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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRAYER	987
MINISTERS' STATEMENTS	987
67-15(3) - NATIONAL STUDENTS AGAINST IMPAIRED DRIVING DAY	987
MEMBERS' STATEMENTS	987
MS. LEE ON ZERO TOLERANCE AGAINST CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE	987
MR. BRADEN ON EQUAL PAY SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT	988
MR. VILLENEUVE ON TAXATION OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDED TO POST-SECONDARY ABORIGINAL STUDENTS	988
MR. RAMSAY ON CONCERNS REGARDING THE STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM	988
MRS. GROENEWEGEN ON MEDICAL TRAVEL COVERAGE FOR STUDENTS.....	989
MR. POKIAK ON BEAUFORT-DELTA LEGAL AID SERVICES	989
MR. HAWKINS ON HOSPITAL WAITING TIMES.....	990
MR. YAKELEYA ON HOUSING FOR TEACHERS IN SMALL COMMUNITIES	990
RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY	991
ORAL QUESTIONS	991
WRITTEN QUESTIONS	1002
RETURNS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS	1003
TABLING OF DOCUMENTS	1004
CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS	1004
REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE	1011
ORDERS OF THE DAY	1011

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Tuesday, October 26, 2004****Members Present**

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

ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good afternoon, Members. Orders of the day, item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. McLeod.

that drinking and driving is a bad idea. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**Minister's Statement 67-15(3): National Students Against Impaired Driving Day**

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, this afternoon, I would like to announce to the House that I have proclaimed today, Tuesday, October 26, 2004, as National Students Against Impaired Driving Day.

---Applause

This will be the sixth annual National Students Against Impaired Driving Day in which student organizations at more than 400 schools from every province and territory will participate. This national day of action aims to raise awareness of, and to prevent, impaired driving. In making this proclamation, the Government of the Northwest Territories conveys its support for community-minded youth groups that want to draw attention to the needless tragedies caused by impaired driving.

On Wednesday, October 6, 2004, the Great Hall of this Legislative Assembly witnessed the kickoff of the Department of Transportation's Strategy to Reduce Impaired Driving initiative, STRID. It should be noted that Yellowknife's St. Patrick High School Students Against Drinking and Driving, SADD, under the leadership of teacher/liaison Ms. Michelle Thoms, contributed to the legislative changes that will come into force December 1, 2004.

I would like to especially thank these students in addition to all the students in the NWT. Through their participation in SADD chapters, young adults of the North spread the important message to make the right choice not to drink and drive. I am encouraged by the longevity of the St. Patrick High School SADD chapter which will be celebrating the 10th anniversary in November during National Addictions Awareness Week. I would like to encourage all high schools in the Northwest Territories to be part of the SADD initiative.

Mr. Speaker, Tuesday, October 26, 2004, is a very important day. Today I would like to take the opportunity to ask every resident of the Northwest Territories to stand behind the commitment of the SADD students and their promise to educate their peers about this very important issue. These students will persuade drivers of every age

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**Member's Statement On Zero Tolerance Against Child Sexual Abuse**

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to take a few minutes to recognize and honour those in our neighbourhoods and communities who are victims of sexual abuse and who are suffering silently. I would especially like to honour the stories of those who are victimized as children and let them know we, as a society, demand and accept nothing less than zero tolerance against any kind of violence, especially when it comes to sexual violence or violence of any kind against our young and innocent children.

Mr. Speaker, I don't believe there is any task more important for people who sit around this room and for leaders in our communities than protecting our young children. When we fail in this regard, we, as adults and as public persons, all have to take our share of collective responsibility for that.

On this day I want to, in a very public way, send a private message to each and every one of the victims out there and say to them that it is never your fault when adults around you and adults you trust violate you physically, sexually, mentally, or in any way that makes you feel inadequate or makes you feel less than the perfect little person that you are. It is the adults who are to blame. I want to also say to them very loudly and clearly, Mr. Speaker, that we understand profoundly that it takes enormous strength and courage for any victim of child abuse and child sexual abuse to speak out about what was done to them. I want to tell them that they have the right to find their own time and place to tell their stories in ways that feel right to them whenever and however they are ready. We honour them for that.

Mr. Speaker, I want to further tell them that when they do speak up, we, as a society, will listen to them and that we will have laws and other mechanisms in place that will confirm, once again, that we, as a society, believe, practice and enforce the principle of zero tolerance against any violence, especially against our children. Even if, along the way, we find disappointments in telling their stories and having their stories taken seriously, and even when, at times, it is just too painful to keep speaking out, I want to tell them, please don't be discouraged and please don't stop because if you believe and we believe,

you will eventually have your say and justice will be done because there are many adults who are here to help you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Equal Pay Settlement Agreement

MR. BRADEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. In 1989, the Public Service Alliance of Canada filed an equal pay or work of equal value complaint against the Government of the Northwest Territories. The complaint alleged that the government had broken the Canadian Human Rights Act by paying men more than women in similar jobs. In June of 2002, three years later, this government, the Public Service Alliance of Canada, and the Canadian Human Rights Commission agreed on a deal for GNWT unionized employees regarding equal pay for work of equal value; an historic settlement, Mr. Speaker. It recognized that both former and current workers, regardless of gender, deserved the same pay for the jobs they performed.

The settlement recognized our obligation as an employer to compensate employees between 1989 and 1998, and resulted in a government-wide re-assessment of the value of many jobs our civil service performs. The settlement applies to both casual part-time, as well as full-time employees. An estimated \$50 million was set aside for the total settlement. Some \$23 million of that was distributed by the time of the settlement in June of 2002.

Mr. Speaker, a deadline of December 31st of this year, two months from now, was set for application for those who had not received their compensation. Our government undertook to contact those who had not applied and, understandably, some employees were not captured in the search process. The chance for them to find out if they are eligible runs out in two months. I am told there are still hundreds of names on the casual employee list who could be eligible.

Mr. Speaker, tremendous effort and expense went into this historic settlement. It seems many who should get their rightful share of the \$50 million allocation have yet to file. I will be asking the Minister about our progress to date and what is being done to make a final call for the workers at the appropriate time today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Taxation Of Financial Assistance Provided To Post-Secondary Aboriginal Students

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to talk about the financial assistance First Nations students receive for their post-secondary education.

Mr. Speaker, starting in the year 2007, the Canadian Revenue Agency will be issuing the first T4-A tax forms to

First Nations students who have received money from their bands for their college and university education. By doing this, the federal government is treating post-secondary student financial assistance as a taxable income and is demonstrating a lack of regard to First Nations treaty rights.

Mr. Speaker, this is a treaty right, despite the view of the Government of Canada that the post-secondary education assistance program is a social policy concern. This is evident from the precedent cases heard by the Supreme Court of Canada which supports the inclusion of student financial assistance for treaty Indians as a non-taxable income, which is the intent of treaties 1 through 11.

