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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Tuesday, October 19, 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, Honourable Michael Miltenberger, Mr. Pokiak, Mr. Ramsay, Honourable Floyd Roland, Mr. Villeneuve, Mr. Yakeleya, Mr. Zoe

ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good afternoon, Members. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 54-15(3): Progress Report On Health And Social Services In The NWT

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to provide Members with a progress report on Health and Social Services in the Northwest Territories.

It is almost three years since the NWT Health and Social Services system action plan 2002-05 was released. This plan outlined 45 action items with specific commitments, timelines and deliverables. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report to this House that the actions outlined in this plan are either completed or being implemented.

As we look back on the last three years, there have been a number of significant changes in the NWT health and social services system that have, and will continue to, improve the services for the residents of the Northwest Territories. Some of these are:

- We will continue to add telehealth sites every year until we have a telehealth capability in all communities across the Territories. We are expanding our telehealth services by adding or upgrading four sites this year in addition to the existing 10 sites.
- We launched a new toll-free tele-care service that enables residents to get advice and support from nursing professionals 24 hours a day. When a young mother in Paulatuk has an infant with a fever in the middle of the night, she can get the advice and the reassurance that she is doing the right thing for her child.
- We enacted changes in our legislative framework so that we can add nurse practitioners into our system to enable better patient care and ease the pressure on our family physicians and specialists.
- We are also in the process of finalizing the necessary steps to add midwives to the health and social services team to provide another option to expectant mothers outside of Yellowknife.
- Our Northern Nursing and Nurse Practitioner program has been very successful in supporting our goal of developing a northern nursing workforce.

Over 20 northern nurses have graduated each year, and we have hired each and every graduate that wants to stay in the Northwest Territories.

- We are completing work on the integrated service delivery model that provides our blueprint into the future to define and provide health and social services in a coordinated and collaborative way beginning where it is most important: at the community level.
- We have made significant increases to the number of frontline care providers, including physicians, social workers, mental health and addictions workers, nurse practitioners and nurses.

Mr. Speaker, over the last few months, I visited the communities in the Mackenzie Delta, Nahendeh, Nunakput and South Slave. I had the pleasure of meeting many of the staff that deliver services at the community level, such as nurses, social workers, community health representatives, lay dispensers, home support workers, interpreters, and caretakers. Each and every one of these individuals contributes to ensure that residents of the Northwest Territories receive the best services possible. I would like to take this opportunity to personally acknowledge the efforts of all our frontline care providers. Their dedication to the health and well-being of our citizens is the backbone of our system.

Mr. Speaker, as I have already mentioned, we are making progress, but by no means is our work done. Still today we face challenges on a number of fronts.

The unfortunate continual reality is that northerners are generally not as healthy as other Canadians. Life expectancy is lower. Lung cancer mortality rates are high. Rates of hospitalization for influenza and pneumonia are higher. Our rate is more than four times the national average.

These are influenced by the lifestyle choices that each of us makes.

- We eat poorly. Nutritious food is expensive and, in some communities, not readily available. Our high cost of living often makes eating a balanced diet challenging and this leads to problems with obesity and increased occurrence of diseases such as diabetes.
- We smoke more. Northerners are twice as likely to smoke or live in a home with a smoker. Smoking causes cancer and makes diseases like asthma, tuberculosis and RSV worse.
- We drink too much alcohol. Substance abuse is related to many of our social problems and is also linked to mental health issues.

- We suffer from preventable diseases, whether it is higher incident rates of sexually transmitted diseases or injuries.

Mr. Speaker, another ongoing challenge is in recruiting health care professionals to live and work in the smaller communities and regional centres. For example, we have an ongoing shortage of nurses at the community level. We have to pay a premium to employment agencies just to find nurses to work in isolated communities to ensure services are available to residents. This is expensive and not sustainable in the longer term and, therefore, our efforts to develop a northern nursing workforce must continue.

As we work towards the goal in our strategic plan of healthy educated people living in safe communities, we are able to contribute and take advantage of life's opportunities. It is important that we use a broad definition of health beyond medicine and treatment. The health of NWT residents is greatly affected by external influences, such as levels of education, income and employment opportunities, access to affordable and appropriate housing, clean air and water, and a supportive social environment. This provides an extra challenge in improving the health and well-being of northerners and requires the cooperation of various government departments and agencies to address. To this end, I am pleased to report that the Ministers of the social program departments, Health and Social Services; Education, Culture and Employment; Justice; Municipal and Community Affairs; and the NWT Housing Corporation, now will meet regularly to ensure that there is more collaboration and joint planning and priority setting.

Another challenge involves utilization of our system's facilities. We know that many of our acute care beds in NWT hospitals are not being used anymore, and yet we have pressure to expand other areas of the system, such as in meeting the special needs of dementia clients in our long-term care facilities. The department and authorities are currently reviewing facility utilization and will soon be making recommendations.

Mr. Speaker, as we look to the year ahead and in order to continue to work toward improving the lives of northerners, we are applying to undergo a process to review and update the Department of Health and Social Services strategic plan. The current plan entitled *Shaping Our Future - A Strategic Plan for Health and Wellness* was put forward and approved in 1998. In the intervening six years, much has changed both within the Northwest Territories as well as within the health and social services system. It is time for us to review and renew the strategic directions of the department and the health and social services system as a whole. All Members of this Assembly, the authorities, frontline workers and the public have a stake in this and, therefore, will be involved in this endeavour.

Furthermore, to follow up to the system action plan 2002-05, I am committed to coming forward in 2005 with a detailed action plan that will outline further steps to improve service delivery.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to spend a moment to mention the ongoing work in implementing the results of the September First Ministers' meeting on health.

I returned Sunday from the meeting of federal, provincial and territorial Health Ministers where the results of the First Ministers' meeting were discussed. This meeting was positive in that there is a new spirit of cooperation between the federal government, provinces and territories to move forward on a variety of health reform initiatives. Rather than repeating this information now, I will be tabling a copy of this communiqué later today.

Also, the Health Ministers from the three territories met separately with the federal health Minister, the Honourable Ujjal Dosanjh, to discuss the special \$150 million announced in funding for all three territories over the next five years starting with 2005-06 comprised of the following:

- \$75 million will be provided for medical transportation. The NWT share of this fund is estimated to be approximately \$3 million annually;
- \$65 million will be provided to the three territories to target innovative and adaptive strategies for long-term health reform, and,
- \$10 million will be used to create a joint federal-territorial working group to look at policy and program management approaches to health delivery in the North.

These discussions were positive and led to an agreement where our officials will quickly work out the details. Some of the concerns and interests the officials discussed related to the specifics of how the funding will be allocated and passed along to the three territories. They will work with the federal officials to ensure that the implementation of the new funding agreements accurately reflects the commitments made by the Prime Minister to the territorial Premiers.

In addition, progress in addressing a number of other long outstanding issues were discussed with the federal Minister. These include:

- needed improvements in dental health and other services under the Non-insured Health Benefits Program;
- the need for improved integration of federal health programming and delivery in the three territories between Health Canada and DIAND;
- the need to review functions, structure and location of Health Canada's Northern Secretariat as it is presently located in Ottawa, but it is supposed to represent and serve the North;
- exploring opportunities to enhance health promotion and prevention activities given the generally poor health status of northerners.

There was an agreement that the territorial and federal Health Ministers would meet again in February of 2005 to discuss the progress on issues discussed.

Mr. Speaker, in supporting our strategic goal to build a strong northern voice and identity, the people of the NWT can rest assured that the North is being heard loud and clear at the national level as equal partners at the table. Building on a foundation established by the three northern Premiers, we have made a conscious effort to develop a

very strong partnership with Nunavut and Yukon Health and Social Service ministries enabling us to present a united northern front. This has resulted in a better recognition, understanding and support of our unique northern health and social service issues by our provincial colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, let me reiterate that, over the last few years, progress has been made in providing improved health and social services. However, we have by no means solved the many problems we face. We are committed to working with all northerners, Members of this Assembly, the authorities, our health care providers, and the federal government to improve all of our lives. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs, Honourable Mr. Handley.

Minister's Statement 55-15(3): Activities Of The Ministry Of Aboriginal Affairs

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of the key priorities outlined in our government's strategic plan is to negotiate, with federal and aboriginal governments, resolutions to outstanding land resources in self-government agreements. As Minister responsible, I would like to update my colleagues on the progress that has been made over the past little while.

First, I want to congratulate the people of Tulita on their recent initialling of their Self-Government Framework Agreement. This agreement sets out the subjects and process for upcoming self-government negotiations and is an important first step. I look forward to signing the Framework Agreement on behalf of this government in the very near future.

---Applause

Meanwhile, I am optimistic that negotiations for a final Deline self-government agreement will also be nearing completion by the end of this year. The progress of the Tulita and Deline negotiation tables comes on the heels of news that implementation negotiations have now been successfully concluded on a new 10-year implementation plan for the Sahtu Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement.

---Applause

Mr. Speaker, the Akaitcho process negotiations have begun to address the core elements of lands, resources and governance. These subjects are made particularly challenging in the Akaitcho Dene's assertive territory in light of unique circumstances involving the City of Yellowknife and overlapping interest with other aboriginal peoples in the South Slave. However, recent efforts by all parties defined a solution to the Con and Rycon trailer court situation suggest the parties are prepared to find practical solutions and complete an Akaitcho agreement.

The government also continues to participate in negotiations with both the Manitoba and Saskatchewan Denesuline to clarify their rights to harvest wildlife in the south-eastern NWT while protecting the overall interests

of our territory, and particularly the residents of the South Slave. Over the summer, we signed interim measures agreements with the Denesuline to allow negotiations to continue towards a final agreement.

We have seen progress on a number of key chapters in our negotiations with the Northwest Territories Metis Nation. A work plan has been developed to conclude an agreement-in-principle in 2005. As with the Akaitcho process, the overlapping interest of other aboriginal people in the South Slave presents a significant challenge to these negotiations.

In the Beaufort-Delta, all parties are continuing negotiations towards a Final Self-Government Agreement and are jointly identifying the costs of implementing the agreement.

Mr. Speaker, before I finish updating the ministry's activities in the Inuvialuit region, I would like to pass on a belated happy anniversary to the people of Aklavik, Inuvik, Sachs Harbour, Tuktoyaktuk, Paulatuk and Holman, who celebrated the 20th anniversary of the signing of the Inuvialuit Final Agreement in June.

---Applause

As the NWT's first comprehensive land claim agreement, the signing of the Inuvialuit Final Agreement was an historic moment for the Inuvialuit people, the Government of the Northwest Territories, the Yukon territorial government and Canada. The achievements of the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation and the Inuvialuit Game Council are a testament to the success of this agreement and the hard work of their leaders.

Mr. Speaker, to continue my update on the progress that Aboriginal Affairs has made, I will now turn to the Deh Cho. I'm sure it comes as no surprise that the Deh Cho process negotiations have been sidetracked following the recent court action taken by the Deh Cho First Nations regarding the review process for a Mackenzie Valley pipeline. The GNWT remains optimistic, however, that once Canada and the Deh Cho First Nations address this issue, the parties will quickly make progress towards a Deh Cho agreement.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs is coordinating the GNWT's efforts on a very aggressive agenda aimed at completing a devolution agreement during the life of this government. In addition, together with our territory's aboriginal leaders, we're also pursuing an interim resource revenue sharing agreement with the federal government.

Finally, I'm pleased to note that the Government of the Northwest Territories has now completed its consultation with the Tlicho on the final piece of legislation required for ratification. As my colleagues are already aware, the Tlicho Community Services Agency Act has been introduced for review during this session.

Mr. Speaker, our government's vision of a strong northern voice and identity is dependent on the successful negotiation and implementation of aboriginal land, resource and self-government agreements in all regions. It is in light of the progress that I have outlined to you today that I am confident that we will realize this goal. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Before we go on, I'd like to draw the Members' attention to the gallery of the presence of a former Member of this House, former Premier, Mr. Jim Antoine.

---Applause

Welcome to the House. Item 3, Members' statement. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On Risks Associated With The Bear And Taltson Hydro Projects

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to use my Member's statement today to speak about the government's involvement in developing the NWT's hydro potential. Firstly, I'd like to state that I am supportive of the economic activity and involvement in the communities that are spearheading both the Bear River hydro project and the Taltson expansion. I am fully aware of the excitement that both projects have on communities like Tulita, Deline and Fort Resolution. I've had an opportunity to sit through various briefings and information sessions on both projects and they are both exciting and potentially key pieces of strategic infrastructure here in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, by nature, I am a risk taker, especially when I can make some logical sense of what is at play. Thus far, in both cases I have seen the Government of the Northwest Territories assuming all the risk. Funding for both projects has been borne out of government funding and, if I could, Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw the government's attention to a section of the recent Auditor General's report which was tabled in this House last week. Under section 2.10, the Auditor General comments in regard to the failed loan guarantee to Deton' Cho Diamonds, and I quote, "...while the precautions that the government had built into the contract for the loan guarantee should reduce its losses, it also provided funding to the company through other programs and the total cost of this failed business to the government is not known with certainty at this time." If that statement by the Auditor General doesn't scare our Premier and government, something is wrong. The funding to continue on with these projects and where it comes from is an issue we should all concern ourselves with.

Also, Mr. Speaker, this issue has not had the benefit of being debated publicly, yet the government continues to throw caution to the wind and supply both projects with more money.

Mr. Speaker, in both projects there is no customer and with no customer there is no business case that can be made for either project at this time. Mr. Speaker, we do not have to look too far to find an example of a poor government decision on power infrastructure. The people, the Government of the Yukon and its energy corporation continue to pay dearly for the transmission line that runs into Faro, Yukon.

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

MR. SPEAKER: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. There are no nays. You may conclude your statement, Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Ratepayers in the Yukon will be paying for the mistake for generations to come and I'm sure they cringe every time they have to pay a power bill in the Yukon. We have to ensure that in both cases we have solid business cases before we proceed. If we do otherwise, we are failing to protect the financial interest of our residents. It reminds me of the movie Jerry McGuire, Mr. Speaker. They said, "Show me the money," and I say it to the Premier today, "Show us the customers." Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Member's Statement On Importance Of Northern Commercial Fisheries

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the commercial fishing industry, along with the hunting and trapping industries, only occupies about one percent of the NWT's export, but more than half of our population routinely hunts and fishes at least on a part-time basis. These activities generate an estimated \$30 million annually in food. Fishing is very important to the well-being of the residents of the Northwest Territories. Wild game can be difficult to access at certain times of the year, but, Mr. Speaker, with about 48 species of freshwater fish, there is always some kind of fish to eat in the winter, spring, summer or fall. Fishing for domestic or commercial purposes is a very important cultural, social and economic activity to many northerners.

I would like to specifically focus on the issue of commercial fishing today. This very important industry is in jeopardy. Besides all the obstacles and hard work associated with being a fisherman, most of the many years of experience and expertise rests with people who are now getting close to retiring. Youth have more options from which to choose today in the NWT and there is little or no incentive to choose the difficult life of a fisherperson.

