bad debts versus the publishing of names in the area of property taxes. The situation that comes out of this is how the different acts work. For example, under the situation of municipal taxes, specifically the act requires that that information be made available. On the other concern about making it known who's applied, what debts, how much debt is attached, is something that we have heard and taken into consideration. I am moving ahead in bringing to my FMBS colleagues the change that we have noted, and looking at changing that to bring it up to date. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the Minister for consideration on that point, anyway. The reason I'm questioning it is that due to the fact that a lot of the large debts in the \$30,000 to \$50,000 range, the nature of the debt is listed as unaccounted contributions. I think it would be prudent of this government to let the public know that the associations the government is dealing with in trying to recover some of the debts and who is actually running these organizations and whose direction it is that is resulting in the accounting responsibilities of the organization. I think it would help the public to be informed that, yes, these people sit on this board and they have an \$85,000 contribution that they were unable to account for to the GNWT. I think people would want to know who these people are and what they've done with that money. When the government can just write off a \$50,000 to \$80,000 debt without batting an eye, and on the other hand of the fiscal framework people who owe a minimum amount of dollars with respect to their taxation bills are all of a sudden put out into the public spotlight through the media that shows what little money they do owe and how long they've been outstanding and some of the ramifications that might come about because of it.

I just wanted to let the Minister know that it would be helpful for the public and prudent on the government's side that we do publish board members and all associated parties that have received contributions but have come back to the government without any certified audits to account for that money and that they start treating all the individual residents of the NWT as fair and as equitable as they do the corporations they lend money to today. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as I stated earlier, I believe we are in sync with what the Member is stating as we go forward. We are intending to change the policy to do just as the Member has stated in recognition that we have to be more accountable and those that receive money from us need to do the same, as well as the principle of being accountable to all citizens. We can no longer differentiate if it's a private individual in income tax versus a business or a non-profit agency, and that's what the majority of this here is around non-profit groups. They're affected and as we go forward to do this and look at changing the policy, we also have to let everybody know that as they go forward to put their names on this that this is one of the potentials. I think we're in agreement here and I'm going forward on that basis to my FMBS colleagues. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the Minister for that response. I just wanted to ask the Minister what his feelings were toward...I know in the paper he stated that all these outstanding property taxes of residents of all the communities that haven't been physically assessed to date are still outstanding and that the FMBS can't even consider writing off these debts which don't even come close to the amount of debts that this government has written off for corporations to date. When we're talking a \$100,000 write-off in taxation debts for a certain group of people, there is a larger group of people that are going to be happy with this government that they're taking into consideration their issues; whereas, on the other side of the board, this government is writing off \$800,000 to a single corporation in one sitting. If they paid as much consideration to the individual ratepayers as they did the people that get loans off the government, I think the residents of the NWT would be a lot more trustworthy and have more confidence in the government's way of doing business.

I just want to ask the Minister if he's tallied up all the outstanding taxes to date and considered the thought of...

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Excuse me. Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Can I just interrupt the committee? Can we have some quiet here? Mr. Villeneuve is trying to talk and I'm sure the Minister's having a hard time trying to listen to the conversation. Thank you. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to get the Minister's thoughts on the possibility of writing off these outstanding debts that many members of the NWT have to date.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Member stated, again drawing a comparison between the taxes we collect as a government versus this act, the forgiveness of debts; write-off of debts. Sorry. Under the legislation that deals with our taxes, it's very clear on what needs to happen and there is no program for forgiveness of taxes that can follow what we're doing here. Although we would look at that as a government as to what initiatives; but when we look at the write-off of bad debts, the one thing that continues to happen, as I stated in my opening comments, is we continue to monitor these and where we can, we continue to collect on them. It does, however, stop the interest from accruing, but it is not forgiveness. This is a write-off of debts, taken off the books, but we do still monitor these to see if at some point we may be able to collect them. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. General comments. The time's up for you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just with respect to some of the noted deficiencies, as we're reviewing Bill 9, with regard to providing grants to organizations that have not received a proper accounting from the year before, I'm just wondering, Mr. Chairman, if the Minister can comment on the existing guidelines to providing funds to organizations when they haven't really been accounting for previous usage. What are the guidelines in use today? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the guidelines are clear that there should be a proper accounting for the funds that are distributed, and there should be a reporting back of those. As the departments go forward in looking at how those expenditures are made, and if they were in accordance with the proposals put forward, they would be dealt with in that appropriate manner. I know the issue of concern was raised with committee, and we've notified the appropriate department. I believe, in this particular case, Mr. Dent may have information to respond to that particular issue that the Member is raising.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Dent, would you like to...