Mr. Speaker, the federal government is taxing the educational funding which struggling students have accessed, which include tuition fees, book allowance and living allowance, scholarships, bursaries and travel dollars that will result in well-rounded and well-educated people upon the completion of their studies, ultimately for the benefit of the country but especially for the benefit of the treaty aboriginals themselves and the people that they represent.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to reiterate that a responsible federal government looks after the regular people they are serving that make up this vast country. It is the responsibility of this government to lobby the federal government to not treat post-secondary education assistance programs for treaty Indians as a taxable income, and to remind them to recognize and respect this right that has already been established when the first treaty was signed and has already been proven in our Canadian justice system and perhaps focus their attention on taxing the faceless corporate giants who are always overlooked when federal taxation proponents rear their ugly heads as persons receiving what I consider negligible benefits given the conditions that they had to endure to be considered eligible for such a benefit. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Concerns Regarding The Student Financial Assistance Program

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am going to speak today about student financial assistance and some of the problems that constituents of mine and many others are having with the way in which policies and rules are enforced.

I have a constituent who ventured south to attend college for the first time last fall, after attending school here from kindergarten to Grade 12. This person was enrolled in six courses in the first semester. When they realized six courses were too much for them to handle, it was too late to withdraw. This young person gave it their best attempt and passed three of the six courses. They then went on and passed all of their courses in the second semester. This individual came back to Yellowknife for the summer to find employment and to earn some money to go back to school. What they found when they returned home was a letter from Education, Culture and Employment advising them that: a, they are on suspension for one year; and, b,

they would have to pay back the money that was given to them from the previous year. Talk about a low blow for a student that is planning on going back to school.

Mr. Speaker, this young person who, as I said, has gone to school their entire career, kindergarten to Grade 12, in the North, is trying to get an education to come back to the North to be a productive citizen here. They can accept the fact that they are on suspension for SFA; that is one thing. Mr. Speaker, what they can't accept is the fact that they are being ordered to repay these loans while still at school.

Mr. Speaker, I find it unacceptable that students are being asked to repay loans when they are still at school. This is unfair to these students who are really only trying to better themselves with an education. It is quite a nice gesture by the Government of the Northwest Territories to waive interest charges for the first year. However, a \$5,500 bill to a student is too much for most to handle or for most to cope with. There has to be a better way to address concerns like the one I have mentioned, and other colleagues before me have spoken about the same concern. It is not a new problem. The appeals process goes by the book. I am suggesting that the department not be so rigid, Mr. Speaker, and show some flexibility and show some compassion to the students who find themselves in this unfortunate type of situation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Medical Travel Coverage For Students

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to address an issue that has recently come to my attention through one of my constituents. This concern is related to medical travel benefits and coverage of these students while attending school outside of the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, for instance, say a student is studying in the south at a college or university recognized by NWT Student Financial Assistance as a qualifying educational institution. Assuming this student has submitted a signed temporary leave of absence form and has done everything necessary to remain insured with NWT health coverage, this student would receive basic insured benefits. Now, assume that this student finds it necessary to travel to a larger centre for medical treatment while attending school. Would they be covered under medical travel? The answer is no. A student does not receive medical travel benefits because the travel is not considered as originating inside the Northwest Territories.

Students are not travelling on vacation or just visiting outside the Territories for a week or two. A student is still a resident of the NWT. They retain their northern residence as their primary address and continue to use their NWT driver's licence. Most students return to their home community for spring break, reading week, as well as Christmas vacation and the four months during summer and fall semester breaks.

In addition to all this, we also anticipate that a number of these students will return to the North to seek permanent

employment. Most students rely on student financial assistance, part-time employment and, if they are fortunate enough, their parents are able to help them financially. But they are most likely not in a position to afford costly medical travel insurance. The burden of an unexpected medical trip could financially end their studies for that particular year or longer. Students who are able to attend one of our northern post-secondary facilities are not faced with this expense and I believe that all students deserve the government's support, as they further their education, in the fair way.

I urge the Minister to review this portion of the medical travel policy with a view to granting medical travel protection to all NWT students while on temporary leave of absence from the Northwest Territories to attend school. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Enbridge Pipelines Long Service Awards Recipients

MR. MENICOCHÉ: (English not provided)

Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate three long-term employees of Enbridge Pipelines NWT Ltd. It gives me great pleasure to recognize them publicly for 20 years of service. These individuals are Mr. Mark Gerlock, Mr. Steven Vandell, and Mr. Frank Villeneuve of Fort Simpson, NWT; gentlemen all.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

MR. MENICOCHÉ: I had the great honour of working with these individuals for 17 years during my career with Enbridge Pipelines and they have offered much volunteerism to the communities in which they have worked. For that I honour them and thank them on behalf of the people and the communities that I represent. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Beaufort-Delta Legal Aid Services

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Honourable Charles Dent, Minister of Justice, was interviewed on CBC Radio on Monday, October 25, 2004, and spoke of changes to the way the legal aid services in the Beaufort-Delta would be delivered in Justice of the Peace Court. A local justice of the peace in Inuvik had expressed concern that the legal aid lawyers would no longer represent people in JP court.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister did say that the court workers would be available for clients at proceedings in Justice of the Peace Court. Now, I realize that proceedings in Justice of the Peace Court are usually not serious, but I am concerned that there may be circumstances where it

would be appropriate for a person to be represented by a legal aid lawyer. For example, bail hearings can be conducted in JP court and I would think that this would be a circumstance where it would be appropriate to be represented by a lawyer. The question then becomes whether the court worker is able to recognize this need and arrange for proper representation.

I am also aware, Mr. Speaker, that some communities do not have a resident justice of the peace or court worker. In these cases, I would assume that a court worker would accompany a justice of the peace and would be available to help persons appearing before the court. The Minister also made it clear in his interview that the Legal Aid office in Inuvik was the only place in the NWT where a lawyer attended a JP court. I cannot understand the Minister's reluctance to continue a practice in one region that is not offered to the rest of the residents in the NWT.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister of Justice at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Hospital Waiting Times

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to talk about the waiting times in the emergency rooms and our clinics in Yellowknife. Mr. Speaker, I've heard that you can wait three to four days if you're absolutely lucky to get into an appointment at a clinic. You're lucky to find a spot. Normally you have to wait two, three, and even sometimes four weeks to get an appointment with the doctor in one of those clinics. That's, of course, again, if you're lucky enough to have a family doctor. Mr. Speaker, at this time, clinics offer you suggestions, if it's a high priority, to march on down to the emergency room, which people do. But, Mr. Speaker, I know even from my own experience, but my constituents are complaining that the emergency room is more like an endurance contest to be able to survive waiting hours on end.

So I can say this from personal experience. But do you know what, Mr. Speaker? There are many people who talk about sitting there for six and eight hours and more just to receive basic care. I've even heard, through my own research, that in Vancouver you can probably get faster service through the emergency room than we do in the NWT. Mr. Speaker, one of the sad things is that we sometimes forget that the waiting in the emergency room just doesn't end there. You're waiting in the waiting room, then you get moved into the examining room and wait even longer.