Commercial fishing is very labour intensive. Fish prices are relatively low. Options for marketing outside the NWT are limited by our federally-legislated marketing corporation. In order to realize a profit and be commercially viable, boats need to be outfitted with modern equipment. Fish processing and handling plants need to be efficient and well managed to support the activities of the fisherman.

Commercial fishing is subsidized by the GNWT, but the subsidies aren't fully accessible because established quotas are not being harvested. Mr. Speaker, this government needs to do everything within its power to support a diversified economy that isn't limited to non-renewable resource development. I know that commercial fishing can be a bigger part of that economy. We need some fresh ideas, some innovative support and a renewed commitment to this industry. Mr. Speaker, later today I will have questions for Minister Bell in this regard. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Search For Four Tuktoyaktuk Hunters Called Off

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last night I received a call from a constituent in Tuktoyaktuk. A Tuktoyaktuk search and rescue team, after a full day of searching on October 18, 2004, have decided to call off the search for the four young men lost while out hunting. They are now considered missing persons. This is not to say there is still not hope. The Tuktoyaktuk search and rescue team, RCMP and the Hamlet of Tuktoyaktuk are now accepting donations for the families of Donna Steen and Darlene Felix.

Mr. Speaker, once again I would like to thank all of the volunteers, search and rescue crews, and outlying communities for their support of the families of Frank Steen and Ronald Rufus. In closing, Mr. Speaker, once again our prayers are with the family. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Indeed, our thoughts and prayers are with the families. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Member's Statement On Location Of New Legal Aid Office

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I know that I have a habit of repeating things in this House, but only if I think that it's worth repeating, Mr. Speaker. So I'd like to just take this opportunity to clarify, in case there is any confusion out there, exactly why I'm so appalled at the government's proposal to open the second Legal Aid office at the Centre Square Mall.

Mr. Speaker, there is nothing wrong with the mall. I just want that to be clear. They got a good deal and good on them. What I'm only interested in is the government's actions in this regard. Mr. Speaker, I must say, when I first heard of this idea in a private committee meeting, a red flag went up inside of my head thinking what a bad political move this was. Then as I got more details, this picture is getting worse all the time. This seems to be a perfect picture case of how government sometimes stops thinking and loses sight of the objectives.

Mr. Speaker, I have fought hard in the last Assembly for more money for legal aid and I was told over and over that unless the federal government helped us, we couldn't really do more. So now that we've finally got some extra dollars, I want to see it go to dealing with the problem, not to waste it frivolously. I want to see that money go to mothers with children who are looking for spousal and child support, for example. I believe, Mr. Speaker, this is our job on this side of the floor.

Mr. Speaker, it is simply wrong, in my humble opinion, for the government to rent a shoe store knowing that it has to spend a whole lot of money to turn it into an office. That is called a waste, Mr. Speaker, and we can't, as a Legislature, look at government waste squarely in the eye and just blink to see if it will go away.

Mr. Speaker, just last week Mr. Roland admitted, in an ever so pitiful way, that he did not have one extra dollar in our situation of restraint to hire extra payroll staff required to take care of the backlog of the retroactive pay for correctional officers for almost an entire year. But apparently he has money to rent a shoe store and pay the money necessary to turn it into an office and pay for all the extra costs. I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, there are many Members here who could think of a few projects they could use in their riding for the money that it would take to turn this into an office.

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

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that most law firms in town -- many of them with fancy headquarters in Vancouver and Calgary -- would think twice before paying the premium rent in a shopping mall that this government is willing to do for the next five, 15 or more years. I'm sure legal aid services are not going to go out of business.

Mr. Speaker, the most important point of all is that one of the main reasons we have such a backlog in legal aid is because the government refuses to pay competitive hourly rates to private lawyers so they will be enticed to do family practice. I think we'd be better off paying the private lawyers more money so they can take on more files, pay their own rent in their own office, rather than government having to open an entirely new office and have more money going to the rent and fixing it rather than to the family who needs it.

So, Mr. Speaker, this is why I'm so appalled and I am not going to let this issue die and I'm going to continue to pursue this for the rest of the Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Mackenzie Valley Winter Road Bridge Program

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my Member's statement today is about the Mackenzie Valley winter road bridge program. This past July, much to my dismay, I received a letter from the Minister of Transportation advising me that \$1 million would be taken from the Mackenzie Valley winter road bridge program. The Mackenzie Valley winter road program is an ongoing capital infrastructure project that began in 2000 with the goal of extending the operating system of the Mackenzie Valley winter road with the installation of permanent bridges over the stream crossings. The plan for this fiscal year was to complete 12 bridges between Norman Wells and Fort Good Hope at the cost of \$8.4 million.

In this letter, the Minister assured me that the nearly 20 percent reduction would have no effect on the number of bridges to be installed, nor the abutment. He told me that

reduction in the funding would only affect grade improvements. Mr. Speaker, all of us can do the math. If a 20 percent cut to the total program budget for this year will not affect the bridges or the abutment, the greatest portion of the program must be absolutely gauged. I'm quite troubled with the Minister's officials who were unable to exactly tell me what effects the reduction in funding allocated to grade improvements would have been. I'm sure any of you who have travelled this road know that grading has a huge impact on the quality and safety of the highway.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly object to the reduction of the funding for this important project. The Mackenzie Valley winter road bridge program is an important project, not only for the people of the Sahtu but also for the oil and gas development in the region and the economy of the NWT as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that solid infrastructure is the key to development. Our highways are under a lot of pressure and it's essential that they continue to be safe for the arrival for all oil and gas development in the region and for families who use the road as a link to capital cities and further south. It seems like a crazy time to be delaying a project like this.

With the filing of the application late last week, the pipeline is now one step closer to being a reality. The Mackenzie winter road project will only see more industrial traffic in the future. The winter roads really take a beating from the heavy trucks. As a father, quite frankly it frightens me to think of my family travelling down the highway. I worry about the safety on the highway of the people in the Sahtu, as well as those who make a living driving up and down that highway.

Mr. Speaker, I put the Minister on notice that until such time he can properly assure me that the \$1 million reduction to the budget for grade improvements for the 2004-2005 Mackenzie Valley winter road bridge project program will have no effect on the timing and completion of the project...

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Yakeleya, your time for Member's statement has expired.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my Member's statement.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, honourable colleagues. Number two, that the Minister can provide some estimation of what possible effects this substantial budget reallocation will have and, finally, that the Minister can assure me that removing \$1 million from the budget this year will have no effect on the safety of the highway. I cannot support this reallocation of funding. I'll have questions for the Minister at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Member's Statement On Congratulations To New Chiefs In Nahanni Butte And Wrigley

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

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Mr. Eric Betsaka as being elected as the new chief of Nahanni Butte. This community of 117 has many challenges before it and I know that Mr. Betsaka will rise to the challenge for his people and his community.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to congratulate Mr. David Moses on his being elected as the new chief of Wrigley, NWT.

As a special note, I would also like to thank the outgoing chiefs for their hard work as well; Mr. Peter Marcellais from Nahanni Butte and Mr. Tim Lennie of Wrigley. Thank you very much.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

Member's Statement On Condolences On The Passing Of Lucy Greenland Of Aklavik

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: (English not provided)

Good afternoon, my friends. Today I'd like to send condolences to the people of Aklavik with regard to a resident of Aklavik, Lucy Greenland, who passed away on Saturday, October 16th. She was 72 years old and lived most of her life in Aklavik. Lucy was one of the remaining elders in the community who was able to speak the Gwich'in language fully and also understand it. Lucy was a very traditional person with a strong connection to her culture and the land. She was a descendant of the Kassi family of the Vuntut Gwitchin of Old Crow in the Yukon.

For someone who battled cancer three times in her life, Lucy was one of the few who never let her ailment get the best of her. Her children can be proud in acknowledging that she also was a person who was very compassionate to other people around her and from the other communities.

At this time, I'd like to send my condolences to the Greenland, the Archie and Kassi families for the loss of a mother and sister, and that her compassion will be deeply missed by all the people in the Mackenzie Delta. With that, mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Difficulties With Living In Remote Locations

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement yesterday I talked about education problems associated with families choosing to relocate to the larger centres. Today, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about dilemmas families are up against when they choose to reside in very remote locations in the Northwest

Territories; the remote locations that do not qualify as a community or are not located within any municipal boundaries. Mr. Speaker, there are families who choose to establish their homesteads in remote locations because of sheer enjoyment or economic or employment opportunities, as did Mr. David King, his wife and their six children. Most are located on our Northwest Territories highway system.

Mr. Speaker, I am talking about places like Little Buffalo River village on Highway No. 6, the Buffalo River Junction on Highway No. 5, Checkpoint on Highway No. 1, Blackstone on the Liard Highway No. 7, and Willow River also on Highway No. 1. Mr. Speaker, all of these places do not receive consideration for financial assistance should there be a family living there with children who require education. I feel that this government should develop some type of education assistance, be it gas coupons or monetary assistance, for the school year to assist them with the high transportation costs in getting their children to school every day.

Mr. Speaker, I would encourage this government to develop a policy or make changes to the current ones to accommodate or find ways to provide assistance to these northern residents. It seems impractical and unreasonable to penalize the families who live in these remote areas and not consider them a part of any municipal boundary when they do in fact contribute to the northern economic stratum despite the fact that they reside in these remote areas. I believe there must be a means to support everyone living in the territory regardless of the location of his or her residence, especially the children who at the end of the day get affected for the sole reason that they are pursuing an education for their own future and for the betterment of our territory. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Centralized Human Resource Centre

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today in the House to speak about the April 2003 Deloitte and Touche report calling for a centralized human resource centre. It will draw significant benefits to our government. During fiscal restraints and tough times, it makes sense to consolidate programs and services, and we share that mandate across the territorial government. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I spoke passionately about the TSC, our technological services centre, and what a great model it is and how it can work. I even saw enthusiasm in the Minister's eyes when he spoke about it yesterday.

---Laughter

I'm losing time on my clock here, Members.

---Laughter

Mr. Speaker, I'm talking about a model and I'm talking about how we can pool our resources and get a great bang for our buck. I'm a huge proponent for a centralized model for a government human resources section. In addition, we can gain in terms of efficiencies, cost savings

and a standardization of hiring practices. But if we don't have clear and fair hiring practices, who knows what the little autonomies out there in departments and agencies are doing on their own. We've all heard of the phrase Darwinian law; well, those policies and hiring practices could have evolved to who knows what by now.

Over the years the GNWT has established a number of programs and policies that are aimed to nurture a representative public service; the Affirmative Action Policy being a primary one, but policies are only effective if they are properly adhered to. So my question would be who really monitors these things unless someone complains? We need some consistency and fairness on our hiring practices. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that assembling government hiring in one centralized area will increase government accountability to implement a fair hiring practice to achieve a representative public service, but this must be done across the board. A large portion of our government public service hiring is administered outside of departments through boards, agencies and corporations. If we are looking to consolidate human resource functions where appropriate, and therein lies the critical mass and we need it to bring it together.

Mr. Speaker, Regular Members had the opportunity during the draft mains of 2004-2005 and spoke with their support in Committee of the Whole with the motion.

Mr. Speaker, may I seek unanimous consent to continue my statement? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, honourable colleagues. As the government continues to move forward with their plans, hopefully someday to create a centralized human resource function or department, it is my hope that they will do this very quickly and comprehensively and include all departments, boards, agencies and even corporations and commissions where, of course, it's reasonable. They should not have a policy where a group can opt in; it should be strictly everyone must opt in. It should be a mandatory policy, Mr. Speaker.

If I may end quickly here with a very short quote from the Deloitte and Touche report, "an integrated and coordinated approach to enable the GNWT to deal with human resource issues has yet to be developed. This lack of coordination is a function of both the accountability structure of human resources management and the human resources service delivery model." So, Mr. Speaker, it's about clear accountability, and later in the day I will have questions for the Minister. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On 2004 Core Housing Needs In The North Slave

MR. ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, according to the 2004 housing needs survey, the

percentage of households in core needs in my constituency ranges from 25 percent in core needs in Rae Lakes and Wekweti, to 36 percent in Wha Ti, and 37 percent of households in core needs in Rae-Edzo, respectively. These are the percentage of households that are dealing with issues of suitability, adequacy and affordability. Quite simply, Mr. Speaker, these percentages are extremely high.

I'm aware, Mr. Speaker, of several constituents in Rae-Edzo who live in social housing that have very good paying jobs at the diamond mines. These people have turned their lives and fortunes around, but cannot get out from under the arrears they owe the housing associations. Many people have told me the reason they owe arrears to the housing association goes back many years to when they worked seasonal work or when they could find work. Rents were calculated, Mr. Speaker, based on what they made. Sometimes the higher rent continued after the person was either laid off or when they moved or else when they went to a different job. That's where the majority of the arrears came from. Now because they make good money, they pay really high rent. Because they pay high rent, Mr. Speaker, they cannot afford to deal with the arrears they owe the housing association; a classic catch-22 situation.

Mr. Speaker, there are people who need social housing who are living in substandard units or are overcrowded. There are people who are living in social housing units who can afford a mortgage on their own houses if they could deal with their arrears. It makes no sense, Mr. Speaker, to me to write off a debt of \$20,000 and gain their social housing unit rather than spend \$200,000 to build a new one.

In the smaller communities I represent, there is not as much social housing, and people look after their own housing needs. The problem there is that...

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Zoe, your time for Member's statements is expired.

MR. ZOE: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude.

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

MR. ZOE: Thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, in the smaller communities I represent, there is not much social housing and the majority of them look after their own housing needs, but the problem in the smaller communities, Mr. Speaker, there never seems to be enough of the HAP or IHP units to meet the demand. There also needs to be more single housing in each of the smaller communities to reduce overcrowding. Another problem I have encountered since I came into this position, Mr. Speaker, is that my constituents that were verbally informed that they have been approved for a HAP or IHP unit are getting letters later on, like four months later, stating that they didn't make the cut for a unit for that particular year and they will have to wait for the following year. Mr. Speaker, can you imagine the... (inaudible)... that these people experience when they are told they will be getting a house? Can you imagine the emotional kick in the gut when you are told sorry, you won't be getting a house this year? There has to be a

better way of handling these applications so that people understand that just because their application was approved, it doesn't mean they are going to get a house.

Mr. Speaker, I am concerned with the level of cooperation and support from the district office of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation for the housing authority in Rae-Edzo. There needs to be a stronger presence. Mr. Speaker, on a positive note, I am pleased with the cooperative approach taken by the Minister and his department thus far in dealing with the concerns of my constituents and myself. It does make me think there is some hope we can improve housing conditions in the Tlicho region. Later on today, Mr. Speaker, I will be questioning the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Municipal Election Results In Inuvik

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to report on the results of the election held yesterday in Inuvik. Elections were held for the mayor and councillors, as well as for the district education authority. Elected as Mayor is the incumbent, Peter Clarkson.