---Laughter

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could I have the question restated, please?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I was just looking for some assurance of what systems are in place so the public will have confidence in our system that we are not providing grants and contributions to organizations that haven't had proper accounting for prior years' contributions. It happened, of course, in this case. I'm just wondering what mechanisms are in place and, indeed, if there was a deficiency, will they be addressing it with some new type of guidelines? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, there's always a concern when there's criticism when we lose money. There's a criticism when we don't have enough accounting so money isn't recovered. The issue of accountable advances, though, is hard to get past. It would be difficult for us to offer up much of our programming dollars if we didn't allow the money to go out in advance of the program being undertaken. So we have to continue, I think, with the process of allowing for accountable advances. The goal is, of course, to make sure that we are watching for instances where the organization may be getting in trouble, and making sure that we aren't continuing to advance good money after bad, if you will. That's certainly something that we will be doing. In this instance, the department has followed up on the issue. There were obviously extensive efforts made to recover the funding and to pursue invoices to recover the monies, but we didn't get the money and the accounting was never actually provided either. The department is being more and more vigilant, but we are going to have to continue to use this kind of advancing of monies in order to make sure the non-profit organizations can get their operations underway. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The committee, of course, is concerned and I was just wondering what has actually been done. Is there any evidence that the government is acting so that this situation will not happen again? Could the Minister of FMBS answer that for me, Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When it comes to the role of FMBS here, we end up dealing with these as we are now, in the form of reporting it to the Legislative Assembly. The other role we would play is ensuring the departments follow the guidelines that are in place, and that's something we'll be more vigilant in is ensuring that the guidelines and policies are being followed. If we see there are specific deficiencies in what we're doing now, we'd work to address those. As Mr. Dent stated, the way the money would flow in your first year of operations and looking for an accounting, they can give quarterly advances in dealing with those and trying to get the information flow. As we know, in a lot of these societies or non-profit organizations are small groups and they might not all have the expertise as board members change. That still doesn't allow for not following the processes and policies established. I believe Mr. Dent has further detail to this as well, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Member had asked for specific examples. What the Department of Education, Culture and Employment is endeavouring to do is reduce the numbers of advances that are given out and the amounts. While recognizing that they're still necessary, there's an attempt to limit the amount that is outstanding at any one time, and to that

way improve on the requirement for accounting to be delivered before we advance further funds.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Menicoche. Thank you. Mr. Zoe.

MR. ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I realize that these are debts being written off from previous years. Nevertheless, just to follow up on my colleague from Nahendeh, when the department knows that the cultural organization hasn't accounted for the previous year, I understand that in the new fiscal year they can ask for another grant and it could be done in a certain manner. If they could get some sort of funding in advance for the first quarter, to get their second quarter they should be able to provide accounting for the previous year so that it's not a backlog. They should be reporting on a quarterly basis so they can account for it. So at the end of the day, you won't have that much accounting to do. Is that the type of mechanism that we have in place now, so that this type of thing doesn't occur in the future?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Zoe. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the member is accurate in his assumption of the policies as they work now. We do make an accounting of advances on a quarterly basis and encourage that information would get back to the departments before they proceed. In a number of these cases, for some reason, that wasn't done in the past. As stated by the Minister, there have been a number of changes in the way that we deal with these. That policy is in place about proceeding on to the next year and doing it on a quarterly basis. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Zoe. Thank you. General comments on Bill 9 by members. Does the committee agree to go clause by clause?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you. I'm just getting help here. Thanks a lot for your patience. Stand down the clauses and go down to schedule 1, page 3. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The discussion that my colleagues and the Ministers have had has helped to illustrate some of the general aspects of how we monitor and manage the flow of contributions and loans to all sorts of different organizations in the NWT. It's helpful, of course, and positive to see that we've taken steps to tighten up the way we manage these things and that hopefully there will be less and less of this kind of thing happening. I think it's useful, for the record, to put some detail around a couple of these cases just to illustrate and to probe what went wrong in some cases, and why we have had to make these changes.