Mr. Speaker, the problem as I see it is that you could get 100 nursing staff there and that would not solve the problem. The problem is the shortage of doctors in that emergency room making this happen. Mr. Speaker, the way our system is designed, a doctor needs to diagnose your ailment before they can allow the nurses to go ahead and do the treatment. That's the real problem. People are waiting there in dire circumstances for hours on end to be seen. Mr. Speaker, some of those chairs -- and I can speak from personal experience -- feel more like milk crates as you're sitting on them and I'd like to see a

supplementary appropriation someday for lazyboys for the amount of time we're making people wait there. Six and eight hours is truly unfair and unreasonable, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the real emergency is we don't have enough doctors in that emergency room. What would the cost be to offer that service? Mr. Speaker, I have no doubt in my mind that two to three people waiting there hours on end is equivalent to the cost of the service of having a doctor there in real dollars. So I guess I ask, what is the cost of not having more doctors in that emergency room?

Mr. Speaker, may I seek unanimous consent at this time to finish my Member's statement?

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think it's a real crisis because real people mean real money and they are just sitting there. That's real time lost to both our government, as well as to our world out there. Mr. Speaker, if someone gets tired of waiting after three, four, five hours...I mean, there are priorities and people understand that, but you have to sign a waiver to leave the hospital now. So people do get exhausted and are taking their kids home because they just cannot sit there.

Mr. Speaker, I will have questions later for the Minister, but there are just some points I want to raise in closing. This should be a high priority, not a low priority. What do we need to happen for those low priority people who sit out there for six hours? Do we have to wait until they become a low priority moving to a high priority? Then it won't be a news story, it will be a real emergency. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Housing For Teachers In Small Communities

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, gone are the days of the government bringing professionals into our smaller communities, putting them in housing units, pay for their living and working in the North by flying them out on vacation trips and rewarding them for long-time service by keeping them in the communities for a number of years. Mr. Speaker, in Tulita and Sahtu, housing is a crisis for our communities. Schools are losing about 50 percent or more teachers every year. Mr. Speaker, to be a veteran teacher in the school in the Sahtu or the Northwest Territories, all you have to do is stay up to about three years. You see, Mr. Speaker, finding new teachers is not the problem, it's the lack of consistency with teachers who don't know where they will be next or where they will be living next year. It's been said, Mr. Speaker, that trust building, bonding and respect are the building blocks of any type of educational environment and this is not happening in the Sahtu or in the Tulita school.

Mr. Speaker, for example we have three teachers presently living in our local hotel in Tulita. It's good for our

economy for the hotel yet, Mr. Speaker, we have teachers who have no place to live and we expect them to provide quality education classes for our children.

Mr. Speaker, this is unacceptable for people in the Sahtu and Tulita. Mr. Speaker, some of our teachers are sharing houses, the cost of living is very high in the Sahtu, and another thing is the high cost of taxes. For example, Mr. Speaker, in Nunavut, the Nunavut government has gone to bat and they have subsidized the teachers' housing in that jurisdiction. When will this government stand up and admit that maybe it was a mistake to get out of the housing business and stop this process in the Sahtu? Give our students, our people, the best educational opportunity of their lives, by supporting people who, at ground level, have some level of comfort for teaching. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Item 3, Members' statements. I would like to commend the Members on their obedience to the rules regarding Members' statements today.

---Laughter

Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a privilege and a pleasure to recognize family, as always. Today I am pleased to recognize in the House my mother, Esther Braden, and another honoured senior within our community, Mr. Ed Jeske. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 303-15(3): Status Of Pay Equity Settlement

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question this afternoon is for Mr. Dent in his capacity as Government House Leader and it follows on my statement about the equal pay settlement that our government signed more than two years ago now. The settlement, Mr. Speaker, set out a deadline of the end of December this year for application by employees who feel they may be eligible. Among its many provisions, the settlement recognized affected unionized employees and obliged this government to try to contact them. I would like to ask the Government House Leader how successful has the government been in concluding arrangements with the affected employees between the years 1989 and 1998? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 303-15(3): Status Of Pay Equity Settlement

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I understand that the equal pay unit has made payments to approximately 80 to 85 percent of the estimated 4,300 former and current unionized employees who would be eligible for these payments. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 303-15(3): Status Of Pay Equity Settlement

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Mr. Minister, for the answer. The settlement also recognized that casual workers who were employed by this government between that period were also included as being eligible. What efforts have been made to contact these casual workers and how successful has that part of the agreement been? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 303-15(3): Status Of Pay Equity Settlement

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In terms of trying to contact people, since February through August of this year there was one person whose primary function in the office was to try and locate eligible employees who had not yet been located, and of approximately 900 people for whom contact had not been established, they were successful in reaching 135.

Mr. Speaker, the plans are to run some more advertisements in the very near future to remind people that the deadline for applying is December 31st. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 303-15(3): Status Of Pay Equity Settlement

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm told that there was one distinct category that had to be created in which to, if you will, park the files of employees whose new positions had not yet been reclassified. This category went by, apparently the number 7777. Employees who may have found their position put into this category, I'm told, may have been overlooked in the settlement process and consequently in the search process, and would not show up on any eligibility lists. Could the Minister confirm that this category indeed was used for this purpose, and what efforts are being made to ensure that those employees are not forgotten by the December deadline? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 303-15(3): Status Of Pay Equity Settlement

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Equal Pay Settlement Agreement outlines which groups of jobs are to receive compensation under the settlement, and this agreement is a legal binding

document and is sanctioned by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal. Because the settlement agreement does not contain provisions for any payments to employees who are in class code 7777, therefore, the government cannot make any payments to those individual employees. So there is no effort being made to try and provide payments to those individuals because it is outside the scope of what the order is from the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 303-15(3): Status Of Pay Equity Settlement

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Despite the fact they may or may not have been included in the articles of the settlement, does that mean that they should still be eligible under at least the spirit and intent of the agreement? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 303-15(3): Status Of Pay Equity Settlement

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as a result of the order from the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal and their findings, this government has been directed as to how it shall resolve the complaint. That direction is prescriptive and we have to follow what is set out in that approach as it is agreed to by the three parties -- the Public Services Alliance of Canada, this government and the tribunal -- so there is no legal way for this government to even look at going around that and we have not.

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

Question 304-15(3): GNWT Medical Travel Policy

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Health and Social Services and it is with respect to the medical travel policy that is overseen by his department. Mr. Speaker, I would like to pose a few questions to the Minister just so that this creates public awareness about this and, also, obviously to find out if there is anything that can be changed to fix this discrepancy for our students.

Mr. Speaker, if a student was home during a school break, saw a doctor in their home community who had then referred them for medical treatment which turned out to be scheduled after they had returned to school, would this be considered as being instigated from inside the territory or would it be covered by medical travel? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 304-15(3): GNWT Medical Travel Policy

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that seems very clearly to me like a hypothetical question.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Ohhhh. Shame.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: But...Hearing silence from the Speaker I will carry on.