---Applause

As well as town councillors elected were Gayle Gruben, Terry Halifax, Arlene Hansen, Karen King, Paul Komaromi, Derek Lindsay, Denny Rodgers and Clarence Wood. As well, Mr. Speaker, elections were held for the Inuvik District Education Authority and those elected to the authority were Nancy Chinna, Judy Harder, Shauna MacKay, Nick Saturnino, Gerri Sharpe-Staples, Clarence Wood and Ruth Wright. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Sustainability Of Universal Health Care

MR. BRADEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. It was only about a month ago that the First Ministers of Canada, including our Premier, Mr. Handley, came out and announced a \$41 billion 10-year health care funding deal through expansion to the health care funding in this country. That was a great achievement and something that all those leaders should be congratulated on. Expectations are high now, of course, that there will be results from this breakthrough financing deal and political deal between the federal and provincial levels. I will take the signal from the Minister, Michael Miltenberger, and his address to this House earlier today that it is early days, and, indeed, a lot of the accounts in the press and from other organizations try to signal that. But I would like to flag one thing among all the different levels and layers of, as I say, expectation. There is a program that is already on the agenda or could be included in this over the next few months and years, Mr.

Speaker, and that is the issue of sustainability. That just doesn't surface in any of the lines that I am seeing or hearing lately.

Mr. Speaker, if there is one thing that in my mind that was the catalyst for this deal it was the sustainability over decades and generations of this very cherished institution in Canada, our universal health care system. If I could leave one message on the table today, Mr. Speaker, it is that I would like our Minister, our Premier, and their colleagues across Canada to take a look at this issue, not just what can be delivered in the short term over the next few years on this, but how are we going to make the system work for the next generation and after that. That is what is significant to Canadians. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Item 3, Members' statements. The Chair recognizes Mr. Menicoche.

Motion To Move Minister's Statement 54-15(3) Into Committee Of The Whole, Carried

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, I move that the progress report on health and social services in the NWT by the Honourable J. Michael Miltenberger be moved into Committee of the Whole, seconded by the honourable Henry Zoe, the Member for North Slave.

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

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

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

---Carried

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister's statement will be moved into Committee of the Whole. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my statement earlier today I put the Minister of Transportation on notice of my objection to the reallocation of \$1 million in the Mackenzie Valley winter road bridge project. I have indicated in my statement that my concern centres on two issues. First I am concerned that the Minister would choose to pull money from this project as development in the Sahtu is rising. According to the information supplied to me from the Minister of Transportation, the Sahtu region expects to see amongst the highest, if not the highest...

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Yakeleya, my mistake, I missed an item on the order paper. So we will go back to recognition of visitors in the gallery and then come back to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to recognize in the gallery my father, David Roland, and my partner, my wife, Shawna. Thank you.

---Applause

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to recognize my constituent Major Karen Hoeft. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: I would just like to recognize the other people up there who haven't gotten recognized. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Certainly we welcome everyone in the gallery. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly. I'm going to apologize again. We'll go to item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 243-15(3): Mackenzie Winter Road Bridge Program

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my statement earlier today I put the Minister of Transportation on notice of my objection to the reallocation of \$1 million in the Mackenzie Valley winter road bridge project. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are to the Minister of Transportation. Can the Minister assure me that the \$1 million reduction to the budget, with great improvements to 2004-2005 Mackenzie Valley winter road this program, will have no effect of the timing of the completion of the project as a whole? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. McLeod.

Return To Question 243-15(3): Mackenzie Winter Road Bridge Program

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member is quite correct. We did, as per our Financial Administrative Act, notify the Member that we would be moving some money out of his riding to be redirected towards the Highway No. 1 upgrades. We are moving money that was targeted for the Mackenzie Valley road program towards realignment and we don't feel that it will have a negative factor to the projects that are happening in that riding. There are still plans to spend \$5 million this year, including the Sahtu. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 243-15(3): Mackenzie Winter Road Bridge Program

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a letter from the Town of Norman Wells saying that

the activity in the Sahtu will be increasing. Can the Minister provide me with some estimation of what the effects of are moving \$1 million from the grading portion of the Mackenzie winter road bridge program will have? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 243-15(3): Mackenzie Winter Road Bridge Program

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I also have letters from other jurisdictions indicating we need investment in their roads and, of course, we only have so much money. Mr. Speaker, we have plans to invest \$40 million into the Sahtu roads. We have met with the GED committee and they have advised us that some of our investments should be moved. This year we decided to move \$1 million out of the Sahtu, we also are planning to move money out of the Ingraham Trail program into Highway No. 1. Last year, we moved money into Highway No. 7. We have to be able to react and deal with the resources impact in all the different ridings on all the different highways. We don't believe this is going to have a negative impact. As I indicated earlier, this money was targeted for realignment of some of the ice roads and some of the grade work, and we don't think it will have a great impact. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 243-15(3): Mackenzie Winter Road Bridge Program

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Why then, Mr. Speaker, did the Minister put the money there in the first place? Certainly there was a reason based on that decision to allocate \$1 million for a particular project, or am I to understand that the capital infrastructure fund is arbitrarily set and arbitrarily changed on a year-to-year or month-to-month basis? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 243-15(3): Mackenzie Winter Road Bridge Program

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, this money for investment in the winter road program is part of the NWT/Canada Strategic Infrastructure Program. Our areas of investment were decided through a proposal called Corridors to Canada where a number of different areas were identified and accepted by the government. Since then we have had changes in resource developed related impacts in the North and we've had to make some changes. We've discussed this with our partners, the Government of Canada, and to date have moved some money into Highway No. 7, the Liard Trail, and are also planning to invest money on Highway No. 1. We have to recognize that the impact is happening all along Highway No. 1 as it leads into the Sahtu, and the road is becoming a safety issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Your final supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

Supplementary To Question 243-15(3): Mackenzie Winter Road Bridge Program

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister provide some degree of assurance to the people in the Sahtu who travel those roads on a regular basis, when there's a winter road in the Sahtu that we're moving \$1 million from the budget in this year's portion for the grading that it will have no affect on the safety of the highway and the safety of the people in the Sahtu who use that highway? As I indicated, there's a letter that was faxed to me by the Town of Norman Wells asking for signs of safety in the Sahtu region. Now we have no money for signage, so can the Minister assure me that reallocating the dollars from this project into other regions will not affect the safety of the people in the Sahtu? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 243-15(3): Mackenzie Winter Road Bridge Program

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, our plans are to construct 23 bridges in the Sahtu in the next five years, and we're planning to invest a total of \$41 million into that riding. We feel that will significantly improve the safety and the condition of that road and increase the season. I can assure the Member that over the next few years the road will continue to get better, and that safety will be less and less of an issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins. There's a Point of Order. What's your Point of Order, Mrs. Groenewegen?

Point Of Order

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to raise a Point of Order that when Ministers share information with standing committees like GED or the Social Programs committee, that we are obliged to keep that information to ourselves and not to raise it in direct reference in the House in order to obtain information about future years' plans. I want to raise this because Minister McLeod was just referencing the plan and decisions of his department. He made reference to the fact that these were discussed with the GED and the GED approved them, and it makes it sound as if this was done at the initiative of a standing committee, as opposed to the department. We share information in the standing committees, but referring to decisions in direct reference to consultation of information that happened and communication that happened within the standing committee is inappropriate in the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Do you have a specific rule that you want to raise your Point of Order under? The Chair will take your Point of Order under advisement and rule at a later date. Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Question 244-15(3): Centralizing The GNWT Human Resource Function

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was almost concerned for a moment that that was going to be called upon me.

---Laughter

Mr. Speaker, earlier in my Member's statement I spoke in favour of a centralized human resource centre and unit. Centralized human resources will enable our government to work more efficiently and, ultimately, get us better bang for our buck. In addition, centralized and standardized hiring practices will better enable our government to achieve a high level of consistency and demonstrate fairness in this regard. I expressed my opinion that all government departments, boards, agencies, commissions and corporations should be brought on board. My question for the Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board is will this government be moving to a centralized human resource centre model? Will it be an inclusive policy where all departments, corporations, et cetera, have to participate, and, if not, why not and who? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The Minister responsible for FMBS, Mr. Roland.

Return To Question 244-15(3): Centralizing The GNWT Human Resource Function

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the decision to proceed on this initiative was made with the intention of including all departments and the boards and agencies. We haven't dealt with the issue of including the corporations. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 244-15(3): Centralizing The GNWT Human Resource Function

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, will the Minister responsible for the FMBS commit to working with these corporations and possibly even boards or whoever may be excluded at this time, to be brought into the plan of this future amalgamation of the HR unit? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 244-15(3): Centralizing The GNWT Human Resource Function

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we will, as we are going down this road to creating service centres in the regions as well as at headquarters, be working with the departments as well as boards and agencies. Once we have that established and things moving along smoothly, then we can re-look at the issue of whether we should be incorporating those that are not included right now. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 244-15(3): Centralizing The GNWT Human Resource Function

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister tell me if this policy will be mandatory, therefore, all departments, boards, commissions, et cetera, need to participate in the centralized human resource centre? Will he ensure that all corporations -- I think as he alluded to -- will be involved in that? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 244-15(3): Centralizing The GNWT Human Resource Function

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I stated, there is a significant bit of work yet to be done as we go down here, and we need to get that up and running and get things working out and working with my Cabinet colleagues, as well, to ensure that what we have designed is going to be working. So we need to get that down first and then we can look, as I said earlier, at other options that may be out there.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Your final supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Supplementary To Question 244-15(3): Centralizing The GNWT Human Resource Function

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister refers to when work will be done. Will the Minister commit behind the principle and the rationale of why we centralize resources, such as yesterday when he spoke with enthusiasm to the TSC, as I referenced earlier today? If we do not believe in this process, we shouldn't be doing it. We need a comprehensive plan. Will the Minister assure us that he will be committed to us to demonstrate this, because GNWT staff and potential future staff deserve to know that the same system applies to them everywhere, that the processes and standards will be demonstrated fairly across the board? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 244-15(3): Centralizing The GNWT Human Resource Function

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I stated earlier, we are working on this initiative going forward. There has been work now and discussions happening internally as to the process that will be used and what needs to be done. To the principle of pulling our resources together and spending efficiently and effectively, yes, I believe in that, but we must take things in a way that is coordinated and planned to make sure that what we are doing is in fact going to be the right thing. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Question 245-15(3): Support For The NWT Commercial Fishery

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciated Minister Bell's attendance in Hay River to meet with the executive of the NWT Fishermen's Federation. I am sure the Minister can

appreciate this is a very unique and interesting industry. I just hope that back in Yellowknife now -- maybe it seems like a long ways away from the centre of commercial fishing -- I hope it's not out of sight, out of mind. There are very many challenges facing the folks involved in commercial fishing on Great Slave Lake, and I would like to ask Minister Bell if upon his return he has any new ideas as to how we could support the commercial fishing industry to ensure its continued viability? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, the Honourable Mr. Bell.

Return To Question 245-15(3): Support For The NWT Commercial Fishery

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me first start, Mr. Speaker, by saying that this sector, like other renewable sectors -- trapping, tourism -- is very important to this government, and we recognize the need to make sure that we have a diversified economy. I think when you see the work that we hope will be coming out in short order on the Northern Economic Development Strategy and the lobbying we've been doing with the federal Minister, that we intend to, on a go-forward basis, target these areas to make sure that the areas that do need our government's support and do need our help receive that. I assure the Members we will focus on these areas.

The issue of support to the fishery and the sustainability of the fishery is a very difficult one. I think there are, certainly, at this point, no easy answers. We do recognize though that we need to do some work and some analysis of the Great Slave Lake fishery and talk about commercial recovery of this industry. One of the first things that we've done towards this was to have an employee of RWED seconded to the Great Slave Lake fishermen's federation to work with them on this issue. It's a multi-faceted issue. As I said, there are no easy solutions. We're hoping that we'll have some constructive approaches, and I assure the Member that it is not out of sight, out of mind and we are working on this problem. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 245-15(3): Support For The NWT Commercial Fishery

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, some people within industry would be of the opinion that part of the problem is that we are locked into a federally-mandated marketing corporation. It is legislated, it is not something we, as a territorial government, have much ability to influence. But some fishermen would say that if they had more flexibility in terms of their ability to export and market the fish themselves, that they could do better than they do currently through the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation. Does the Minister, in the foreseeable future, see any opportunity to test whether or not in fact there are markets in southern Canada for Great Slave Lake fish outside of the mandate of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 245-15(3): Support For The NWT Commercial Fishery

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, this is a difficult question. I understand the concern from some segments, at least of the Fishermen's Federation. I recognize that the fishermen feel that they're getting very low prices for their higher-value fish, for the trout and whitefish and pickerel in that lake, and some may feel that they could be more successful marketing on their own. The difficulty is that probably not all of the fishermen have the capacity to engage in those marketing activities; some probably do. But as the Member has pointed out, once you are under the legislation of the FFMS, it is as if you're either in or you're out. We have had discussions about exemptions from that quota, and I'm just not sure that that is the wish of all the fishermen in the federation. If that is the wish of all the fishermen in the federation and they would like to see me lobby the federal Minister on that matter, we can do that.

There is quite a history here. I think almost 10 years ago one of my predecessors wrote a letter to the fisheries Minister at that time asking for an exemption, only to find out that some segments of the Fishermen's Federation were not in support of that. I think the department was soundly criticized for taking that action. Before I would do that, I would want to know that the entire Fishermen's Federation supported that initiative. Obviously, there are questions around how the quota would be divided up in the event we were successful in getting it, but I'm reluctant to lobby a federal Minister to later find out that in fact the Great Slave Lake fishermen's federation is not consolidated behind that position. There are some difficult issues here. I will commit, though, to working with committee and with Members going forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 245-15(3): Support For The NWT Commercial Fishery

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's obvious from the Minister's response that he does have a very good grasp of the situation as it stands today, and a bit of the history of it from the past and I'm very impressed with that. Also in reference to his mentioning of a secondment to the Fishermen's Federation, I also want to thank him for that. I think that was a very productive move.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the support that has traditionally been provided to the fishermen, primarily so far it has been a freight subsidy. Occasionally there have been special programs related to upgrading equipment. There was a program at one time to allow fishermen to purchase vessels. But primarily it has been a freight subsidy. Does the Minister see merit in perhaps expanding that to provide for a little more flexibility? The problem with the freight subsidy is that if the quota isn't accessed then the subsidy isn't accessed, and then this is money allocated by our government which actually never does benefit the fishermen. So could he foresee a subsidy program with more flexibility in it? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 245-15(3): Support For The NWT Commercial Fishery

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member is right; and in the past, the \$390,000 roughly -- and it has been around the same for the last number of years -- was primarily targeted toward a freight subsidy. We did change the program, I think it's two or three years back now. I don't have this information in front of me, but if I remember, there are about four schedules. One of them is for capital upgrades, one of them is to support new entrants to the industry, freight subsidy is still in there, there's another schedule. If I recall, last year the federation had a small surplus in one of the schedules -- I hope I'm right on this -- I think they were allowed to transfer that into another schedule where there was a bit of a deficit. So we think there's adequate flexibility built in. We think the money is being spent each year. I agree that in the past, it probably wasn't if it was reliant on the freight, because if the quotas aren't being reached then that isn't of much use to the federation. So we think that the feedback has been fairly positive on this. There are issues about who decides who gets which money and these kinds of things, and we are using the federation to help us with the determination of that allocation. But there are some issues to work through. We think it's suitably flexible. We think the larger question and larger issue is the long-term viability of this industry, because I think, as the Member has pointed out, even with the subsidy, there are major challenges to this industry going forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 245-15(3): Support For The NWT Commercial Fishery

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have one final question for the Minister and that is does the Department of RWED have within their possession anywhere some kind of an indication of if operating under optimum conditions with maximum capacity, what kind of an impact this industry could have on not just the economy of Hay River, but on the economy of the Northwest Territories? I think it would be good for us to fully understand what the potential of this is so that we have goals to work towards. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 245-15(3): Support For The NWT Commercial Fishery

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure that we have the comprehensive information that the Member speaks of. It would certainly be a good idea. I would agree with that. There are a number of variables in looking at this. Maybe one thing I should point out is, despite the challenges, this industry I think employs almost 150 people, both on boats and in processing. So it is not insignificant. It is important to our economy; the economy of the entire Territories. We recognize that. That is why we want to support it, but to understand the full potential of the industry would make sense. We know we are under quota. We know that that quota isn't excessive. We believe that if the quota were being caught every year, the fish stocks would still be sustainable. What kinds of ships would make the most sense?