On schedule 1, Mr. Chairman, item 2, regarding the NWT Development Corporation, they are applying for a write-off of \$150,000 in unrealizable preferred shares in Nats'enelu Limited. Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the Minister a few questions about this amount of money to this corporation. Over what period of time was the NWT Development Corporation involved in supporting Nats'enelu Limited? Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the arrangement or the requests and working with the NWT Development Corporation began in March of 1999. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Okay. So it started in March of 1999 and up to what period? I am looking for the time frame here. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The operation concluded, seized to exist, in March of 2002 or approximately that time. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Were there any other contributions or assistance from other agencies of this government to this business? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I better correct myself. Initially, it was August of 2002 that the relationship had changed. There were other funds provided through other sources within the government and the BCC was involved in this as well to the tune of approximately \$100,000. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There was no other agency involved and the total amount of GNWT contribution to Nats'enelu was then \$250,000. I just want to confirm those numbers so far. Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No, the total amount owing to the government was approximately \$350,000. The first amount was for \$150,000 in 1999 and then in 2001, through the Development Corporation, it was another \$100,000 and then a further \$100,000 from BCC. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Okay. So we are up into several hundred thousand dollars of contributions to this organization. I guess, Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask was a substantial amount of this paid back or recovered through the organization? Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No, there wasn't a substantial amount repaid. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Chairman, then to add some numbers up here, we see that we have a total of \$350,000 that was advanced to Nats'enelu from the Business Credit Corporation and the Development Corporation, and in addition about \$430,000 was provided through other departments. So we have almost \$800,000 by some accounting here to Nats'enelu, but we are able to go after \$150,000. Do I have that right, Mr. Chairman?

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the total amount is \$350,000; \$150,000 of that was in preferred shares and that is the amount that we are accounting for through this write-off. We are no longer able to count on those preferred shares as an asset. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. This is a very difficult forum in which to exchange this kind of information and I am not going to drill down into this any further. What I wanted to do, Mr. Chairman, for the record and the people who are looking and listening to this kind of thing, is to show that over the course of time, the Minister has suggested about three years, maybe four, that this government was involved in some fairly significant contributions to a business. Over the course of time, we kept putting money into something that really wasn't showing it could get through the start-up difficulties. So there was a failure here, and a regrettable one at that, because Nats'enelu put out a tremendous product. It's regrettable that it didn't go. What we are involved in here is looking at how we assess and the kind of decision-making process we have for businesses. It seems that perhaps in this case here, over a period of several years, we were just trying to help a business hold on that really didn't have a good plan going for it from the start, perhaps hadn't put together all the ingredients that it really needed.

So our ability to assess and properly support and fund a business was really not quite up to snuff. We've lost a fair amount of money and the business has failed. So as I say, Mr. Chairman, this is illustrative of some shortcomings that we have had in our business support system and we have an upcoming fairly major changeover to our whole support to business support, so some of these things may be addressed in there. I have no other questions on schedule 1, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The member is right. As we go forward on the basis of some of the work that's being done in RWED now, some of these deficiencies and concerns raised in the past and at this time, as well, are being considered as we go forward. Just to highlight the fact that in the next bill we are going to be dealing with accounts for the next \$100,000 through the Development Corporation that we are forgiving in the