---Laughter

Mr. Speaker, if a student is at home and they are sick and they have to be referred south, if I understood the question, that would be medical travel as far as I am aware. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 304-15(3): GNWT Medical Travel Policy

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, this student is at home, in their home community, in Hay River -- this is so to make it not hypothetical -- and they have a doctor's appointment and it is determined at that appointment that they need further medical attention, which is not available in their community or in the Northwest Territories. So a referral is made to a southern doctor, but in the meantime the student goes off to their post-secondary education in Grande Prairie. Now, is there medical travel available for that student to go from Grande Prairie to Edmonton for the procedure, as it would have been if they were in Hay River when they traveled? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The question is, I guess, borderline whether it is hypothetical or not, but I'll give the Minister a chance to answer maybe if the policy does address that particular situation. Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 304-15(3): GNWT Medical Travel Policy

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member is asking me for a technical, detailed question very specific to a certain circumstance, and not being an expert on the medical travel detail I am not able to answer that. Thank you.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you. Maybe I could inform the Minister of his policy for medical travel within the Department of Health and Social Services. If the medical travel to a southern institution does not originate from the Northwest Territories, then it is not covered and people understand that when they go on vacation, that's why they buy medical travel insurance, but these students are normally residents here and are out for a very specific purpose: to pursue their post-secondary education. So does the Minister feel that that policy is comprehensive and adequate to address the needs of students attending post-secondary school? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mrs. Groenewegen, I'll give you a chance to maybe rephrase your question so that you are actually asking the Minister for his opinion on something. Would you care to rephrase your question, Mrs. Groenewegen?

Supplementary To Question 304-15(3): GNWT Medical Travel Policy

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, would the Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger, revisit the medical travel policy of this government to ensure that students who are attending post-secondary education outside of the Northwest Territories are covered by medical travel? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 304-15(3): GNWT Medical Travel Policy

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member has raised an interesting question; one, obviously, that I must become more conversant on. So, yes, I will review the issue.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Do you have a final supplementary Mrs. Groenewegen? Thank you. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Question 305-15(3): Emergency Room Wait Times

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question will be to the Minister of Health and Social Services and I will refer back to my Member's statement as I've said earlier with my concerns about the waiting period. Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister is what is the Department of Health and Social Services doing about waiting times and what are they doing to supply reasonable tools for those staff who work there in the emergency room and I consider, at this time, human resources important tools to get the job done? What is the Minister doing about this problem? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 305-15(3): Emergency Room Wait Times

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, back in the 14th Assembly there was, I think, over \$8 million voted by this Assembly as interim health professions to allow us to better staff our health professions. The majority of that money went into Yellowknife with the nurses, doctors, more specialists. We currently have 29 GP positions in Yellowknife and 22, I believe, are specialist positions. We are also working at better coordinating our referral processes, our medical travel. We are adding nurse practitioners. So we're investing significantly across the board to deal with waiting times, not only in Yellowknife, but I want to point out we also have significant challenges in small communities where oftentimes we have trouble getting a full complement of nurses where communities are reduced to emergency services because of the inability to get qualified community nurses. So there are challenges across the system and we are making efforts on all those fronts. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 305-15(3): Emergency Room Wait Times

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can appreciate the fact that the Minister gave me a little bit of a history lesson on the 14th Assembly, Mr. Speaker, but we're a year into the 15th Assembly and I can appreciate that the 14th had priorities as well. Mr. Speaker, I'm talking about real life waiting times. I'm talking about where people have to wait six or eight hours. If you are a mother with a child who has to go get them fed, you just can't sit there and wait; or you're a senior, you can't sit there forever. Mr. Speaker, I'm talking about dealing with the six or eight-hour service delivery. What is the Minister specifically doing to address those problems? This is the same Minister for the past four years. Could the Minister answer that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 305-15(3): Emergency Room Wait Times

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Actually, it's only three years, just for the record. Mr. Speaker, I've articulated and tried to lay out some of the things we are doing. The other thing we are also doing is we're looking at right now planning for a major midlife upgrading renovation at Stanton. One of those key pieces being looked at is the emergency room and how it's structured in terms of the actual physical layout. Mr. Speaker, we've also, over the last number of years, put out a book, "Do I Need to See a Nurse or a Doctor?" and it was sent to every household in the Northwest Territories. Plus we've also instituted the 1-800 number to give 24-hour-a-day access to qualified medical advice for anybody in the Northwest Territories in most official languages, should they need an initial point of call to get an assessment of what the circumstances may be that they think requires medical attention. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 305-15(3): Emergency Room Wait Times

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister raises a couple good points about the book and the 1-800 number and he's probably very right that they do serve a purpose, because I've even used the book and I haven't had the pleasure of using the 1-800 number yet, but they are services. But, Mr. Speaker, the book has been out for at least two years and the 1-800 number service has been out since the spring of this year. Mr. Speaker, we are still dealing with six and eight-hour waiting periods. Mr. Speaker, I can't refer to it too much, but there is a survey being done by this hospital at this time and it doesn't talk about waiting times. It talks about satisfaction, cleanliness, politeness, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera, but it doesn't talk about waiting times. Mr. Speaker, will this Minister address the waiting times that people have to go through sitting in the waiting room and then in the examining room to get services? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 305-15(3): Emergency Room Wait Times

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe we are making all reasonable efforts to do just that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Third supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Supplementary To Question 305-15(3): Emergency Room Wait Times

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My apologies, I didn't hear that, but I will go into my last one. Will the Minister be willing to commit to looking into the problem of waiting times, as well as possibly addressing this problem directly by putting another doctor in this emergency room because the nurses need a doctor to do the job that they do? So would the Minister commit to looking at that problem today? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 305-15(3): Emergency Room Wait Times

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as we have this discussion and question and answer period in this House there are staff making note of the concerns, and I will make note of the concerns and I will assure the Member that I will be talking about them with the public administrator and the CEO of Stanton to make sure that we are covering and making all reasonable efforts, covering all our bases and if we're not, if there are gaps, then, yes, I will look at how to address and have those filled. Thank you.

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

Question 306-15(3): Long-Term Home Care In Fort Simpson

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Social Services. I am very concerned about a problem an elder in my constituency is having with the health care system; more particularly with the long-term home care in Fort Simpson.

He was recently informed that he now owes approximately \$4,000 as rent for staying in the long-term care facility. Setting that aside for now, the question for the Minister, Mr. Speaker, is why is an aboriginal elder paying to stay in a long-term care facility? Is this truly a policy of our health care system today? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Minister of Health and Social Services, the Honourable Michael Miltenberger.

Return To Question 306-15(3): Long-Term Home Care In Fort Simpson

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the policy is that there is a rent or a cost billed to all those who require and move into long-term care third-level facilities where there is 24-hour

supervision. It is a maximum, I believe, of around \$700. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 306-15(3): Long-Term Home Care In Fort Simpson

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My concern is that the maximum amount is \$700. It is approximately equivalent to what they receive in old age pension, Mr. Speaker. My thought on this is that this is pretty much their last stop on earth. I was just wondering why we are charging our elders to sit out their remaining life. Particularly, for me, I believe that what is going on here is a treaty right. I am just wondering if the Minister cares to respond with regard to that. Why are we offering a service when it should be classified as a treaty right?