Potentially, what would make more sense is to have one or two or three boats on that lake and possibly it would be more economically viable in that manner, but there are a lot of concerns about people who have been established in this industry for a number of years. There are many questions going forward. I will certainly work with committee and with the Member to see if we can't do a little bit of research into the viability of the industry were it at full potential. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 246-15(3): Funding For The Bear And Taltson Hydro Projects

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Premier, who is the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation. It goes back to my Member's statement that I spoke of earlier. It is the funding for the hydro projects in the Northwest Territories. I go back to the Auditor General's report talking about loan guarantees and having difficulty pinning down where money came from. I am wondering if the Premier would be able to let us know how the government is funding these hydro projects: directly or indirectly? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation, the honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

Return To Question 246-15(3): Funding For The Bear And Taltson Hydro Projects

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, a review of our hydro potential in the Northwest Territories has been ongoing since 2001-02. For a year and a half or so, the government funded the research of hydro potential ourselves. Then, later on, we funded those projects through the Energy Corporation, which is a subsidiary of the Power Corporation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 246-15(3): Funding For The Bear And Taltson Hydro Projects

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier didn't really answer the question that I had asked. If you have the Energy Corporation, the Power Corporation, RWED and ECE, where is the funding coming from? Can the Members on this side of the House and the public get a disclosure of where the funds are coming from? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 246-15(3): Funding For The Bear And Taltson Hydro Projects

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, if the Member is referring to this year, the money is coming from the NWT Energy Corporation; that is a subsidiary of the Power Corporation. Mr. Speaker, there was for a while a loan guarantee of up to \$300,000 to the Energy Corporation. That has since been cancelled, and the Power Corporation advised to take that into account as they do their revenue and expenditure statements for the year and

pay us less on the dividend side, reduce the dividends to the government. So, Mr. Speaker, for this year from now on, many expenditures will likely be done this way. They will be accrued by the Energy Corporation, and the Energy Corporation will pay less in dividends to the government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hope that answers the question.

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

Supplementary To Question 246-15(3): Funding For The Bear And Taltson Hydro Projects

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was just wondering, through you to the Premier, if I heard him correctly, the funding for the hydro projects is going to be channelled through the Energy Corporation. Does that mean that the Power Corporation, RWED and ECE won't be tapped for any other programs? As I mentioned earlier, the Auditor General's report clearly states that, because so many programs funded the Deton' Cho diamond company, we still have trouble today trying to find out where all the money came from. I don't want the same situation to occur with the hydro potential. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 246-15(3): Funding For The Bear And Taltson Hydro Projects

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, let me be clear that the direction to the Energy Corporation, which is partly owned by the Power Corporation, is that they will pay us as a government, as shareholders, fewer dividends. The dividends will be reduced by the amount that they invest to hydro projects. Mr. Speaker, that doesn't mean that the owners of the hydro project, assuming that these proceed, wouldn't also look to other programs for some assistance. Mr. Speaker, for example, with the Great Bear project, that one is proposed to be partly owned by the Power Corporation and partly by the Tulita and Deline land corporations. The Tulita and Deline land corporations could very well apply for training assistance, for example, or through some other program that RWED may offer, but they would do that as shareholders independent of the Power Corporation but part of the whole corporate structure. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 246-15(3): Funding For The Bear And Taltson Hydro Projects

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks, Premier, for your response. I am just wondering if the Premier is aware of the Yukon experiment with power and running a line into Faro in the Yukon and the fact that ratepayers in the Yukon territory are indeed paying a 15 percent rider on their power bills today to continue to pay for that legacy of putting that power line into Faro. I am just wondering what steps the Premier might take here in the Northwest Territories to ensure that our hydro projects have a customer and aren't built without a customer. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 246-15(3): Funding For The Bear And Taltson Hydro Projects

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On any of these big projects, anywhere from two to five percent of the total project is often spent on the conceptual and pre-feasibility and feasibility stages before we even know if we have a viable commercial project. So we have to invest some money up front. I am, Mr. Speaker, very aware of the Faro situation and the risk that was taken by the Yukon Energy Corporation in building a power dam solely to that one mine. I should also remind the Member, as well, and other Members that we also have a different kind of story with the Pine Point mine where one was built. It went to one mine. It worked out very well. People south of the lake enjoy lower hydro rates. In the case of the Taltson project, Mr. Speaker, that one we are looking at. We are very aware that mines have a limited life, but we need to look at whether or not this will work. We don't know that yet. We have been talking with our partners. We have been talking with the mines that have all expressed interest in it. In this case, we are looking at mines with a limited life, but we are also looking at at least three mines and potentially four mines that would all be buying power from this one project if it were to move ahead. So those are all risks we have to take whenever we look at any business venture like this. There is no guarantee in it. Certainly, there will be a lot of discussion in this House assuming this project keeps moving on, before there would ever be a decision made.

Mr. Speaker, I might add, and I am sorry it is a long answer, but we have to do a fair bit of work up front before we could even go talk to customers. We do not want a project like the one in Newfoundland in Joey Smallwood as days where Newfoundland is still losing money as a result of a bad deal that they entered into before they had all the information that was necessary. Mr. Speaker, it is important to spend some money up front and make sure we got it right before we sign any contracts with customers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 247-15(3): Eligibility For Student Financial Assistance

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, today I rise to ask some questions with regard to Student Financial Assistance to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. The Minister replied at length yesterday how SFA works. My concern is once a student is deemed to have not completed and is requested to return funds from a previous year or previous semester, how long is that student penalized, or, rather, deemed ineligible for SFA? Thank you very much.

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

Return To Question 247-15(3): Eligibility For Student Financial Assistance

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The student would be ineligible for one year, and they must also have repaid the monies to the program. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 247-15(3): Eligibility For Student Financial Assistance

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, I was just wondering if the Minister was made aware that there is some shortfall or shortcoming on how the students are deemed ineligible. They are given notice at the last minute. It is rather stressful for them. I was wondering if the Minister has any plans currently to review the students' progress and to let them know ahead of time so they are not stranded in some city or some educational institution and kind of left holding the bag wondering what to do next.

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

Further Return To Question 247-15(3): Eligibility For Student Financial Assistance

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is very clear in the directions for students when they are completing their forms that they must maintain satisfactory progress, passing marks and attendance. There is a clear definition of attendance that is set out, as well. In sending back an applicant declaration and consent, the students are required to sign a form that says that they will immediately notify the SFA program in writing if my or my spouse's personal information changes. That includes any educational changes.

The problem seems to stem from the fact that students can't get transcripts immediately. It takes a while for the institutions to get transcripts out and, therefore, the department doesn't become aware of a student's ineligibility until we get the transcripts, but the students should know what their marks are. If they haven't been successful at the required course load, and if they haven't attended enough school to qualify, they should be aware of that. It is clearly set out in the program. If they talked to one of the student financial assistance officers, they can get that laid out clearly. I guess we could consider, Mr. Speaker, putting up front in great big bold letters to make sure before you take any money from the program, that you know that you are actually qualified for it. But we send out e-mails. We make sure that, on the web site, it is very carefully laid out that you have to be successful in each semester in order to qualify for the next semester. Students are told that they should review their situation and talk to student financial assistance if anything has changed. That means if they had to drop out of a course, if they know they are failing a course, if they know that there is a problem, they should get hold of student financial assistance right away because there may be some impact on their subsequent funding. We encourage them to do that. During the course of the year, if things change, students should be contacting student financial assistance. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 247-15(3): Eligibility For Student Financial Assistance

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I really don't agree that the total onus is upon the student that is out there. They are just doing their best. We should do our best to encourage and support them as well. There

must be something the department can do to improve their process, because I do have a case this fall, in fact. A student entered the spring session, completed that, was approved for summer session and completed that whole summer session quite successfully, and then the transcripts came in. In the fall, they were denied fall session as well as required to repay the summer session and, of course, the previous year, so it gets quite expensive. I was just wondering if the Minister could comment on that. There must be a way to improve it so that we are not penalizing the students, that they are encouraged and we say look, yes, you made a mistake but, Mr. Speaker, I don't think that they should have to be penalized for everything that they have been trying to do. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 247-15(3): Eligibility For Student Financial Assistance

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is difficult to say that we could solve this issue without penalizing students in a different way, because if we required students to demonstrate that they actually qualify for the funding before we sent the money out, then students would have to miss every second semester, because from the fall semester they would not have a transcript in time for the start of the winter semester for us to get the money to them. So we are depending on students to know how they are doing in their courses and to be aware that if they are failing at a level that will impact on subsequent student financial assistance, they should be talking to the student financial assistance officers very quickly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 247-15(3): Eligibility For Student Financial Assistance

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just in this short week alone, there have been many cases with regard to trouble with SFA and eligibility of students. The students are traveling out of the Territories. I would just like to ask the Minister if he will commit to reviewing the procedures that are currently existing as there is some identified shortfall in the system. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 247-15(3): Eligibility For Student Financial Assistance

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday to Mrs. Groenewegen, I would be quite happy to take a look at what we can do to try and improve students' awareness of their responsibilities under the program. But short of refusing to issue monies without seeing a transcript, we can't stop this problem unless students are going to start to report that there is an issue themselves. So I will direct the department to look at what options we have to improve the communication to students to try and make them understand how the program works and what the implications may be if they are not being successful in school. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Question 248-15(3): Staffing Appeals At The North Slave Correctional Centre

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am not going to ask questions on the lease...

---Laughter

...only because I know that I am going to get opportunities in other items on the order paper, so, Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister of Justice. It is in regard to a topic that I was pursuing last week. While we were going back and forth with these questions, I have been given some information from the union that suggests that there might be some problems regarding why all the appeals that went on in the North Slave Correctional Centre, from the hiring that the centre had to do and why it took so many months to get through this. I would just like to know from the Minister, what is his understanding of why all the appeals had to take up to four months to clear? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The Minister of Justice, the Honourable Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 248-15(3): Staffing Appeals At The North Slave Correctional Centre

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I ought to be careful here because I misspoke when I answered some questions earlier on the hiring process at the North Slave Correctional Centre. I probably should have referred the questions to the Minister responsible for FMBS, because staffing is not the responsibility of the department. Staffing and the processes are overseen by the central agency. Mr. Speaker, all I can say in answer to the Member is that my understanding is that when job offers were made, there were people who were qualified to lay appeals on the basis that they had not been offered a job. They did that, and it took some time for the appeals to be heard through the regular staffing process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 248-15(3): Staffing Appeals At The North Slave Correctional Centre

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not sure if I got any new information out of that answer that the Minister gave. He is the Minister that sits on top of the correctional centre.

---Laughter

He's shuffling off the RFP chaos to Minister Roland, and now Minister Roland is responsible for all these hiring problems at the correctional centre. Mr. Speaker, my question to Minister Dent is there was obviously a problem with the hiring process, it took so long for the vacancies to be filled. He indicated in his answers that it was because of the length of time that it took to appeal and that's why they couldn't hire the new staff. But it appears that wasn't the problem.

I want to know from the Minister, what is his information about what other problems have gone on in hiring staff for the new facility that has caused such morale problems at the centre? I don't think that's the responsibility of Minister Roland, as much as he's in charge of lots of things. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 248-15(3): Staffing Appeals At The North Slave Correctional Centre

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last week when I was answering these questions I think some members of the union got the idea that I was referring to the union as delaying the process. I want to be very clear that was not the case. The process that caused us the amount of time to fill the positions is entirely one that is within government and it is set up in order to make sure that we're vigilant in our staffing to ensure that all applicants are treated fairly and in a manner consistent with government policies.

In this situation, there were people who were interviewed for positions who were not selected. They have the opportunity, if they feel they are qualified and should have had a job offer, to file an appeal. In this case, a good number of people who were interviewed did. In order to work through all of the appeals, it took a considerable amount of time following the processes as set out in our staffing procedures. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 248-15(3): Staffing Appeals At The North Slave Correctional Centre

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The information seems to be that there is informational knowledge within the union or people who do this kind of work that suggests that there is a lot of work that can be done to shorten that process. There is no reason, from how I'm reading it, why the government has this system set up in such a way that it takes the appeal as long as four months. It seems to me that this is a very one-sided operation. It's really the government that has set out the appeal process and the union is just following whatever was agreed to. I'd like to know from the Minister if he's willing to revisit that and see how we could do this better. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, this is a question related more to the process and I think it's more appropriately referred to the Minister responsible for the public service. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. The Minister responsible for the public service, Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 248-15(3): Staffing Appeals At The North Slave Correctional Centre

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Under the Financial Management Board Secretariat I have the responsibility of dealing with the staffing situation in human resources. In the case of staffing appeals, it is one area that is recognized that we've had problems in the past. There's been work done by Grant Thornton that

looked at the whole area of human resources within the Government of the Northwest Territories. The area of staffing appeals is one area that we recognize has some problems, and we're beginning work on potential changes to that process and setting it up so that we can, in fact, look at trying to streamline this and be a little more proactive and productive in this area instead of having a lot of appeal processes, grievances out there that need to be dealt with. We're trying to be proactive in there and move forward in addressing the situation around the staffing appeals section. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Your final supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 248-15(3): Staffing Appeals At The North Slave Correctional Centre

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was not aware that the Minister was working on this. I guess we will hear about it eventually if we happen to raise it. Mr. Speaker, I understand some of the problems that are within our system, people who hear the appeals are actually the people who failed to hire them in the first place. We have the judiciary and the actors that are in the same body. Mr. Speaker, I don't know which Minister wants to answer this, my question really goes to the impact of this situation on the overall internal human resource review that is taking place. Is the government, whoever wants to answer it, going to look at how to simplify the appeal process? I'm really talking about morale problems and human resources problems at the correctional centre, and Mr. Dent is engaged in an internal review and I don't know if Mr. Roland can answer this on behalf of Mr. Dent, but are they going to look at that as a part of their internal review? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 248-15(3): Staffing Appeals At The North Slave Correctional Centre

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we do recognize that there are problems with the process, and the apparent conflict of those involved seems to be a concern. We've looked at that and are preparing to try and address that and move that process to more of an independent review process where the union itself, as well as the department itself, would not be directly involved in that appeal process. We're working towards that. We hope to have something to my FMBS colleagues in the near future so that we can make some positive steps in this area. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Question 249-15(3): Health Priorities In The NWT

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With the health care debates going on at full speed, I would like to direct a couple of questions to the Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger, here in the GNWT. There's a list a mile long, Mr. Speaker, of priorities and projects and needs and necessities in our health care system. The Minister has access to many different organizations, levels of consultation, and lots of blue chip information, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask him, what are the top three health priorities in the Northwest Territories that he would like to

see addressed with the help of this new funding regime? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Return To Question 249-15(3): Health Priorities In The NWT

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are a number of initiatives we have currently underway that aren't adequately funded as they deal with alcohol and drugs, mental health addictions, to name some; trying to make a positive impact on the health indicators that are currently on the negative side in terms of the consumption, the prevention issues, the consumption of alcohol and tobacco, the basic diet issues, exercise. Those very fundamental issues for us are a real driving concern because they drive our costs. That's probably the first and biggest one. The other one is to look at trying to adjust the system we have to make it more efficient and effective and I reference, for example, the work being done in review of the facilities that we currently have that are underutilized and putting those to good use.