next piece, and potentially there are other things to come. It is an area of concern, it has been for awhile, but there is a certain amount of risk that we do realize and accept when we do take on ventures in the smaller communities across the North. We know that your traditional banking institutions would not go in those places, so we have to try to come up with a program to try and encourage some development. We've heard it in the past and as well today, and through this process we're going to need to review how we go forward on this and much of that will be taken into consideration as we go forward in review of those economic programs that we hold as a government. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. General comments for schedule 1. No further comments. Schedule 1. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Go on to page 5, schedule 2. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To item number 3 on schedule 2, Northern Addictions Services. Again I'd like to see if we can track some of the history and the layers that there may be in this particular request for a write-off of almost \$120,000. I think it warrants some attention at committee level, Mr. Chairman. This is through the Department of Health and Social Services. Could the Minister advise if there was a cumulative history here for this \$120,000? Could he advise on some of that? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, there is a long history with this Northern Addictions Services program and non-profit organization that tried to have services provided to residents and we don't have all of that detail here. On the specific numbers dealing with the Department of Health and Social Services, about \$112,000 was initially issued out in the 1999-2000 year for a utilization plan. As well, there was a further amount in 1999-2000 of approximately \$7,200 for training initiatives. There has been no accounting for that. That's why we're at the stage we are, and the organization is no longer in existence, I guess we can say. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Northern Addictions Services indeed had a troubled history. Would the Minister be able to advise, with this organization, what their history of monitoring and accounting and providing for other government contributions? I know there were substantial contributions that went into this organization. Did they have a good history? Was this an exception? Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I don't have that detail with me with regard to the Department of Health and Social Services and the work they've undertaken in trying to get an accounting for that money. What I can say is, once the file was forwarded to us in FMBS, there were actions taken and initiated to

try and collect on the funds, but our efforts came to no gain for us and that's why we're at this stage today. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Chairman, as far as the documentation that the government would require when it looks at these applications, would there normally be a list of the directors of an organization, the financial officers? Is there any kind of backup to handing this money out? Is there an agreement in place? Are they contracted to provide the justification and the reporting on it? I guess what I'm looking for here, Mr. Chairman, is how solid is our paperwork, if you will, and our contracting method when we make these kinds of contributions to organizations? All of it is in good faith. But there is an onus to look after the taxpayers' investment, if you will? I just want to determine how tight our process is on this. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all I would like to state that we are, as a government, looking at tightening up how we deal with those that would come requesting funds. The process that would have been used, whether it was the application process, a lot of the funds that are available to groups in the Territories would be based on applications being made, proposals being put forward and a structure of how it would operate, including board members, the program that they were going to operate, and what results they were hoping to achieve. So going into it there would be a substantial amount of work done in justifying why the money should go as they're being requested.

The problem we find from time to time is that as things go forward and as boards change and as staff changes, some of that accounting internally gets lost and when we want a report to finalize what's been done, what's been achieved, how that money has been spent, if it's been spent in accordance with what the plan was, that falls from time to time between the cracks of those organizations. Then we have to step in, as the departments initially can't get the information requested and then hands the file over to us. We end up stepping in from the collections side and try to secure those funds that are outstanding.

So there is a fairly onerous process when an application is being put in and looked at by the departments. Now, it's not a template that every department uses depending on the program, the amount of money being requested, but it is something that for any money being requested that we would want to see a plan of how that is going to be spent and if it fits the criteria of the contribution that can be made. So there is a fairly substantial process in going to get the money. What we do find from time to time -- and this is where we're at today -- is that in accounting for how those dollars were spent we have some difficulties. That is more on the organization side, the non-profit agency, and we have to go from there and we become involved as FMBS and try to find those that are out there that were board members. We make calls, send letters and try to get a response to the situation. In this case we have not had a successful response. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you. Those are acceptable answers. In this particular case the Minister advised the committee that of this \$119,651, \$12,391 was for a "utilization plan." I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman, \$112,000. That's a lot of money. That's a big piece of work, and yet it's just gone? It's never performed? Even way back then, four years ago, when obviously our processes weren't as tight as we would like them to be, that's still a big pile of money to lose. At what level within the department should we be going back and saying where were you guys? Was someone asleep at the switch? I am digging up accountability, Mr. Chairman. I think we need to, as a committee, be on our toes here. When we see areas where accountability should be called up, then we should do so, and that's what I am looking for here.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is something that we have stated in this government that we intend to be more vigilant and accountable for the dollars that are spent that are put out there. We can give a number of examples. As I stated earlier, I am bringing a paper to my FMB colleagues for accountability and a sense of directors that are on boards and requesting funds from the government.