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

Further Return To Question 306-15(3): Long-Term Home Care In Fort Simpson

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, first, I would just like to point out that we have some of the best long-term care facilities that I have seen anywhere. They come at a cost that will not be bettered in any jurisdiction in this country. The reality is that there was a decision made, I think in the 13th Assembly, that there would be a modest charge for that high level of service in those specialized facilities. That has been the policy that has been in place. It is the one that we continue to follow today. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 306-15(3): Long-Term Home Care In Fort Simpson

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased to hear that we do offer the best service and one of the best facilities to provide for our elders that do have to end up in long-term care facilities, Mr. Speaker, but I still don't understand why we have a treaty right and our aboriginal elders are having to pay for it. If the Minister could comment on that again, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 306-15(3): Long-Term Home Care In Fort Simpson

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will commit to the Member to give him the background on the rationale and reasoning for the \$750 and the issue of how the issue of treaty rights was interpreted in this particular case.

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

Supplementary To Question 306-15(3): Long-Term Home Care In Fort Simpson

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just the fact that, here again, there is an inconsistency where

some seniors or elders that do have the benefit of insurance to cover their stay in these homes, and now we have aboriginal elders who depend solely on fixed income of their old age pensions and we are taking almost all of it away. I would just like to get that commitment again from the Minister that he will closely review this policy of ours and address it as soon as possible. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 306-15(3): Long-Term Home Care In Fort Simpson

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, first I want to point out that, when this fee was instituted, it was clearly anticipated and it was planned to leave the elders sufficient amount of money that they would not be left without any means to have looked after some of their personal needs. So I made a commitment to the Member. I would also like to point out that, under the federal government, it has a fiduciary responsibility for aboriginal and treaty people and Inuit people, so this \$750 would be, if they are treaty, covered through the federal government.

I will commit once again in this House to give the Member the information and the background on this particular area and the work that was done leading up to the decision to institute a \$750 fee. Thank you.

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

Question 307-15(3): Market Housing Initiative

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are to the Minister of Housing. It is in regards to the market housing initiative. I have been thinking and reread the notes of Hansard yesterday. I must tell you, Mr. Speaker, it is a complete outrage that, in last March, the government told us that the sky will fall if we do not waive BIP and if we do not order 22 mobile homes from somewhere in southern Alberta, Las Vegas 1-800 number, because we had to house the teachers and nurses. The Minister tells us yesterday that only 14 have been taken and they have no idea what went wrong. How are we ever to accept when government comes and says the sky is falling, we have two weeks to do it and you have no control whatsoever to say yes and we are going to make it happen? Nothing has happened and nobody is responsible. I need to hear more from Minister Krutko. Exactly what is going on? Why are the 22 units not installed? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 307-15(3): Market Housing Initiative

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I tried to explain yesterday to Members, there have been problems in regards to logistics and in regards to damage to these units in transportation. The damage has been fixed, but that was one of the main delays of the project. It was because the trailers were damaged being unloaded off the barges in Lutselk'e and also in Fort Good

Hope. Those are the two communities that have not been occupied today because they are behind on the schedule. The whole project has not been delayed in regards to the people that are applying. Right now, as of today, we have 16 applicants for 22 units. So, technically, we are short. If 16 people take up those units, we will have six units that are still out there. There are two communities that are still not going to be concluded until November. Hopefully, that helps the Member understand the program as it sits as of today. So we are still looking forward to a completion date and doing a review. Hopefully, that answers the Member's question.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It appears that the Minister is picking out only one of the problems. He said yesterday in Hansard, page 2196, and I quote, "we did have some logistical problems by way of transportation, barging, looking at sites for these units, gravel was a problem...and power hookup." Mr. Speaker, I say that they had problems at every corner and every aspect. I have to ask the question, this decision was made in the previous Assembly. This was not a surprise. The Housing Corporation had at least two years to prepare for this. If they can't figure out how to hook up power, how to do the gravel, how to even have the lots available, how could we have any confidence that they could deliver anything in the Housing Corporation? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: I didn't hear a question there. Did you want to reframe your question? Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 307-15(3): Market Housing Initiative

MS. LEE: Mr. Speaker, my question is if the Housing Corporation can't do any of these areas, power hook-up, gravel, lots, I think those are pretty essential items of building a house. If the Housing Corporation can't do that, how can we have confidence that they can carry on with the other phases of this marketing initiative program?

---Applause

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

Further Return To Question 307-15(3): Market Housing Initiative

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the reality of the Northwest Territories, the whole problem of logistics is a day-to-day problem. You have to depend on other sectors of our economy to be able to carry out our responsibilities. The timelines that we are facing are almost on track to what was projected out there. The Housing Corporation depends on sub-contractors and other contractors to carry out our responsibility of fulfilling our programs. It was the people on the other side of the House that raised the concern that we waived the BIP because of this contract. We reinstated the BIP so that we can get a maximum benefit to local communities, local contractors or transportation companies to ensure that 50 percent of this capital expense would stay in the Northwest Territories. That was the other side that asked us to do that. Because we did that, we had to put this work out to contracts, but the contracts were not fulfilled until almost July. In order to

meet this deadline, it caused the project to move ahead. So that, Mr. Speaker, is the reason for these logistical changes, but again, to satisfy the opposition, the people on the other side of the House, the BIP was reinstated to ensure that we get the maximum benefit for northerners in our communities and the money stays in our communities. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 307-15(3): Market Housing Initiative

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It never fails to amaze me how we get these morsels of information in the midst of question and answer period, because it never ever was told to me that BIP was reinstated. How nice to find this out as a surprise at the end of October. Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I think there are ample reasons to suggest that the Minister should really look into other modes of providing this housing, because this mobile home idea is not working. If they can't even make it off the barge, I really think it is about time the Minister revisit this. Will the Minister revisit this? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 307-15(3): Market Housing Initiative

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday, we have committed to do a report back to the House in regards to ensuring that we analyze the efforts to date and that we will put forward a report and carry on. We still have other communities that have the same problem. There is a market challenge in other communities in the Northwest Territories. These are some of the communities. There are still communities out there that have this problem of accommodating professionals in our communities. So it is a problem that won't go away simply by removing this program, but we will assess the program. We will come forward with recommendations on where we go from here. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 307-15(3): Market Housing Initiative

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps the Minister was not privy to this, but, in the midst of this debate in March, there were at least two NWT business people who do this for a living, who build up trailers. They could do it with their eyes closed. They were not even allowed to bid because the department insisted on going with the Edmonton firm. Would the Minister now look at the local businesses that can do the job and deliver them on time? Would he do that, Mr. Speaker?

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

Further Return To Question 307-15(3): Market Housing Initiative

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe we do have people out there that can do the job. Again, the bottom line is affordability. These houses have to be affordable at the end of the day so that people who rent them are able to afford to pay the rent.

That is the other thing we are hearing in the House. They can't afford to rent them. But, it has to be affordable so that these people are able to acquire them. So I am open to a bid process and go with the lowest bid that comes in. Again, it has to be affordable. Thank you.