As well, we've made significant steps to come up with a plan to be more effective through our integrated service delivery model, to work more effectively and collaboratively at the community levels within our system, and eventually more effectively with education and housing and those other related agencies at the community level as well. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 249-15(3): Health Priorities In The NWT

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can certainly agree with the Minister on the priorities set out by addictions and efficient uses of our facilities and our people. But I would refer to the point I was trying to develop in my statement earlier today, Mr. Speaker, on the sustainability of the system over the years and the decades and the generations to come. How will the Minister look at addressing that critical issue for the future of northerners in our health care system? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 249-15(3): Health Priorities In The NWT

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are two basic pieces to that issue. There is making sure that the existing system is efficient and effective and running the way it should be running so that it's not wasting resources and we're dealing with things appropriately, like having adequate use of our facilities and having the resources located close to the community. From a system side, that's the fundamental piece that we have to make sure we have a good, tight, efficient system. The front-end piece ties into the prevention and personal choice issues that are driving our costs to a huge degree. Those are the ones I've talked about in terms of the abuse of alcohol, the smoking, the

improper diet, the lack of exercise. Those fundamental personal choices which tie into having a broader definition of health, brings in the schools, brings in physical activity, healthy living, adequate housing. That's where the sustainability is going to come. Unless we can get the personal choice issues and those drivers under control that are adding so greatly to the stresses on the system, the system we have will never be sustainable no matter how much money you put into it. That's the fundamental issue and challenge. We have to have a good, efficient system, but the things that are driving it as a society make it unsustainable and those, to large degree and in my opinion that I submit to this House, are still personal choice issues where we have lots of work to do on the front end, the prevention side. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 249-15(3): Health Priorities In The NWT

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, the Minister has my fullest endorsement for that approach. The areas that we all can make choices and decisions in ultimately will reflect on just how much we can rely on our health system for. I wish him the best of luck in that.

I would refer to one aspect that the Minister talked about in his statement earlier today. That was the reference to some \$10 million that will be used to create the joint federal-territorial working group to look at policy and program management approaches in the North, and this aspect of personal choice and how do we affect it could be one of them. Mr. Speaker, \$10 million to set up a joint federal-territorial working group seems like an extraordinary amount of money to put into a working group. Could the Minister give us a little bit more information about what that \$10 million will be used to achieve? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 249-15(3): Health Priorities In The NWT

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd be happy to share with the Member my preliminary thoughts on that particular issue. It's not one where there is clear consensus, but if the Member will also look into the statement I made earlier today, I identified a number of issues we raised with Minister Dosanjh that are outstanding, yet to be resolved, very fundamental issues about the service delivery model of the federal government; for example, the almost complete disconnect between DIAND and Health Canada and how they deliver services, non-insured health benefits, medical services to the Indian and Inuit people. The fact that we carry tens of millions of dollars in arrears from DIAND is a very fundamental issue that we can look at. It's going to give us, hopefully, the capacity to look pan-territorially at some of these very fundamental issues, like diabetes strategies, if we're going to make a dent in the health indicators and the personal choice issues. Those are very common among all three territories, and the federal government has a clear major fiduciary responsibility for health for aboriginal people in the Northwest Territories and across this country. How do we

make best use of whatever funds may be available under the aboriginal health fund that was set up?

One of the other possibilities that has been floated out there is the possibility of the creation of a northern centre of excellence. We have other centres of excellence across the country for different things. We may have the opportunity here to have some seed money to look at getting a centre of northern excellence that will help us deal with some of these organizational issues, some of these health issues. How do we come up with an effective diabetes strategy, or a northern response to FASD, in a more focused, coordinated way that has four major players: the three territories and the federal government?

I think there is tremendous potential here and it's a recognition, I think, of the Member's concern about sustainability. We can put money into the programs, but if we don't have a real forum that brings all the major players together, this will be an opportunity, I think, to help do that. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 249-15(3): Health Priorities In The NWT

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, these are very progressive answers and I'm really happy with the tone of what I'm hearing. I'd like to take this idea of the three northern territories working together. The Minister suggests that we are now able to present a united northern front. How connected are we? How formal or informal is this united northern front and what are its priorities? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 249-15(3): Health Priorities In The NWT

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if I could just quickly look back to fairly recent history in the previous Assembly where the three territorial leaders, the three Premiers, made a very dramatic statement about their lack of happiness and contentment with the decision that was made by the federal government in terms of how health money was going to be allocated. They took a dramatic step of walking out. There's been significant effort with the Premiers to demonstrate that kind of collective united front that's been carried on in this Assembly. I know in my time as Health Minister, the three Ministers have made a point of collectively sitting down to talk about northern issues. We meet with the Minister of Health whenever we can as a collective to talk about northern issues. The agreement that was made by the First Ministers, the Prime Minister and the Premiers, reflects, I think, the effectiveness of the northern alliance where there's a pan-territorial effort to put our issues on the agenda. I would submit once again, if you look at how the press has covered these issues, that when you look at how effective it's been, that it is effective. We're listed in the communiqués. We get very good, clear billing along with aboriginal issues and northern health issues as a separate component that has to be dealt with. I think there are indicators all over the place that demonstrates there is strength in unity and strength in collaborative and partnership approaches. Thank you.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to extend question period.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to extend question period. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Question period is extended.

Question 250-15(3): Funding For The Bear And Taltson Hydro Project

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to get back to the line of questioning and the questions, again, are for the Premier, the Minister responsible for the Power Corporation. I'd like to state again for the record that I am supportive of both the Bear River hydro project and the Taltson project. However, I find it difficult to imagine that decisions and money being spent is done so without any type of accounting or a disclosure of the risks. It is public money and I would just like to ask, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier, if we could get a full disclosure of the risks that are involved to the public funds that are going to both of these projects. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 250-15(3): Funding For The Bear And Taltson Hydro Project

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I have no difficulty at all in giving the Member a summary of the money that has been spent to date, as accurately as we can -- it may not be right to the minute -- and where the money has originated, Mr. Speaker. If that's what the Member wants, I can certainly provide that.

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

Supplementary To Question 250-15(3): Funding For The Bear And Taltson Hydro Project

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I think that would be beneficial, not only to myself but to other Members on this side of the House and to the public. I think over the course of the last four or five weeks, there's been no less than four or five different amounts bandied around on what has been spent to date on both projects. I think for the Premier to make the statement today that he is ready to have full disclosure on a, where the money came from and, b, where it's going to be spent, I think that's a great thing. I also wanted to ask him what or how this money is going toward trying to find a customer for both projects. I think that, to me, is the most important piece of this puzzle, is trying to find customers for both projects. I, for one, wouldn't mind spending money trying to find a customer. That's something I think would work for everybody. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 250-15(3): Funding For The Bear And Taltson Hydro Project

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, before these kinds of projects can move ahead, as I mentioned earlier, we have to go through a number of steps. First of all, there is

the conceptual step of whether we have a project. We then do the pre-feasibility. We do the feasibility which follows that. That looks at the engineering and environmental work primarily. Then we go into a project definition stage, which describes what it is we have to do, what it's going to cost and so on. It is at that point that we would be able to go and talk to customers about whether we have a project or not because we know what it's going to cost, we know what it looks like and we know the magnitude of the project. We then would go through a permitting stage, then into construction and eventually into operation. So there is a whole range of steps we have to go through before we can identify a customer. Mr. Speaker, we have not taken either of these projects to the point yet where we would be able to, with a lot of comfort, go talk to a customer about a price. I expect, Mr. Speaker, that within the balance of this fiscal year, we should be able to know that we have a project or we have two projects or we have no project. Hopefully before the end of March 2005 we would be at that point and would be able to talk serious dollars with customers both for the Taltson project and the Bear River project if we continue on the path we are on now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 250-15(3): Funding For The Bear And Taltson Hydro Project

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Premier, for your response. I wonder how much money the Government of the Northwest Territories will have to put forward for both of these hydro projects before we get a customer. I go back to the different numbers that have been kicked around, whether it's \$1.2 million or \$3 million. There doesn't seem to be one number that captures everything the Government of the Northwest Territories has put towards these projects. When do we hit that critical point? Is it \$5 million, \$6 million, \$7 million or a blank cheque for both projects and we worry about that later? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 250-15(3): Funding For The Bear And Taltson Hydro Project

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, to bring both of these projects to the stage where we have done everything and it's ready to go into permitting will cost us a total of about \$5.2 million. I don't have the exact breakdown of how much would be for each project. Mr. Speaker, I expect to have some clarification, particularly on the Taltson project within this week or next week, to be able to say this is a project that can go or we are too late or there is a better way of doing this because we are looking at alternatives. Mr. Speaker, I want to talk with the potential partners in the project before finally making that decision.

With regard to the Bear project, that one certainly seems to be moving along quite well without anything that I would call a show-stopper. I expect that by April, as I said, we would be able to decide on a customer. There is something over \$2 million that would have to be spent to bring it to the permitting stage as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. The Chair recognizes Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to return to item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery.

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

REVERT TO ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are two groups I would like to recognize before they have to go back to work. The first one is from the Nechi Drug and Alcohol Training Counselling Program. I recognize two of my constituents and other friends here; Mr. Donald Yukon and Rosemary Elemie from Deline. Welcome.

---Applause

I would also like to recognize three negotiating teams working on the Tulita Yamoria Self-Government Agreement. These negotiators have put in some hard work in initialling the final framework agreement and would guide us to a final AIP. I know most of these people as I was the former chief negotiator for the secretariat. I would like to congratulate these members who are committed to working towards a final agreement in three or four years. On behalf of the government, I would like to wish the negotiators well on their journey and indicate that we look forward to hearing how the process is going.

Please help me welcome the federal negotiating team: chief federal negotiator Kevan Flood, research officer Monique Campeau; legal advisor Mary Jean Rolando; intergovernmental affairs advisor Jarvis Gray.

---Applause

The GNWT is made up of our chief territorial negotiator Jamie Fulford and assistant negotiator John T'Seleie. Unfortunately, John is back in his community due to a death in his family. We extend our prayers to John and his family in this time of sadness. We have legal advisor John Thachat, and assistant negotiator Richard Bennett.

---Applause

I am pleased to welcome the Tulita Yamoria negotiating team as follows; interim chief negotiator Danny Yakeleya; elders Morris Mendo, Wilfred Lennie and Boniface Ayah; negotiating advisor Bob Patterson; legal advisor John Lojek; and executive director Cheryl Best.

---Applause

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Boy, it feels good to have our team on this side.

---Applause

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate this relatively rare opportunity to recognize two constituents I noticed as I was leaving the House. They are from Fort Smith: Ms. Una Simon and Rob Genaille. I assume they are here with the Nechi folks.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Ms. Pat Switzer, a constituent of mine from Fort Simpson. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. It certainly is always a pleasure to see residents in the gallery taking part in our proceedings. Welcome. We will return to oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

REVERT TO ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 251-15(3): Spending To Date On The Bear And Taltson Hydro Projects

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask questions of the Premier with respect to the hydro projects. I don't know where to start because there are many questions to be asked. I will try to follow up on my colleague's questions, Mr. Ramsay's questions, because the answers that the Premier gave to him gave me more questions.

Mr. Speaker, I still didn't get a clear answer. It was reported recently that the Taltson expansion and the Bear hydro project to date have cost this government, we heard, \$300,000, \$1.2 million, and the Power Corporation came on the same broadcast and said \$3 million. Mr. Premier believes the price is right. Which price is it to date? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 251-15(3): Spending To Date On The Bear And Taltson Hydro Projects

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I think there are a lot of different answers depending on what question is asked. To be clear, the amount that has been spent to date on the Taltson project is \$3 million. That's \$1.5 million, which I will put in the engineering work category and \$1.5 million for the baseline studies that have been done to date. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 251-15(3): Spending To Date On The Bear And Taltson Hydro Projects

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is very clear and very concise. I thank the Premier for that. Just staying on the Taltson for a minute, when I had

previously raised questions about the benefits of the Taltson expansion, I was confronted with why don't you support the Taltson expansion, it's south of the lake, think of all the benefits and all those high consuming industries that will come to Hay River someday. Mr. Speaker, in relation to market and in relation to a customer, could the Premier tell us what is the excess capacity of the Taltson not being used today?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 251-15(3): Spending To Date On The Bear And Taltson Hydro Projects

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, depending on the time of year, because power usage varies and it goes up as people turn on their Christmas lights and the weather gets colder and so on, the amount that would be available from the current project as it exists would be somewhere between eight and 11 megawatts. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 251-15(3): Spending To Date On The Bear And Taltson Hydro Projects

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that is, in my mind, a fairly significant amount of capacity not being utilized now. I have to assume if it's not being sold, there is no customer for it at the present time. This would lead me to ask the question if we have not, since the Pine Point mine closure, been able to find a customer for the capacity the Taltson already has, what makes us think that we are going to find customers for increased capacity? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 251-15(3): Spending To Date On The Bear And Taltson Hydro Projects

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, all of the existing diamond mines and the now permitted Snap Lake mine have indicated an interest in buying hydro power to meet their non-motive needs. So that's where your customer would come from. Mr. Speaker, the amount of megawatts that they will need would certainly exceed the surplus that is going over the spillway at Taltson today. So it would mean an expansion and the proposal would be to expand by about 36 megawatts to meet the needs of the additional customers if the mines were to sign on to an agreement. Mr. Speaker, oil being over \$50 a barrel, this is a fairly attractive option right now for anyone who is burning heating oil. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Final supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 251-15(3): Spending To Date On The Bear And Taltson Hydro Projects

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in a previous response, the Premier indicated that the mines have alternative options with respect to fuel besides hydroelectricity. Could the Premier please tell us what those other options other than diesel might be? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 251-15(3): Spending To Date On The Bear And Taltson Hydro Projects

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I don't think the mines have any options that could meet their needs other than through diesel-fired generators or through hydro. They may have some small things they could do with wind power, but the option I was referring to was a proposal that another Ontario-based company has given to the Lutselk'e band where they say if they could divert some of the Lockhart River, as I understand their proposal, and build a hydro project on it and have the agreement from Lutselk'e, they could supply power from there. If they can do that, Mr. Speaker, that's half the distance and that would make good sense. I have not heard any consensus from Lutselk'e that they really want to go ahead and divert a piece of the Lockhart River, but that's the alternative I was referring to, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Zoe.