Another big piece we have done here, since becoming elected, is put into practice the third-party accountability framework that is now being rolled out. That, as well, enhances how we see this flowing as a government and how funds are used from the government. So we, as the 15th Assembly, have started to put into practice what we feel is a stronger way of doing business and accounting for the dollars being spent by the government. So we have started putting that in place.

As for the money just being gone, there were activities carried on. There were services provided, but, unfortunately, things fell between the cracks when it came to an actual accounting on how things were spent, how much was on wages, how much on O and M, how much on having clients come into a facility. Unfortunately, that fell through. Without more detail from the Department of Health and Social Services at this time, I can't say all that money just went to waste. There were individuals who went through a program. How much success was there? That's the unfortunate part. We don't have an accounting for it at this time. The interpretation could be that money went out and was gone, but we know that there was a service provided for a time there. Unfortunately, the accountability portion of the report did not get done. So we are tightening up that system as we go forward as the 15th Assembly. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Schedule 2, agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Item numbers 8 and 9, I would like to talk about these two together. They refer to debts owed by the Metis Heritage Association and the Metis Nation of the Northwest

Territories through accounts of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. They total about \$120,000. The first one for the Metis Heritage Association is for \$84,000, and to the Metis Nation of \$35,000. The reason that I would like to look at these two in combination, Mr. Chairman, is they occur in the same time frame, 1998 to 2001, those fiscal years. The information we have so far suggested that they are largely for related purposes, cultural and language purposes. There is a similarity between some of the previous files I have been asking about and that my colleague, Mr. Menicoche, talked about, and that is the cumulative process that we've had in some files here of continuing to advance, loan or contribute money to organizations even though past accounting has not been there.

Could I start asking on these two whether the Minister could provide, for the record, a little bit more information about the purpose of the contributions for items 8 and 9? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Item 9, the \$35,000, money was forwarded on the basis of a language program. A contribution agreement was put in place with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. On the Metis Heritage Association of \$84,000, that was again to do with cultural organizations, oral traditions. It was applied for in that manner and funds were doled out. For more detail and the actual flow-through, we could go to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment for more detail. The one thing I should say is, as the Member stated, we are dealing with occurrences that happened back in 1998. For the detail, that may be available and Minister Dent may be able to provide some more. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There's not a lot that I can add to this that hasn't already been provided, either in response to Mr. Menicoche or by Minister Roland just now. The programs are programs of the department that are application-based. They weren't special programs. The issue is one of vigilance. You are always going to find once in awhile an agency that will go out of business owing money. You can't ever have 100 percent certainty. We are fairly confident that procedures have been tightened up now so that the changes of it happening again are reduced. In terms of why this happened, I can't really say. I can say the person who was responsible for approving the payments is no longer with the department. The policies and procedures have been tightened and we will endeavour to make sure we see this happen as seldom as possible.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Could the Minister give a little more history on these files? Over what period of time were contributions made? Was this a one-year occurrence or were there multiple years involved and what were those years? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the situation with the Metis Heritage Association, the first funding started to flow in 1997-98 and then a further contribution in 2000-01.

For the Metis Nation on the language contribution, it was 1998-99. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Okay. So 1997, we are really going back. We are going back seven years. It seems to have taken a long time to bring that piece of work forward for management here as a write-off.