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

Question 308-15(3): Housing For Sahtu Teachers

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment in regards to the crisis issues in the Sahtu, and specifically in the Tulita community school. We have teachers staying in hotels. I want to ask the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment what is he doing with his partners in the Sahtu Divisional Education Council to work with the teachers to see that this issue is resolved and that this won't happen again in the future? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 308-15(3): Housing For Sahtu Teachers

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my colleague, Minister Krutko, advises me that three units will be available for occupancy in Tulita on October 27th, so within the next day or so they should be available and the teachers have applied for residence in those units. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 308-15(3): Housing For Sahtu Teachers

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the question I am asking the Minister again is what is his department, along with the Sahtu Divisional Education Council, doing in terms of what kind of strategies they have for this issue not popping up in, say, Fort Good Hope or Deline next year? Are they looking at common strategies to work with the teachers at the divisional education authorities in communities to keep our teachers here so this issue won't be raised again next year? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 308-15(3): Housing For Sahtu Teachers

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have been talking with my colleague, Mr. Krutko, on numerous occasions, as recently as the lunch hour today, about the need for us to coordinate the plan for next year's market housing so that we can find out from the DEAs and DEC's where the demand is and just exactly what the demand is for, whether it is two or three bedroom units, but to make sure that we are responsive with what the expected demand is. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 308-15(3): Housing For Sahtu Teachers

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Minister. When will this strategy or discussion come to the House or come into the Sahtu region for communities to discuss this amongst themselves to see that the teachers don't have to go through this again next year? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 308-15(3): Housing For Sahtu Teachers

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will be meeting in a couple of weeks with the board chairs for the regions. This is one of the topics that we will discuss at that time. Until the review that the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation is talking about is completed, we won't be advancing very far on this, but I will advise the chairs that we are interested in talking some about it after the review is complete. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 308-15(3): Housing For Sahtu Teachers

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, would the Minister also look at considering the sensitive issue, I know the previous government has made a decision not to get back into the House on this issue with the education or teachers, so would the Minister give some consideration to that issue? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 308-15(3): Housing For Sahtu Teachers

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, we have no intention of getting back into employee housing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 309-15(3): Fairness In Payment Of Student Financial Assistance

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, the Honourable Charles Dent. I outlined a story for him of a constituent of mine who has gone back to school and is faced with a \$5,500 bill that is hanging over their head. I am just wondering what Education, Culture and Employment is going to do to try to address some of the students who face this situation that they didn't quite meet the 60 percent mark, but they are still in school. They can understand that they are under suspension, but why don't we call the dogs off on the \$5,500 and allow them to continue their education? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 309-15(3): Fairness In Payment Of Student Financial Assistance

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when a person is enrolled in an approved institution, they are not required to make payments on the student loan as long as they are considered full-time under the typical requirements of the NWT Student Financial Assistance program. So if a person makes arrangements to continue on their schooling at their own expense, they would not be expected to repay the student loans, for instance, in the subsequent year. If, however, they haven't made arrangements quickly enough, then the debt has been transferred to FMBS. Then Education, Culture and Employment can no longer have anything to do with the debt to this government because the debt has been transferred from Education, Culture and Employment to FMBS. Arrangements have to be made then with FMBS. I know that FMBS is prepared to consider token payments as long as the will is there to make good on the loan in the long run and there is a demonstration of good faith by the person who owes the money so that they are making what is \$25 or \$50 payments each month towards their outstanding debt. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 309-15(3): Fairness In Payment Of Student Financial Assistance

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, Mr. Speaker, in this instance, the debt has gone over to the FMBS and they are sending notices in the mail requesting payment of some kind. Even \$50 a month for a student is a lot to pay, Mr. Speaker. I am just wondering again, FMBS and ECE not really working together. These are real people, Mr. Speaker, with real problems and each situation is unique. I think, as a department, we're trying to send our students out to get an education and come back and be productive citizens and we need to find a way to be flexible. I know we have rules, I know we have policies that are in place, but we need some flexibility. I'm just wondering if the Minister is -- and I know there have been other cases like this, this is not a new issue -- prepared to have some flexibility in these situations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 309-15(3): Fairness In Payment Of Student Financial Assistance

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated, in the policy, it is stated quite clearly on page 16 of the Student Financial Assistance Student Guide that if a student comes to SFA, says they've gone back to school full time, can illustrate by filling in form D, that the institution agrees they are enrolled in a full-time program, their loan is put on hold. Now, if that hasn't happened, if the student doesn't work with the department on a timely basis and the debt gets to be somewhat old, it gets transferred over. It's quite clearly set out in the program guides that this is liable to happen. So students have to be aware that this is a potential and as long as they're working with SFA, they can keep things within Education, Culture and Employment. I believe that right now the system does accommodate individuals who are prepared to work with us. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 309-15(3): Fairness In Payment Of Student Financial Assistance

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm just wondering, if a student who is at university or college in the South and on their own ticket, paying their own way because they're on suspension, having the FMBS debt of \$5,500 hanging over their head, if they come back to the North next summer and work and then go back to school and they're reinstated in SFA, what happens to that \$5,500 debt that FMBS has over their head. Does ECE go back to FMBS and get that back? How is that all worked out if one doesn't really know what the other one is doing? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 309-15(3): Fairness In Payment Of Student Financial Assistance

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, once you owe the money, you owe the money. So that money is not going to be forgiven, it will have to be recovered. FMBS is not going to forgive it either. The student will have to pay that money back because it represents monies that were paid out that they should not have received in the first place. So that becomes a debt to the government which is going to be recovered. FMBS has demonstrated on numerous occasions that they are willing to be very flexible with people who owe this government money when they're involved in programs to better themselves or making productive choices. So I'm quite confident that FMBS would continue the arrangements as long as the person remains a student. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 309-15(3): Fairness In Payment Of Student Financial Assistance

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, what the Minister is saying is if the student goes back to school -- and let's say they become a lawyer or a doctor -- this \$5,500 is never remissible because they missed a deadline. They've gone to school here their entire life, K to 12, and they come back to the Northwest Territories as a lawyer or doctor and the government won't remiss a \$5,500 payment because they missed a date. Is that what the Minister is saying? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 309-15(3): Fairness In Payment Of Student Financial Assistance

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, I wasn't saying that at all. I'll say again what I said. That \$5,500, the way the Member laid it out, was paid to someone who should not have collected the money; therefore, they owe that money back no matter what. They would never qualify for remission even if they had contacted SFA to have it put on hold for a while. It would always have had to be paid back. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Pokiak.