Question 252-15(3): Options For Housing Clients In Arrears

MR. ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier today I made a statement with regard to the problems that some of my constituents are having in dealing with their housing arrears. Many of these people, Mr. Speaker, can afford their own houses only if they could deal with the money they owed to the housing association. What options exist for people or persons to deal with arrears and whether the corporation has any programs or services to help persons in arrears move into their own housing units? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 252-15(3): Options For Housing Clients In Arrears

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Right now, we do have a major problem with arrears. It is not only in Rae. We, as a corporation, have to realize that there is a major cost to going after people with arrears with court action or evictions. There is a process in place where the local authorities work with the clients to work out a pay plan where they can pay back their arrears over a period of time and also include their rent. There are ways that people can get out of their arrears, but they have to work out a plan with the housing authority and make an effort, so they can either get back into the local housing authority or access housing programs.

You have to realize that we have to be fair to the tenants that have been paying their rent, that have no arrears. We also have a lot of people on the waiting list that want to get into public housing. So we have to balance what we are doing here realizing it's a problem. People with arrears are having problems accessing our programs, but there is a payback plan and those people can sit down with the local authority and work out a plan over a period of time to pay off those arrears.

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

Supplementary To Question 252-15(3): Options For Housing Clients In Arrears

MR. ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if that process is in place, why isn't the Housing Corporation dealing with various clients in my region to deal with their arrears? It's a classic example the Minister gave us which could be utilized, but, unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the district office or even the local housing authority isn't going in the direction the Minister is suggesting. So that scenario doesn't exist. Can the Minister direct his officials to go in the direction he just mentioned? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 252-15(3): Options For Housing Clients In Arrears

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have directed the local housing authorities to go after people who do have arrears and we are trying to bring in half a million dollars this year just on collections from people who do have arrears. Like you stated, there are people who have arrears that have been going on for years and they are at a point now of making a decision. Do you take these people to court and collect their arrears? That is a very expensive and drawn out process. Or do you sit down with these individuals and work out a payment plan so they have an opportunity to get out of their arrears and also have access to programs and services. It's a question of fairness. We do have people there who pay their rent on time and are good tenants, but we have tenants who have not paid rent for years. We can crack the whip and lay the law down right across the board, but we will have a lot of people who will be going through the court process to collect those arrears, again, if that's the decision we have to take. But we are making attempts to get our local housing authorities to correct more arrears right now.

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

Supplementary To Question 252-15(3): Options For Housing Clients In Arrears

MR. ZOE: Mr. Speaker, I agree with the Minister in terms of fairness. Nevertheless, I would like to ask the Minister if he thinks it's more economical to either forgive a \$5,000 to \$20,000 debt and free up a social housing unit rather than build a \$200,000 new social housing unit? Don't you think that would be more economical? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Zoe. He may be asking you for your personal opinion, Mr. Krutko.

Further Return To Question 252-15(3): Options For Housing Clients In Arrears

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think that the question of arrears is one that affects all the local housing authorities. At the end of the day, if authorities are not collecting this rent, the money they are spending for the operational costs to be able to build new units is taken out of the budget of those local authorities, and that has a direct affect on the operation of those authorities in those communities. By not collecting

that rent, it is having a direct affect on the bottom line of those authorities, which is putting them in a deficit. I think in order to be fair to those authorities and to people who are good tenants, we cannot set that sort of precedent where you just write off someone's arrears and get on with it. If that's the case, everyone in the Northwest Territories who has arrears today will basically have their arrears waived, yet the people who are good clients and people who are in line to get into public housing, there is no fairness to those people.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Your final supplementary, Mr. Zoe.

Supplementary To Question 252-15(3): Options For Housing Clients In Arrears

MR. ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am of the opinion that the Housing Corporation's rent collection policies contribute to the percentage of households in core need in the Northwest Territories. Can the Minister inform the House whether the corporation has reviewed this policy recently?

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

Further Return To Question 252-15(3): Options For Housing Clients In Arrears

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, yes, we do have the policy in place in which we have the local housing authorities who have signed on implement that policy. Right now, as I stated, we are making efforts to get the local housing authorities to collect from more people in arrears to the tune of \$500,000. Basically at the end of the day, we're hoping to bring in more revenue to the local housing authorities. There again, it shows you that we are making efforts to bring more revenue back into the corporation.

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

Question 253-15(3): Addressing Power Rates In The Sahtu Region

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's about time that this government looked at hydro power in the Sahtu and the high costs that we have in the Sahtu. Mr. Speaker, I heard somewhere that the Sahtu community of Tulita pays almost \$400,000 for power. That's a high cost. I want to ask the Premier what is he doing to ensure that people in the Sahtu are going to see a drop in their power rate? There are alternatives there, and when can we get the show on the road that hydro may be looked at as a reality? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 253-15(3): Addressing Power Rates In The Sahtu Region

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I agree with the Member, that in the Sahtu, power rates are incredibly high. If it weren't for the subsidy that we have to bring the rates for the first 1,000 kilowatts for business and 700 for residential down to the Yellowknife levels, then it would be impossible to do business or live there.

Mr. Speaker, we are working on the hydro development potential, we are working with both the Tulita and the Deline land corporations. We have raised this issue with Imperial. They have agreed that it is technically feasible and are interested. But we are too early, at this point, to have a customer. We need to have a big customer, Mr. Speaker, because of the capital cost of these kinds of hydro projects, both for the generating plant itself as well as for the transmission lines. So we need the pipeline company in order to be able to get the lower rates all across the Territories.

Mr. Speaker, I would like that our government be the government that began in a serious way the transfer from diesel generators to hydro powered, not just for cost but also for environmental reasons. Mr. Speaker, we are moving this as quickly as we can, but there is still a fair bit of work that has to be done yet on both the pre-engineering and the environmental work. So I am aiming at getting a customer by the end of this fiscal year. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 253-15(3): Addressing Power Rates In The Sahtu Region

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Premier in terms of getting a customer before the end of this fiscal year, what is the Premier doing in terms of ensuring the communities of Deline and Tulita in terms of getting the work underway that would give some level of comfort to our potential customer by the end of this fiscal year? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 253-15(3): Addressing Power Rates In The Sahtu Region

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned before, it's mainly on the pre-engineering work and the environmental work that we're doing now to scope out this project and determine the viability of it and what we would have to charge to a large customer. I hope we are able to talk seriously with Imperial before the end of the year. When I say we, I'm talking about our government, our Power Corporation, the Tulita and Deline land corporations; talk seriously with Imperial by the end of the year. But we need to invest up to the end of the year about another \$400,000 to get to the point where we can move this one step closer to reality. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 253-15(3): Addressing Power Rates In The Sahtu Region

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would also like to ask the Premier in terms of the arrangement between the Government of the Northwest Territories, the community of Deline and the community of Tulita in terms of forming this. I understand there's a partnership formed in terms of having the corporation in terms of the involvement of the two communities in the Sahtu with the territorial government in terms of the level of partnership to see the viability of the Bear River hydro for not only the people of the Sahtu, but for the people of

the Northwest Territories. I wanted to ask the Premier if he can give me an update on the strength of this partnership that has been formed to look at the hydro development in the Bear River? Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 253-15(3): Addressing Power Rates In The Sahtu Region

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, the Tulita and Deline land corporations have created the Sahdae Energy Ltd., their energy company. We have talked with them about signing a memorandum of intent between the Power Corporation and Sahdae Energy shortly. I don't know the exact date when this would be done, but I expect within the next weeks we could have an MOI in place that would commit both the Sahdae Energy corporation and the Power Corporation to moving ahead with this as a joint venture. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Final supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

Supplementary To Question 253-15(3): Addressing Power Rates In The Sahtu Region

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have heard it takes money to make money. I think the communities in the Sahtu will be somewhat supportive. Another issue they need to look at on the Bear River hydro is the Protected Areas Strategy. Is there any relationship with this in terms of the Bear River hydro that the Minister could inform the House of? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 253-15(3): Addressing Power Rates In The Sahtu Region

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, yes, there is a considerable amount of work yet that has to take place on the Bear hydro project. As I mentioned, we still have the pre-engineering, pre-environmental work to be done yet. That's the \$400,000 I talked about. We still have to do more detailed environmental baseline studies, assuming that we move to the feasibility stage. There's more engineering work; there are traditional knowledge studies; and, of course, money for community information. So there's a fair bit of work to be done yet.

The Protected Areas Strategy is another one that we're certainly supportive of moving ahead quickly on, and we encourage the federal government to come up with its share of funding soon so we can move this forward. While there is minimal environmental impact in that we're not flooding areas as the Great Bear Lake serves as a reservoir, there is going to be some impact and we want to ensure that we're not doing anything that would be counter to the Protected Areas Strategy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Handley. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Question 254-15(3): Aurora College Lease In Northern United Place

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the GNWT has been a substantive leaseholder in the

Northern United building since it was constructed in 1976. Over the years, the GNWT has occupied three floors in the building with offices with a number of departments there, and at present Aurora College occupies that for their campus and student housing. An important consequence of the GNWT leasing significant space in NUP allows subsidized, low cost housing to be provided to seniors, for persons with disabilities and others with limited financial means in this building. This is absolutely vital for these people. The program needs of the Yellowknife Campus of Aurora College are expanding, and I understand various options are being considered to meet these needs.

Mr. Speaker, my question for the Minister of Public Works and Services is will the Minister please provide me with an update on the current Aurora College lease situation in the Northern United Place building? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The Minister of Public Works and Services, the Honourable Mr. Roland.

Return To Question 254-15(3): Aurora College Lease In Northern United Place

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I would be able to provide that information to the Member.

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

Supplementary To Question 254-15(3): Aurora College Lease In Northern United Place

MR. HAWKINS: That's a hard one to come back on. Will the Minister supply the renewal date of the Aurora College in this building, as well? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 254-15(3): Aurora College Lease In Northern United Place

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Yes.

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

Supplementary To Question 254-15(3): Aurora College Lease In Northern United Place

MR. HAWKINS: I'm starting to regret being so friendly to this Minister yesterday. Does the Minister intend to exercise the renewal process in this building, vis-à-vis the lease process? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. I would remind the Members to put their answers through the Chair, please. Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 254-15(3): Aurora College Lease In Northern United Place

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I had committed to, I will get the information together and provide to the Member. In the area of the renewal dates and if we plan to extend them, I'm not aware of the intentions at this point. We'll have to work with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment to see what the future plans are, and at that point we would make a decision. But what information we

do have, I will get together and provide it to the Member. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Your final supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Supplementary To Question 254-15(3): Aurora College Lease In Northern United Place

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if the Minister can inform us in the House whether or not ECE wishes to continue as the present core leaseholder in the Northern United building, will he be able to inform me if they intend to honour the commitment that provides subsidized housing for seniors, persons with disabilities, and other people on financial needs, as the base, anchor tenant to this building? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 254-15(3): Aurora College Lease In Northern United Place

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again, I'll have to get some information on this file and look to the extent that we are involved in Public Works on the leasing side. It sounds like we have a partnership with potentially the Housing Corporation on this initiative, as well as ECE, but I'll get the information together and once I have that, I can respond better to the Member. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Zoe.

Question 255-15(3): Bear River Hydro Development

MR. ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question would be to the Premier with regard to the Sahtu Bear River hydro development. Mr. Speaker, the residents of Sahtu I know would just love to replace their diesel generation with hydro electricity. But my understanding, Mr. Speaker, is that the project that the Premier is referring to is a huge development. If I recall correctly, it's a one-hundred-and-some-odd megawatt facility. If this project doesn't have a major customer, the communities are not going to replace their diesel generation power at the community level. Am I correct in saying that, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 255-15(3): Bear River Hydro Development

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, the project we're looking at on the Bear River would be about a 126 megawatt project. While that amount of power is more than enough to power the proposed needs of the pipeline and the communities, the communities would not be able to shut down, tear down and move away their diesel generators. They would have to keep it for backup, because in our climate we couldn't afford to have a hydro line go down, for example, and not have any alternative. So the diesel generated stations would stay there, but they would be used for backup or for times when, for example, there was maintenance work on the hydro station. But we could not displace them until we had a second alternative for power. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Your supplementary, Mr. Zoe.

Supplementary To Question 255-15(3): Bear River Hydro Development

MR. ZOE: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. The Premier didn't really answer my question. I realize that the diesel generation would still be used as a backup if the project goes ahead. My question to the Minister was am I correct by saying that if the project doesn't have a major customer such as the pipeline group, that no development will take place and those communities would not get hydro electricity from that project the Minister is making reference to? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Zoe. Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 255-15(3): Bear River Hydro Development

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry; I misunderstood the Member's question, but I understand it now. If this big project doesn't go ahead, then very likely the communities would not be able to make a viable hydro project for many of the communities. It is possible, Mr. Speaker, that Deline could have a mini hydro project of some kind, because of the proximity of that community to the waters that would be necessary. But for the Sahtu, no, I don't think it would be viable there or many other places in the Northwest Territories unless we have a big, anchor customer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Zoe.

Supplementary To Question 255-15(3): Bear River Hydro Development

MR. ZOE: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my understanding from the officials from the Premier's department, the Power Corporation, even with the mini hydro specifically for Deline, I understand it won't be feasible for the community to absorb the costs of building this mini facility. Am I not correct? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Zoe. Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 255-15(3): Bear River Hydro Development

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, given the current power consumption in Deline, it would certainly be marginal at best and most likely wouldn't be any cheaper in the short term than is the diesel generated power we have right now, unless the community were to grow or something were to change in the technology for these mini hydro projects. We have looked at them, there is some potential, and we are looking seriously, Mr. Speaker, at one in a community like Wha Ti. But again, a lot more work has to be done. Again, even the mini hydro are very capital intensive and likely would not be viable, I would guess, in Deline, but I'm not an engineer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Your final supplementary, Mr. Zoe.