Does the department have all the documentation related to these files here, including the loan or contribution made to the Metis Nation, as well? Is all our documentation in place there? Because of the nature of these two organizations, obviously they're related. The nature of the contribution and the request of the project are obviously related. Was there any crossover here in terms of the board of directors or the staff?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as stated earlier in the previous item that we'd looked into here, when organizations put their applications in I'm sure the proper paperwork was done and put in place. It comes back to the fact that the accounting portion of what was done with that money is the area we run into problems. The Member has raised one point that we'll clarify; there was on both the Metis Heritage Association and the Metis Nation issues some crossover in the sense of directors. So there were some crossovers of individuals who served on both boards. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: I guess to the aspect of accountability, Mr. Chairman, the Minister offered that the staff person who would have made these decisions is no longer at the department, and I don't want to suggest that I or committee is out here on a headhunting expedition. It's not our practice to bring forward the names of staff or go in that kind of direction. In the area of accountability, when things like this go off the rails, to what degree -- Minister Roland has talked to us about a third-party accountability framework -- are we going to be holding our own people accountable for the monitoring and oversight of these files, where the total amount that we're looking at here for this year's debt write-off is just over \$400,000?

Okay. You'll have to coach me here. Mr. Chairman, I move we extend Committee of the Whole until we conclude Bill 9.

---Laughter

How was that?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): I don't think you can do that at this moment in time. We'll check with the Clerk's office and see how we may proceed from here. That was all that was up. The word from the Clerk's office is the motion is in order to extend until we conclude Bill 9. So what is the wish of the committee?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Okay. Continue, Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for the advice on procedure here. To the aspect of accountability and how we hold our own staff and our own officers accountable for these programs, I want to reiterate, Mr. Chairman, I'm not engaging in seeking out or searching out individuals. However, on a go-forward basis, what levels of accountability will be contained in our new third-party accountability framework that will hold our own people to the task of watching and monitoring and reporting on these contribution programs? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, first of all, I just want to put it on record that the reference Mr. Dent made to the individual who worked on this file no longer being with the government, there was no direct relationship between what occurred on the file and that individual being with our government. Just to be sure on that portion. Now, the third-party accountability framework portion is more the relationship that we would set up with the organizations from a government perspective to an organization receiving money. It's not the relationship between an employee working in the department and how they would account for a review of a file. That continues to be the internal workings of our departments and how they deal with their human resources. If there's a lack of understanding there or a process or ability to do the work, that has to be dealt with internally.

On the third-party accountability framework, once again, that deals with the government relationship with the organization accessing the funds. We're strengthening that and making it clear what we expect out of that partnership that would be formed when an organization requests funds from us. So there's that portion and, unfortunately, in any situation that we have, again it's when we come to this portion that we have to look at how we got to this and that's why this question process is a good one. We've seen at times there can be many good proposals brought forward to the table, that make sense, fit the program, and funds advanced in that situation. If an organization goes defunct within that year or in the year that they receive those funds, then it becomes more difficult to try to get the accounting for those funds and what those funds were used for. That's what we find from time to time.

The more problematic one, I think, is when we do have an experience with an organization that has received funds and not accounted for it and seemed to have got more funds. We do put that on the table so it's open to Members of this House to see that, and that is why we are going in the direction we are about strengthening our position as a government when we deal with organizations that receive funds from us. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Braden, anything further?

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Okay, I'm still looking internally here. The Minister has said, if I follow, that any kind of accountability or if we're going to hold our own people to account for their performance, if their duties

are to watch and monitor and take suitable action on files, if they fail to do so then what kind of provisions do we have in our agreements or our contracts or our performance measures with them to see that they're held accountable? I'll leave it at that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we have, as a government, processes in place to deal with our employees that are required to do a certain job. They have to fulfill those requirements and have to be competent in doing that. So each department follows those guidelines and whether it be one supervisor dealing with an individual or if it's right up to the deputy minister or the Minister, there is a process in place about how we would deal with our employees. It's very clear and agreed to by the unions. So that process we follow.

In all of this stuff, let's be real; there is the human element of all of this and how one individual would deal with another and how they report that, whether it's first a verbal warning, a written warning, to a suspension and so on. There is always that process and it has to be clearly followed. At the same time, I have to qualify that by saying there is that human element in there and we can all be guilty of acting human from time to time, whether it's in the right way or the wrong way. That's a fact.