Question 310-15(3): Eligibility For Legal Aid Before A Justice Of The Peace

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement today, I referred to the recent decision of the Legal Services Board to no longer attend Justice of the Peace Court in the Beaufort-Delta. I am concerned that there are circumstances where a person should be represented by a lawyer in JP court. Can the Minister tell me whether a person appearing before a JP for a bail hearing would be eligible for a Legal Aid lawyer? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 310-15(3): Eligibility For Legal Aid Before A Justice Of The Peace

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The answer is absolutely. The role of a court worker is to look for situations that require the case to be put up to Territorial Court, at which time a Legal Aid lawyer would appear. But in any case, even in front of a JP, if it's a show cause hearing, Legal Aid will provide a lawyer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 310-15(3): Eligibility For Legal Aid Before A Justice Of The Peace

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister inform this Assembly what percentage of their time the Legal Aid lawyers spend in JP court and whether stopping this practice will increase the amount of time the Legal Aid lawyers can spend defending people charged with serious crimes and criminal offences? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 310-15(3): Eligibility For Legal Aid Before A Justice Of The Peace

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have the exact percentage of time that lawyers attend JP court. It's not very often in the Northwest Territories because, as I mentioned, they only attend for show cause hearings typically, or when the terms are being set for somebody's release. The exact percentage I can't provide, however, it's not very often. It's not a practice that has happened anywhere across the Territories. The role of the court worker is to attend JP court and watch for situations where a lawyer should be involved and ask, in those circumstances, for the case to be set over to the Territorial Court. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 311-15(3): Update On Disabled NWT Residents In Alberta Facilities

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, during May of this year, there was a bit of a crisis with

persons with severe developmental disabilities in Edmonton who are Northwest Territories citizens. Mr. Speaker, referring back to that crisis, it was about accreditation and some suggestion of abuse. Would the Minister of Health and Social Services be able to update us on that problem that occurred then and what his department has done to solve that crisis? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the question is not clear enough for me in terms of the crisis he's talking about. If he wants to be more specific, I'll try to be more specific as well. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Hawkins, if you want to clarify your question.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure what the Minister's referring to by not understanding that question and it seems I've lost my first question, so I'll try to squeeze it in again clearer. There was a crisis with regards to accreditation about our people being down in a facility in Edmonton and we're talking about people with severe developmental disabilities. There were concerns of abuse, and who knows what else was happening down there. The folks were being shuffled around in a non-accredited facility. Mr. Speaker, my question clearly is what is the Minister doing about these folks down in Edmonton? What is he doing? Where are they today? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 311-15(3): Update On Disabled NWT Residents In Alberta Facilities

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this situation has resolved itself in terms of the accreditation issue. We no longer have, have not had I believe since last May, any kind of relationship with the facility in question or the program in question. Arrangements have been made both in Edmonton and in the North for the folks that were involved or staying at that facility and in that program. The issues that were raised in terms of mistreatment and other concerns that were raised by some of the former staff of that facility are being dealt with. It's in Alberta. It's a situation that occurred in Alberta. It's an Alberta program that's run under the standards and rules of the Government of Alberta and they've been dealing with that. Our role has solely been as buying a service from that particular organization, and when the troubles occurred we severed that relationship in the best interests of the clients that were being served and we made alternate arrangements. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 311-15(3): Update On Disabled NWT Residents In Alberta Facilities

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Minister's answer there. That was very clear on this side. Mr. Speaker, my concern is that I'm afraid we're abandoning these people. Mr. Speaker, my concern is

that we're spending \$1,500 a day through different types of placements. We're spending \$1 million a year to no end to treat these people. Are we bringing these people home eventually? Are we taking care of our people? What is the Minister doing to bring these folks home to the Northwest Territories where they belong? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 311-15(3): Update On Disabled NWT Residents In Alberta Facilities

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the money is not spent to no end. These are individuals that have significant needs. In some cases we've done a review on all the clients. In some cases they've been returned to the North. In other cases alternate placements have been found. Some are very high need and will never be able to, in our opinion, come North, at least not in the foreseeable future. So we've made the appropriate arrangements in all cases for the individuals involved. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 311-15(3): Update On Disabled NWT Residents In Alberta Facilities

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, recognizing that we do have clients with high needs, I do appreciate that. But the fact is they're gone. They're down there and from the sounds of it, it's as if they're going to be there forever. Why are we not working towards establishing a northern facility to take care of our own people? Why are we not looking at investing in the Northwest Territories? It doesn't matter where, but why are we not taking those steps to invest in the Northwest Territories to take care of our people with our dollars? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 311-15(3): Update On Disabled NWT Residents In Alberta Facilities

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: But the fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, we are. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 311-15(3): Update On Disabled NWT Residents In Alberta Facilities

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That was a good answer by the Minister, I'll say. Mr. Speaker, why are we not looking at setting up a territorial facility to take care of all of the people that we ship out to Edmonton with regard to this situation that I've raised with the Minister? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 311-15(3): Update On Disabled NWT Residents In Alberta Facilities

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are doing a review of the clients. We have done a review. We have made the steps in some cases to repatriate some of the clients. One size does not fit all. These are clients with individual and, in some cases, very specific and specialized needs. It's not accurate or appropriate to assume that you can just create a facility that would be able to deal with all the issues of all these high-needs individuals. Thank you.

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

Question 312-15(3): Treatment Of Contractors In Market Housing Initiative

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to follow up on the questions that I had for the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation earlier. Mr. Speaker, if I understood him correctly, he indicated that in fact the Housing Corporation lifted the BIP waiver. The waiver that they fought so hard for; they being Mr. McLeod and Mr. Bell. They told us the world will end if they didn't get it this way, now the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation for the first time just now enlightened us that he, in fact, lifted that waiver for the subcontractors. To the same question, in the last answer he gave earlier, he said he can't go with the local contractors in the NWT because it's too expensive. So I want to know if he's treating subcontractors in communities differently than businesses in Yellowknife. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 312-15(3): Treatment Of Contractors In Market Housing Initiative

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to clarify the Member's question. The waiver of the BIP was on the site development phase of the project, so it was for the set-up costs of the units in the communities and the transportation costs. The BIP was waived to ensure that portion of the contract would benefit the North. That decision was made in May. With regard to the construction, the labour, the equipment materials for site work setup, that portion was waived to ensure that we received as much benefit as we could for that aspect. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 312-15(3): Treatment Of Contractors In Market Housing Initiative

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So could the Minister clarify exactly who, where, what subcontractors was BIP applied to? He indicated earlier that he wanted to make sure that 50 percent of the business stayed in the North, so they were entitled to BIP. But apparently the business that puts mobile homes together in Yellowknife, the Housing Corporation can't afford. So I want to know exactly who got the benefit of BIP. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 312-15(3): Treatment Of Contractors In Market Housing Initiative

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think the benefit was for the whole Northwest Territories on this one. The people in the communities benefit by way of employment, job opportunities and assisting the business community. We may see a downturn with regard to activity in our communities. So there is benefit to the local community and the Northwest Territories. Also, with regard to the notion that communities are benefiting over Yellowknife on this one, I don't believe that's the case. This is an initiative that has put some 60 beds into communities which weren't there before. The way I look at it, this is a benefit for all northerners. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 312-15(3): Treatment Of Contractors In Market Housing Initiative

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate his superfluous statement and principle about benefiting everybody in the North, but the Minister did not answer my question. I need to know who got the benefit of BIP. The Minister just indicated earlier that he reinstated BIP for subcontractors. I want to know who those businesses are or at least what work they performed.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Krutko.

Further Return To Question 312-15(3): Treatment Of Contractors In Market Housing Initiative

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with regard to this contract, I think the contract that was let for the trailers was a tender process that was separate from the worksite phase of this project. But because the activity was going to take place in the communities, that's where the tenders were let. So that's basically where the benefit was. Mr. Speaker, out of this project, almost 59 percent of the total cost of the project stayed in the North and also benefited communities. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 312-15(3): Treatment Of Contractors In Market Housing Initiative

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So I need to know where the 59 percent that stayed in the North are located. Are they all in the communities, or is any of it in Yellowknife? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 312-15(3): Treatment Of Contractors In Market Housing Initiative

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the trailers that went to the communities benefited those communities. There are no trailers in Yellowknife, so the benefit went directly to those communities.