Supplementary To Question 255-15(3): Bear River Hydro Development

MR. ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For my colleague's constituents, I don't want them to get misleading or false information from the government. I applaud the government for the direction they're going, and I think it's going to be a good project for the Sahtu region if we get this major, 126 megawatt project on stream. But nevertheless, the residents of those two communities of Tulita and Deline have to understand that no matter if it's a small project, it's not going to be viable, from my understanding from the government officials. In that respect, Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to ensure that my constituents understand the significance of this major project that the Premier is talking about. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Zoe. I didn't hear a question there. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Question 256-15(3): Pipeline Uptake Of Proposed Bear River Power

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wasn't going to ask any more questions, but since we are still on the hydro item, in an earlier set of questions, like I mentioned before, I have a lot of questions. Mr. Speaker, with respect to the Premier's reference to an anchor customer such as Imperial Oil, I am not really sure how the pipeline works but I assume he's talking about hydroelectricity to power the pipeline and I am not sure at what interval the compression stations along the pipeline would appear, but maybe the Premier could tell me that. It's going to involve a lot of infrastructure investment in transmission lines as well. How many compression stations on a pipeline like the Mackenzie Valley pipeline are we talking about? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 256-15(3): Pipeline Uptake Of Proposed Bear River Power

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, my understanding at the beginning, on the base, there will be four compressor stations. One of them will be located in the area north of Inuvik near where the main gas fields are. One will be in the area of Norman Wells. Another one will be toward Wrigley and a fourth one somewhere in the Deh Cho along the highway. There are four compressor stations in the plans I have seen. That may change as we go through the environmental review. Those four compressor stations will need approximately 100 megawatts of power. Again, this is pipeline information and that's their project description but that can all change. To power that much gas through that line, no matter how they do it, will take something in the neighbourhood of 100 megawatts of power.

Our intention, Mr. Speaker, is to first run a power line, if we were to build on the Bear River, out to the gas line and then north and service the northern needs first. Then later on, we would follow the pipeline south. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 256-15(3): Pipeline Uptake Of Proposed Bear River Power

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So, in fact, only one of the compressor stations for the pipeline is even in relative proximity to where the hydro would be generated. That's interesting because that's a whole lot of transmission. That brings into question the viability of something like this. Has Imperial Oil ever explicitly or in any other way say they were interested in purchasing this hydro power?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 256-15(3): Pipeline Uptake Of Proposed Bear River Power

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, certainly Imperial has expressed interest in it. They have also acknowledged that it's technically feasible. They have acknowledged that this is a way of powering compressor stations in many other situations in North America, but they have not agreed to a price nor have we offered anything to them in the form of a price for the hydro power to meet their needs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 256-15(3): Pipeline Uptake Of Proposed Bear River Power

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Going back to the earlier questions about NTPC, the parent company, the Energy Corporation, the subsidiary, a further subsidiary, Sahdae, I believe. Who is the proponent for this hydro development? Is it the Government of the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 256-15(3): Pipeline Uptake Of Proposed Bear River Power

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, the proponent for this project, assuming we have a commercial project, will be a joint venture between the Power Corporation, NTPC, and Sahdae Energy. Sahdae Energy is not a subsidiary of the Power Corporation, but rather a corporation created by the Tulita and Deline land corporations. Mr. Speaker, they would become the proponents if this is a viable project. Our interest as a government is in the promotion of this as a project and the creation of an environment where this is an alternative source of cleaner energy for our communities, as well as for industry.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned before, we are doing this partly for commercial reasons but also for environmental reasons. Mr. Speaker, as an example, 100 million litres of diesel fuel that is used in generating power from the diamond mines right now creates 283,000 tons of CO2 that is dumped somewhere in the North. We cannot continue to have that kind of development happening and pipelines doing the same things in the North and continue to have a good pristine environment that we are all proud of. As well as the commercial side, we, as a government, are interested in protecting this land that we have as well.

Our role, as a government, once this is determined to be a viable, commercial project, is then to look at it simply as a business project that is managed and owned by the Power Corporation and Sahdae as a joint venture. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Your final supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 256-15(3): Pipeline Uptake Of Proposed Bear River Power

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for a project of this magnitude, it won't be strictly financed from a lender. There is going to have to be equity involved. Will it be the NWT Power Corporation who provides the equity necessary to finance a project of this magnitude? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 256-15(3): Pipeline Uptake Of Proposed Bear River Power

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, we have not finalized by any stretch how this will be financed in the end. The financing will be based on the long-term contracts we have. Financing could come from primarily two sources. One is we could borrow from investors who are not in the power generation business; life insurance companies, for example, who want to invest and earn money, banks. The other option would be to take on other partners who are in the energy business. Those are decisions that have to be made once we determine that we do have a commercial project. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry, I don't have any.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. I'll take you off the list. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Question 257-15(3): Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Office

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In that case, I will take Mr. Menicoche's questions.

---Laughter

Mr. Speaker, I have questions for the Minister of RWED with regard to the Mackenzie Valley pipeline office. Mr. Speaker, I spoke with my people back in the Sahtu region about their concern about the location of the pipeline office. They have questions about how well the decision has been made. What will the role of the new office play in terms of the Mackenzie Valley pipeline? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The Minister of RWED, Mr. Bell.

Return To Question 257-15(3): Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Office

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we have had quite significant discussions on both the role of this pipeline office and the choice for location. In terms of role, the office will coordinate our government's activities interdepartmentally for the entire project. There are a number of departments that have been involved to date and will continue to be involved in the planning for this project. RWED is an obvious one, both environmentally and from a business development side. You can imagine Education also has to be very acutely involved with regard to training. MACA is doing some community capacity development work, so they are also involved. What we need is a comprehensive strategy and a comprehensive planning unit and this office will provide us with that support. It will also work on the development of many of the agreements we need in place, the socioeconomic agreement is just one of those. So there are a number of facets to this office, but it will provide a coordinated approach that we've needed for some time and I am now happy to say we will have. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 257-15(3): Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Office

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would also like to ask the Minister of RWED, in light of the office location, how is his office going to coordinate the information to the regional advisors who are on the ground, in the region, in terms of getting information out into our regions? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 257-15(3): Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Office

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The staff in the Mackenzie Valley pipeline office obviously will work on a day-to-day basis very closely with the regional petroleum advisors who are key to our strategy. Obviously it will be the RPAs on the ground in communities who will have their fingers on the pulse of the community, will know about business development opportunities and will communicate much of the work of the MVPO. So we are counting heavily on those positions. I know there are some positions that are still vacant despite the fact that we are funding those RPAs, and I can assure the Member we are working diligently to fill those positions because, as I say, they are critical to the strategy. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 257-15(3): Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Office

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell the House what the life is of the Mackenzie office?

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

Further Return To Question 257-15(3): Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Office

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's our sense that this office will be for the life of the initial stages of pipeline development and construction. Obviously we have a minerals, oil and gas division that speaks to development much more broadly. So what will happen in future, I am not certain. We do believe that with the development and the construction of this pipeline, we will see much more exploration and activity in the sector and I think that will stimulate a further need for government resources and there will be demands on the existing resources, but we have to wait and see exactly what happens. It was a good sign to see the environmental impact statement filed by the producers' group. The next major hurdle is the construction decision. So I know we are all very keen to learn what the producers will determine in the coming months. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Final supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

Supplementary To Question 257-15(3): Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Office

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, like the mayor of Norman Wells...

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Whoa!

MR. YAKELEYA: ...if they are going to run this office out of Yellowknife, perhaps we could look at the mining industry in Norman Wells. In the future, it makes sense. Could the Minister look at rationales to have the Mackenzie Valley pipeline office situated in the appropriate place somewhere along the Mackenzie Valley where the pipeline is running? I think it's logical and makes sense. Would the Minister give some commitment to that for serious discussions in the future?

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

Further Return To Question 257-15(3): Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Office

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think we have been quite clear that this is really step one in our approach to dealing with this immense project. We know it will need further resources in the regions that will be affected by this pipeline and by this development up and down the valley and we have to have an approach and strategy. I am relying very heavily on our joint Cabinet/Regular Member committee to provide much of that direction on how we adequately resource the regions.

As well, I know the Member is aware that I have written to regional leadership to discuss this issue as well, and to solicit input from regional leadership on how we might approach this. But, Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, I think I can state categorically that Hay River will be severely impacted by the development of this pipeline. The impacts on infrastructure in Hay River, because of its location as a logical hub for logistics and transportation, will be immense. It does make sense in my mind to have resources on the ground in Hay River. Does that preclude or mean that we don't need to resource the other communities up and down the valley? No, it doesn't, Mr.

Speaker, and we will certainly be working on that in the coming months. Thank you.

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

Question 258-15(3): Ensuring Winter Road Safety In The Sahtu Region

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Minister of Transportation a question with regard to the increased activity of oil and gas in the Sahtu. What is the Minister doing this winter in terms of increasing the safety in the Sahtu with regard to the winter road, mostly the...(inaudible)...that would need some special attention? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister of Transportation, Mr. McLeod.

Return To Question 258-15(3): Ensuring Winter Road Safety In The Sahtu Region

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The issue of safety has been raised in a number of communities during our tour of the Sahtu. That was an area that is receiving a lot of activity, a lot of transportation, because of the oil and gas activities up there. We have heard numerous issues being brought forward by the communities. The biggest one is having some more of a presence with our highway patrol and that's something we are looking at. We are also looking at the signage that needs to be done up there and we are looking at how we can accommodate that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 258-15(3): Ensuring Winter Road Safety In The Sahtu Region

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would ask if the Minister would commit to do more than look at it, but put together an action plan for the people of the Sahtu that they can physically see signs going up on the winter road and they can see the presence of law enforcement officers to help with the safety of these heavy vehicles that come up into the Sahtu. I am afraid that there is an accident waiting to happen in the Sahtu with regard to the increase of oil and gas activity that's going to be happening up there. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 258-15(3): Ensuring Winter Road Safety In The Sahtu Region

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, once again, I wish to assure the Member that we are aware of the need for signs in the Sahtu. We will start putting the sign action plan, as he requested, together and try to get something in place. We are hoping that we will also work with industry. We have had several meetings with different companies to look at ways we can work with them to improve the safety of the road in the Mackenzie Valley area. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 258-15(3): Ensuring Winter Road Safety In The Sahtu Region

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Minister McLeod. There is also an issue on the winter road project of the Great Bear ice crossing. The elders have said over the years that the ice has been decreasing and is getting thinner and thinner. We are looking at other alternatives to using that winter road. They want to look at all options. Would the Minister be committed to talking to the people in Deline in terms of options about the winter road routing?

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

Further Return To Question 258-15(3): Ensuring Winter Road Safety In The Sahtu Region

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The issue of climate change has been something that's been becoming more and more serious as we start to see changes in our transportation infrastructure. This past summer, we signed an agreement to work with Transport Canada to do a climate change study that would look at what climate change is doing to our infrastructure. The winter roads around Deline are of concern. We've highlighted this as a scenario we should look at. We will provide the results as we receive them. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Question 259-15(3): Interest In The Bear River Hydro Development

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to follow up with a couple more questions to the Premier on the proposed hydro development on the Bear River. Mr. Speaker, the Premier referred to the financing on this project as potentially being money borrowed from investors not involved in the energy business or those who perhaps are in the energy business. Has the Government of the Northwest Territories or the Power Corporation ever received solicited or unsolicited expression of interest by a private company in the energy development business interested in the Bear River development? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Minister responsible for the Power Corporation, the honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

Return To Question 259-15(3): Interest In The Bear River Hydro Development

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, yes, the government has received inquiries and verbal expressions of interest in the hydro potential in the Northwest Territories. Included in that, of course, would be the potential of the Bear River. It's only, Mr. Speaker, I want to emphasize, inquiries only. It's nothing as formal as a proposal. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 259-15(3): Interest In The Bear River Hydro Development

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, certainly in the Premier's former response, the idea of alternative and cleaner energy in the North is a very noble endeavour on the part of this government, which I support. There are other ways besides hydro to get cleaner fuel. In terms of the customer base that the government is looking at, has the Premier ever heard of natural gas as an alternative to hydro and as an opportunity to diesel being a viable option? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 259-15(3): Interest In The Bear River Hydro Development

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, yes, interestingly, I have heard of it.

---Laughter

Mr. Speaker, I might say as well -- I don't want to give information on companies who have expressed interest -- one of the companies who has expressed interest in hydro potential in the North is a company that's in the business of transmission lines for natural gas. People do not think of these things in stovepipes, but rather look at combinations of energy. So I am not surprised that companies look at all of the alternatives, including hydro and natural gas. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Time for question period has expired, however I will allow a few more supplementaries. Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 259-15(3): Interest In The Bear River Hydro Development

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I also respect the aspirations of the people in the Sahtu to have more affordable access to power supply. However, it seems that maybe some of the information out there isn't as complete as it could be in terms of the viability. For example, to get the hydro from where it's generated to the communities and then powered down requires substations and transmission infrastructure that's worth millions and millions of dollars. Has anyone taken the community as a case profile and applied the economics to it to give us any kind of an idea how many years we would be looking for some kind of a payback on diesel replacement? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 259-15(3): Interest In The Bear River Hydro Development

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, that's the kind of pre-feasibility and feasibility work that's ongoing. We know we have to step up the power to have it carried and aligned long distances and we have to step it down again when it comes to a small community. There may, Mr. Speaker, be situations where it just isn't cost effective to step it down as you go past a very small community. But those are studies that have to be done yet, Mr. Speaker. There is considerable work to be done on both the Taltson

project to bring it to the permitting stage and also on the Bear River project. So we need to look at both of these.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you in the case of the Taltson one, the initial work we've done shows that it would not be worth it, for example, to take a high voltage power line within 50 or 80 kilometres of Lutselk'e, step it down and then carry it at a lower voltage line into the community. It would be more economical for us to provide the power in an alternative way for that community in that scenario. We have not worked it out for each of the communities along the Mackenzie Valley. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Item 7, written questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

ITEM 7: WRITTEN QUESTION

Written Question 41-15(3): Winter Roads In The Sahtu

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is to the Minister of Transportation. Mr. Speaker, the Sahtu region has recently witnessed an increase in the volume of traffic driving our winter road.

1. Given the period the winter roads are in operation and the increase in oil and gas activities, what types of tracking methods are used by the department to keep track of numbers of vehicles?
2. How many accidents were reported within the Sahtu winter road system last year?
3. How or what steps have the department implemented in the Sahtu for safety measures?
4. What are the policies to handle emergency responses for travellers within the Sahtu region?

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Hawkins.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hey!

Written Question 42-15(3): Organizations Receiving Year To Year Funding

MR. HAWKINS: Be nice to the Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My written question is with regard to organizations that presently receive year-to-year funding.

1. What are the names of year-to-year funding organizations?
2. Length of time that each organization has been receiving year-to-year funding?
3. What is the life of each financial commitment of its expected sunset each year?
4. How is each financial commitment renewed, either by agreement, business plan or other reason?
5. What is the amount of each commitment?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Written Question 43-15(3): School Funding Policies

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Honourable Charles Dent, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

1. What portion of funding to divisional education authorities is allocated to assist families who reside outside the education district but have children registered in the DEA schools?
2. Is the funding at the sole discretion of each DEA?
3. What options, besides the home schooling option, would families have to address this problem?
4. What direction is the Department of Education intending to take to eliminate this old problem?

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Item 7, written questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Written Question 44-15(3): Deton' Cho Corporation Funding

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board.