Our processes are in place, we are confident in those processes and we try to adhere to them through the whole process, but because there are so many departments, so many individuals, there are things we need to do to make sure we are all following the same interpretation. That's another area we are working on as a 15th Assembly to strengthen that part of the organization. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Chairman, I am going to ask one more question with regard to this and I think I have had my share of time on this. On the accountability factor, we've been discussing the onus that is on our people, on our staff, our officers, but I am also wondering about the onus that is on the politicians. The ability or opportunity, sometimes the temptation that there might be for a politician or Minister to apply influence on a certain application is a well-known part of how government and politics operates. It's a test of our system. To what degree do our processes guard against that kind of thing or are able to resist it? I wonder if any one any of these files here, is there any information at all that politics may have had to do with overriding the need for a contribution to have been accounted for before a new one was authorized? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we have no information that would bring that into question, if there was political pressure when these things were going forward to make things go away or just deal with it. We feel there are processes in place today that would take that into consideration. If a Minister were to try to put undue pressure on one of the deputies in saying we want to see this one flow through, we have a system in place where the deputies are reporting directly

to the Premier. There is a reason for that separation. If I, as a Minister, were to try to put undue pressure on my senior staff, they can go to the Premier and say this is not appropriate. Here is the advice and this is the way things should flow.

As well, I think the next piece of what we do on the political front, whether it's a Minister or a Member, is that we have the ethics portion of our duties and the Ethics Commissioner and a Conflict of Interest Commissioner. We have to adhere to those policies. If not, then you take your political life, as one would possibly describe it, and put it in jeopardy. Hopefully Members are very aware and familiar, as I am sure we all are, of the processes in place and the need to adhere to them.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Thank you, Mr. Braden, for your questions. Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Braden pretty well asked all the questions, but I would like to pursue it a little further.

---Laughter

I am referring to items 1, 2, 3, 8 and 9. Again, they are all unaccounted contributions. You gave pretty good explanations previously, so I won't pursue that any further. The question I have is when we talk about accountability, I think that's the key thing that has to be dealt with, especially when we start invoicing the companies that have to make payments. I think it's the responsibility of the Minister to ensure his staff are accountable to get this done. You mentioned earlier that there are ways to do that, but once a person gets a loan, it's very important that your department ensure that the staff is on the ball to make sure that collections are being made. Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I guess first of all, we would hope we wouldn't be to the point where my department was called into the picture, because that is when things have gone really bad and it's collection time. Each department would be in charge of how they deal with the organization that received a contribution. In the initial stages, we want to keep that relationship going in a positive way.

The other part of it is from our side, the policy is quite clear on what needs to happen and the process we follow. I think that's why we also hold our senior staff accountable for how those policies are being worked into the system. Granted, again, there are times when a file, whether a letter went out and when it was received back, when the next call was made or how long between calls, when you can do further follow-up, as we stated. In this case of debts being written off, it doesn't release the individuals from the debt and we continue to monitor. Depending on the file workload, there could be some time between the checks that happen, but they are being followed to the best of our abilities that we have within resources we operate in and our environment. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Braden indicated there was over \$400,000 being written off this

year. Is this a trend that this government is doing in terms of writing debts off? Have you seen this trend from the past few years around this figure? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, first of all, when we look at the amount of \$411,000, it is a substantial amount and that is why we try to improve on the way we get things done and the third-party accountability framework and how we work with our own staff and that process.

This has not been a growing trend. It fluctuates from one cycle to the next. For example, in 2000-01, the total amount for write-offs was \$2.6 million; for 2002-03, it was \$134,000; in 2003-04, \$162,000. The total amount we are looking at for 2004-05 is in the neighbourhood of \$500,000. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It seems that it's a bit of a rollercoaster here in the Northwest Territories in terms of debt write-off. Does the department have an analysis of expected risks for this year or next year in terms of debt write-offs? Can you crystal ball in terms of what may be expected next year and the potential development in the NWT? In going into business and some ventures, there is some degree of risk. You go through the process of having trust in the organization. Personally, I lend money out and I am not 100 percent sure it's going to come back. Sometimes you have to cut your losses and it's not a good feeling. You know the person you are going to lend money to is hoping to pay it back. Is there a percentage that we expect to lose, a minimum for each year? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we do not build into our fiscal framework or plans a loss percentage, I guess you could say. We don't have that. What we do count on is departments coming forward to us on a yearly basis saying that these files, whatever they would be, are doubtful now and we don't think we can receive any funds back in those areas. At that point, we would put it into the system and the departments would build into their budget process a loss as it comes down to it and we follow through with the process we are at today. On an annual basis in budget planning cycles, we have not built in a percentage of loss we might see because it fluctuates quite a bit, as I have just stated, from \$2 million to \$100,000. It could go back up again. It all depends on how things work out in that year and if we have some big losses. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My last question to the Minister. I will look forward to the Minister bringing information forward to the committees in terms of the best methods of recovering money and also money that's been given out to the organizations. In their hearts and their minds...For some odd reason, something went wrong. There are some safety mechanisms and more

preventative measures in terms of catching these past learned lessons and having more successful recovery of the various contributions that go out to individuals. We need some safety checks or coaching or a checklist that the government would be more successful in recovering these dollars and accountability is brought back into the system. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, there is work underway and if there is further clarification needed for members or as we proceed forward and get the next piece of the work done, we will gladly share it with members as how things are flowing. We have shared the third-party accountability framework that we have begun to implement, as well as the processes that are in place that we have built in. As the Minister of Education stated earlier, the flow of funding on a quarterly basis instead of giving it all upfront is one of those areas. It is difficult. On a yearly basis, we can contribute millions of dollars to organizations out there, some as small as \$5,000 to \$10,000, and in other areas, \$1 million plus. So that really does affect how we go from year to year. But as we stated, we are working on improving our accountability, not only for ourselves but for the people of the Territories to show we are accounting for the money that's going out there. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Any other comments on schedule 2? Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): To clause by clause, schedule 2?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Back to the main clauses. Bill 9, Write-off of Assets and Debts Act, 2004-2005, clause 1.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 2.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mr. Zoe.

MR. ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, although we agreed to schedules 1 and 2 of the bill, the total amounts have not been indicated. Therefore, I would just like to, for the record, indicate the total amount of assets being written off, schedule 1, \$165,000 and when we get to clause 3, I will do the same for the debts written off.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Zoe. Clause 2.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 3. Mr. Zoe.

MR. ZOE: Again, for the record, Mr. Chairman, schedule 2 debts written off, the total was \$411,096.10. Mr. Chairman, the combined total for the bill has been noted

by the chair of AOC. The total was \$576,096.10, as he reported in his opening remarks. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Zoe. Clause 3.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): To the bill as a whole?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Does the committee agree that Bill 9 is ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Bill 9 is now ready for third reading. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: I move we report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. Thank you, Minister Roland and Mr. Voytilla. There is a motion on the floor to rise and report progress and it's not debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

I will rise and report progress.

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

ITEM 21: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Minister's Statement 48-15(3) and Bill 9 and would like to report Bill 9 as ready for third reading and, Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Do I have a seconder? The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Zoe. The motion is on the floor.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

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

---Carried

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

ITEM 21: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, there will be a meeting of the Board of Management today at 2:30 p.m. and a meeting of the Accountability and Oversight committee on Monday at 9:00 a.m.

Orders of the day for Monday, October 18th, 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
 17. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 13, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2004-2005
 - Bill 14, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2003-2004
 18. Second Reading of Bills
 19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Committee Report 7-15(3), Report of the Review of the Information and Privacy Commissioner's Annual Report 2002-2003
 - Minister's Statement 48-15(3), Sessional Statement
 - Minister's Statement 49-15(3), Fiscal Update
 - Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Legal Profession Act
 - Bill 8, Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2004
 - Bill 10, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2004-2005
 - Bill 12, An Act to Amend the Education Act
 20. Report of Committee of the Whole
 21. Third Reading of Bills
 - Bill 9, Write-off of Assets and Debts Act, 2004-2005
 22. Orders of the Day
- MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. For those Members travelling home for the weekend, I wish you safe journeys home. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Monday, October 18, 2004, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 1:55 p.m.