Would the Minister provide a list of the total amount of grants, contributions, or any other agreements to the Deton' Cho Corporation or any subsidiary companies owned by them, through all GNWT programs for the five years? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. 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 of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

ITEM 13: TABELING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 72-15(3): News Release Re: Annual Conference Of Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Of Health, Vancouver, B.C., October 16-17, 2004

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following news release entitled Annual Conference of Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers of Health, Vancouver, B.C., October 16 to 17, 2004. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Item 13, tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motion for first reading of bills. The honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 15: NOTICES OF MOTION FOR FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 17: Modernization Of Benefits And Obligations Act

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, October 21, 2004, I will move that Bill 17, Modernization of Benefits and Obligations Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Bill 18: An Act To Amend The Territorial Court Act

As well, Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, October 21, 2004, I will move that Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Territorial Court Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Item 15, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Item 17, first reading of bills. The Minister responsible for FMBS, Mr. Roland.

ITEM 17: FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 13: Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2004-2005

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, that Bill 13, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2004-2005, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried.

Bill 13 has had first reading. Item 17, first reading of bills. Mr. Roland.

Bill 14: Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2003-2004

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that Bill 14, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2003-2004, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried.

Bill 14 has had first reading. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. The Minister responsible for FMBS, Mr. Roland.

ITEM 18: SECOND READING OF BILLS**Bill 13: Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2004-2005**

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I moved, seconded by the honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, that Bill 13, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2004-2005, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill makes supplementary appropriations for the Government of the Northwest Territories for the 2004-2005 fiscal year. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried.

Bill 13 has had second reading and is referred to Committee of the Whole. Item 18, second reading of bills. Mr. Roland.

Bill 14: Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2003-2004

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that Bill 14, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2003-2004, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill makes supplementary appropriations for the Government of the Northwest Territories for the 2003-04 fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried.

Bill 14 has had second reading and is referred to Committee of the Whole. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in Committee of the whole of bills and other matters: Committee Report 17-15(3), Minister's Statement 48-15(3), Sessional Statement; Minister's Statement 49-15(3), Fiscal Update; Minister's Statement 54-15(3), Progress Report on Health and Social Services in the NWT; Bill 10, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2004-2005; Bill 13, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2004-2005; and, Bill 14, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2003-2004, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I will call Committee of the Whole to order. We have Committee Report 7-15(3) and Bill 10 before us today. There is also Minister's Statement 54-15(3), Minister's Statement 48-

15(3), Minister's Statement 49-15(3), Bill 13 and Bill 14. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Madam Chair, we wish to consider Committee Report 7-15(3) and Ministers' statements 48-15(3), 49-15(3) and 54-15(3), as well as Bill 10.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. We will proceed with those items after a short break. Does the committee agree with what we are going to do today as outlined by Mr. Menicoche?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Does committee agree we will take a break?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. We will take a short break.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I will call Committee of the Whole back to order. We have Committee Report 7-15(3), Report on the Review of the Information and Privacy Commissioner's Annual Report 2002-2003. I am going to ask Mr. Menicoche, the chair of the Accountability and Oversight, to give us a brief overview of this committee report. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Madam Chair. This Report on the Review of the Information and Privacy Commissioner's Annual Report 2002-2003 was read into the public record by myself as chair of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight. There are three committee motions that I would like to speak to, Madam Chair.

Committee Motion 17-15(3): Municipal Compliance With Access To Information And Protection Of Privacy Legislation, Carried

I move that this committee recommends that the government work with the NWT Association of Communities to assess the resources required for municipal governments to be able to comply with access to information and protection of privacy legislation and to develop an implementation plan for such legislation.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I believe all members have a copy of the motion before them. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Question is being called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Madam Chair. The deputy chair will now speak to the other two motions. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Hawkins.

Committee Motion 18-15(3): Monitor Effectiveness To Personal Information Protection And Electronics Documents Act, Carried

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. I move that this committee recommends that the government monitor the effectiveness of the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act in the NWT and prepare its own report with the recommendations on whether the NWT needs its own legislation following the 2006 review of the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act by the House of Commons. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The motion is in order. To the motion. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to speak briefly to the motion. In her presentations to us, the Information and Privacy Commissioner gave us notice and told us as a Legislature to consider the future and present we have in this electronic information age, and we should be addressing our minds to coming up with policies and regulations that would protect the privacy of individuals. We don't have the legislation that governs that. The federal government has one, and that's the legislation that is referred to in this motion. It's not clear, because this is still very new, whether or not this federal legislation would be sufficient to protect the privacy of the residents in the Northwest Territories. I do believe that there is agreement in our committee that this is definitely an area that is important and we should address our minds to.

So by passing this motion, I am hoping that this will send a signal to the government that this is something that the government has to look into, and they should do their analysis about whether or not they should introduce some sort of legislation or policy and moving out to the general population.

I just wanted to make a short statement saying I support this motion and that I would like to have the government address their minds to it as well. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Lee. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Question is being called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Hawkins.

Committee Motion 19-15(3): Contracting Clauses Requiring Compliance With The Access To Information And Privacy Protection Act, Carried

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that this committee recommends that the government investigate whether its contracts currently include clauses requiring compliance with the Access to Information and Protection and Privacy Act and, if not, that the government add such clauses to any outsourcing contracts where a business would be creating records that would otherwise

be government records or handling personal information on behalf of the government. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Question is being called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Does the committee agree that consideration of Committee Report 7-15(3) has been concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Does the committee agree that we move onto Bill 10, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2004-2005? Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Does the committee agree that we would ask Mr. Roland if he would like to do his opening remarks? Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. The purpose of the Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2004-2005, is to authorize the forgiveness of certain debts listed in the schedule of the act. Pursuant to section 25(1) of the Financial Administration Act, the forgiveness of a debt of the government exceeding \$1,000 must receive Legislative Assembly approval.

When a debt is forgiven, no further collection action shall be pursued. The forgiveness being proposed in this act will not require a new appropriation, allowances for doubtful accounts were charged to an appropriation at the time it was determined that collection of the debts was considered unlikely.

Accounts being recommended for forgiveness are the result of bankruptcy, compromised settlements and/or are in the public interest. In cases where a compromised settlement is reached, the following factors have been considered: the possibility for future recoveries; the cost of continual legal actions; and, the value of security. For example, do the personal guarantees hold a realizable worth?

Madam Chair, I am prepared to answer members' questions. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. This is an appropriation bill, therefore, there is no formal review by committee. Does the committee agree that Mr. Roland be allowed to bring witnesses to the table?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. I will ask the Sergeant-at-Arms if he will please escort in the witnesses for Mr. Roland.

I would like to call upon Mr. Menicoche, chair of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight to

read the chair's remarks with respect to Bill 10. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight reviewed Bill 10, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2004-2005, at its meeting on August 24, 2004. The purpose of Bill 10 is to authorize the forgiveness of debts to the government exceeding \$1,000. This is pursuant to section 25(1) of the Financial Administration Act that states that the forgiveness of debts over \$1,000 requires approval of the Legislative Assembly.

Unlike Bill 9, Write-off of Debts Act, once a debt is forgiven, there is no further collection action taken. Typically debts being forgiven are the results of bankruptcy, compromise or negotiated settlements or are in the public interest.

There is no new appropriation required to forgive these debts, as an allowance already exists within the departments' budget for doubtful accounts.

The committee considered and adopted one amendment at the request of the government during the committee review stage. This amendment reviews the amount of money that would have to be forgiven by \$3,037.81. This is because one individual was able to provide the necessary paperwork for a portion of her student loan and the applicable interest to be forgiven under the Student Financial Assistance program.

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight has no major concerns with the bill, as amended and reprinted. Individual members may have comments or questions as we proceed. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. I would like to ask Mr. Roland if he would please introduce his witnesses, for the record.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. With me is Mr. Lew Voytilla, secretary to the Financial Management Board.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Are there any comments on Bill 10? Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have just a few brief comments. Is it within the scope of the collection process? In order to get our money back, do we report this money outstanding to credit agencies? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. It is currently our practice, as the Government of the Northwest Territories, to do that, but in the case of BCC, that is not the case? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Mr. Minister. Specifically to the BCC, are you able to provide a reason as to why? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have Mr. Voytilla supply that in detail.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Mr. Voytilla.

MR. VOYTILLA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would just make a note that this is the forgiveness act, so generally the items coming forward in this bill, there is no recourse to the debtor because of bankruptcy or the debt is statute barred. So the issue of reporting a bad debt to the credit bureau is probably less applicable to this act, probably more to the write-off act. Our policy, as a government, is to advise the credit bureau of our bad debts. The BCC currently does not do that on all their accounts, to our understanding. I believe in our discussions with them, that they are reviewing that policy and will be deliberating that with their board in the near future.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Voytilla. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I believe that satisfies my initial concerns.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I know the Minister has said he has exhausted all avenues of collection on these accounts, but can he say today with 100 percent conviction that none of these individuals actually work for the GNWT? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. I cannot say that all the people listed in this forgiveness act are not potential employees of the Government of the Northwest Territories. The problem we have there is if the time allotted or as allowed through legislation expires, as they call it statute barred, we are unable to proceed. So if someone has had a debt with the government a number of years passed and has applied for employment and has gained employment with the Government of the Northwest Territories, we have no avenue to go and recoup that.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. What safeguards are in place for one department or one portion of the government knowing what the other one is doing? For instance, some of these folks here who we are going to be forgiving their debts that they owe to the GNWT, but from what the Minister is saying that wouldn't exclude them from walking into an RWED office and getting a BDF grant. I think there has to be some kind of safeguard in place that red flags these individuals, so they don't take advantage of the system down the road. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Madam Chair. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. We do track the names of directors and individuals who have

had debts and had them forgiven. We do track that. So if their names do come up in the system, when it comes to future grants or contributions from the government, it is taken into consideration. It is red flagged, I guess we could say. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Any further general comments? We will defer the clause to consider the schedule first. Bill 10, debts forgiven, page 3.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Page 5.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: I have a question on clarification with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. What is the timeline that student loans are forgivable? When do they become eligible for forgiveness? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. The process would be if once the Department of Education, Culture and Employment has used its own avenues to try to recoup money owed to it, the file then would be handed to us and a number of events happen and are put into practice and are taken into consideration. I am being told that it goes into remission from the department side of Education, then when it comes to us then we go through the process of trying to further collect. Maybe I'll have Mr. Voytilla give you more detail.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Voytilla.

MR. VOYTILLA: Thank you, Madam Chair. There are three ways that a student loan can get dealt with. One is if the student is eligible for remission when they return to the Northwest Territories and gain employment, they can have elements of their loan or the full loan over time remitted in that it's an incentive for our students to both complete their education and come back to work in the Territories. That's one way they can get the loan addressed.

The other way is if they complete their studies or even if they interrupt their studies and they don't return or are somehow ineligible for remission, then they can repay the loan and we would enter into a repayment plan with them. If for any reason the loan does not get remitted or repaid, then we would put it into collection activity and we would try to work out a payment plan with the student and try to resolve the debt.

In situations where we have tried to find the student, some of them might leave the Territories and not leave forwarding addresses and we aren't able to track them down, if after six years we have not been able to perform any substantive collection on the account, then the account becomes statute barred and we cannot legally further pursue the account, and many of these accounts in here are of that nature. So perhaps the answer to the member's question is that six years is rather a key date because that's the legislation that means that the account

is statute barred if in that six years we have not been able to or have not taken any collection action.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Voytilla. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Six years seems pretty reasonable I guess. Once it gets forgiven is there any kind of a reporting to any credit bureaus letting them know that these people have outstanding loans, they have been forgiven? Is there any kind of process in place such as the one that the NWT Housing Corp had undertaken where people in public housing that had outstanding arrears in their public housing accounts were being recorded to the credit bureau and the credit bureau companies could refuse credit card applications, loan applications and such? Does this work around the same guidelines as something that the NWT Housing Corp was pursuing?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. That process would have kicked in the write-off part of the act, not this one. At this point at the forgiveness stage, there is no action that is triggered in that nature. It's triggered in a previous act that would have happened where it went for write off at that point and it does trigger the reporting to the credit bureau. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Maybe the Minister could inform the members which act would you want to fall under. Would you want to fall under the write-off act or would you want to fall under the Forgiveness of Debts Act? Do people have a choice of which act they get their loan under? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. If I had it given to me, I guess it would be forgiveness, then it wouldn't be on the books anymore, but there is no choice in the matter. The first stage would be that when the account went bad it would come into our hands. Collection would try again depending on the years as Mr. Voytilla mentioned. At that point then we would note them as being unlikely to be able to recover those and they go into the write off of debts. At that point the debt quits growing in a sense of the interest costs, but we still have avenues to go and collect. After that if we still see no opportunity or know that it's just not going to come about that we'd be able to get our funds, we would then go to this stage of write off. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Villeneuve, finished?

MR. VILLENEUVE: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): To the schedule then, the total, \$508,146.72.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. Please turn back to clause 1.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. To the bill as a whole.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Does the committee agree that Bill 10 is ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. Bill 10 is now ready for third reading and I'd like to thank Minister Roland and Mr. Voytilla for their attendance. Thank you. What is the wish of the committee now, Mr. Menicoche?

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that we report progress.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The motion is in order, it is not debatable. All those in favour of the motion? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

I'll now rise and report progress.

MR. SPEAKER: Could I have the report of Committee of the Whole? Mrs. Groenewegen.

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Committee Report 7-15(3), Report on the Review of the Information and Privacy Commissioner's Annual Report 2002-2003, and Bill 10, Forgiveness of Debts Act 2004-2005, and would like to report progress with three motions being adopted and that Committee Report 7-15(3) is concluded and that Bill 10 is ready for third reading. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Second, our Member for North Slave, Mr. Zoe. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Item 21, third reading of bills. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

ITEM 21: THIRD READING OF BILLS

Bill 8: Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2004

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Weledeh, that Bill 8, Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment, 2004, be read for the third time.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. There is a motion on the floor. The motion is in order.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Bill 8 has had third reading. Item 21, third reading of bills. Mr. Dent.

Bill 7: An Act To Amend The Legal Profession Act

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Legal Profession Act, be read for the third time.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. There is a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

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

---Carried

Bill 7 has had third reading. Item 21, third reading of bills. The Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Sorry, Mr. Speaker; I'm out of order here.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 21, third reading of bills. Mr. Dent.

Bill 12: An Act To Amend The Education Act

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It seems like people would like to hear this bill read for the third time, so I'll do it today.

---Laughter

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, that Bill 12, An Act to Amend the Education Act, be read for the third time.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. There is a motion on the floor. The motion is in order.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

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

---Carried

Bill 12 has had third reading. Item 21, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, there will be a meeting of the Accountability and Oversight committee at adjournment of the House today and again at 9:00 tomorrow morning. The Social Programs committee will meet at 10:30 tomorrow morning, as well as the Governance and Economic Development committee.

Orders of the day for Wednesday, October 20th, 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 15, Tliicho Community Services Agency Act
 - Bill 16, NWT Business Development and Investment Corporation Act
18. Second Reading of Bills
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
 - Minister's Statement 54-15(3), Progress Report on Health and Social Services in the NWT
 - Bill 13, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2004-2005
 - Bill 14, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2003-2004
20. Report of Committee of the Whole
21. Third Reading of Bills
 - Bill 10, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2004-2005
22. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Wednesday, October 20, 2004, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