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

Question 313-15(3): Housing For Sahtu Teachers

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll do a follow-up question to the Honourable Charles Dent with regard to teachers. I want to ask the Minister what is this government doing to keep teachers in the North? What type of incentives are they working on to keep the teachers in the North, so they don't have to deal with issues such as housing? I know that the government is not in the housing business now. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 313-15(3): Housing For Sahtu Teachers

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe that we have a competitive compensation program for our employees in the Northwest Territories and I think that part of the problem is that perhaps people have been coming here without an understanding of what the costs are to live in some of our communities. I believe the salary compensates people fairly for the cost of living, as does our northern living allowance. The programs such as the one offered by the Housing Corporation for market rental housing is certainly making sure that housing is available at a reasonable rent in communities. I'm just not sure that people who have come into the Territories have been aware of the high cost of rent and the fact that they can get rent for lower prices in the communities than they can in Yellowknife. It doesn't seem to have been made aware to many people.

I know that I've encouraged the chairs of all the boards to make sure that they are upfront with people who are coming into their communities when they offer them a job, that they know what the cost of living is in that community, including the cost of housing. I know that the NWTTA, on their website, is going to start providing a list of questions for prospective employees so that they ask their boards when they're offered the jobs what to expect when they move into a community, including what are the rents going to be. So what we're trying to do is make sure that we're open and aboveboard with all of the information and hope that we have a compensation package that will make up for the high cost of living in the North. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 313-15(3): Housing For Sahtu Teachers

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I support the Minister in terms of aggressively looking at some initiatives that would keep our teachers here and have them be aware of the high cost of living in the Sahtu. We are no strangers in the Sahtu region, we know that. I would ask the Minister what would he do with his department in terms of working with the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation to look at some unique initiatives of providing some secure housing to our

people in the Northwest Territories and the Sahtu region. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 313-15(3): Housing For Sahtu Teachers

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I indicated previously to the Member, we are not about to get back into staff housing, so I can't commit that we will do anything to provide secure housing for our employees. However, I have committed to work with my colleague, the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, and the boards and DEAs throughout the Territories to make sure that there is some understanding of the needs and, therefore, hopefully some ability to respond to those needs as we continue with the second year of the program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 314-15(3): Taxation Of Financial Support Provided To Post-Secondary Aboriginal Students

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess my question would be directed to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. I just want to ask the Minister what his department will do or plans on doing, if anything, to protect the constitutional rights of the aboriginal treaty natives in the NWT...

AN HON. MEMBER: Protect the rights.

MR. VILLENEUVE: ...with student financial assistant.

---Applause

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

Return To Question 314-15(3): Taxation Of Financial Support Provided To Post-Secondary Aboriginal Students

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what we do already is we offer indigenous aboriginal people in the Northwest Territories the choice of receiving their living allowance either through a remissible loan or a grant. We have, for a number of years, advised people that there is some question whether or not CCRA will at some point start to tax the grants. We have known for some time that they are looking at this. The option is there if a student takes a remissible loan, for instance, they can avoid paying the taxes in any case, no matter what CCRA decides.

That means that will make sure that we offer an option that would avoid the taxes in any case in the Northwest Territories, or would allow students the option to avoid paying taxes on the monies. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Time for question period has expired, however, Mr. Villeneuve, I will allow you your supplementary questions. Mr. Villeneuve.

Supplementary To Question 314-15(3): Taxation Of Financial Support Provided To Post-Secondary Aboriginal Students

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess I don't know what would be better, a remissible loan or pay the tax on your grant. I'm not sure which, where the student would come out on top. The Minister said he has had some dialogue with the federal cohorts on this taxation issue. I'm just wondering what his department, as the Minister of Education for all our youth, aboriginal and non-aboriginal alike in the NWT, is doing to assist and help these treaty people to get a point across to the federal government that this is a treaty right and should be non-taxable. Whether it is a remissible loan, grant...

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

Further Return To Question 314-15(3): Taxation Of Financial Support Provided To Post-Secondary Aboriginal Students

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we're not experts on treaty in the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and don't claim to have that expertise. We would expect that it is in the interest of Canada and Canadians to make sure that the cost of education is kept as low as possible, and we would hope that that is looked at. But in terms of defining treaty, it isn't something that I think this government is in a position to do, and I think that we want to be cautious about getting ourselves into that argument. As I've said, we have made sure that we are offering students the opportunity to choose whether they receive the money through remissible loan, in which case it doesn't have to be paid back, so that if they get 100 percent of the dollars and never wind up having to pay it back, they can choose that method; or they can choose a grant and then their argument is going to be with CCRA over whether or not they have to pay taxes. That's not one that we can intervene on directly, because it was one between the individuals, but it certainly is in the interest of all of us to see as much money as possible getting into the hands of students. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 314-15(3): Taxation Of Financial Support Provided To Post-Secondary Aboriginal Students

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I guess I had the remissible loan concept a little mixed up. I thought that was repayable, but I guess you have to come back north and repay it in the form of hard labour. I just want to get the Minister's support, I guess, to help move this thing forward for aboriginals and treaties alike in Canada and the NWT, and I guess I'm looking at him to offer the NWT students some level of comfort in saying yes, they are going to maybe lobby the federal government to help them with this initiative and establish it as a treaty right, which I feel it is. I just want to get the Minister just to offer these people some level of support, that he do everything in his power to move the federal government toward a more reasonable approach to this whole taxation of student financial assistance. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. I don't know if I heard a question there, but, Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 314-15(3): Taxation Of Financial Support Provided To Post-Secondary Aboriginal Students

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I could certainly commit to the Member that I would communicate to the appropriate federal Minister our concern about the impact that this change might have on the ability of students to be successful and ask that they take a look at their policy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Before I proceed to item 7, written questions, the Chair would like to correct the record with respect to Written Question 49-15(3), asked by Ms. Lee, and contained on pages 2203 and 2204 of unedited Hansard. The Member incorrectly identified the Honourable Floyd Roland as the Minister to whom questions regarding the North Slave Correctional Centre were addressed. In reviewing the unedited Hansard, I note that the questions contained in Written Question 49-15(3) are all directed to the Honourable Charles Dent, Minister of Justice. Therefore, I have ordered that the requisite changes be made to Hansard and the official records of this House.

Item 7, written questions. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

ITEM 7: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Written Question 54-15(3): Market Housing Initiative

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for correcting those errors. I have two sets of written questions. The first one is to the Honourable David Krutko, Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

1. How much money was budgeted and has been spent out of the budget approved for the market housing initiative as of October 15, 2004?
2. Describe the work along with the dollar amounts for which the Business Incentive Policy was waived and for which the BIP was applied in this initiative, respectively.
3. Provide the dollar figures and names of all companies that received contracts under this initiative.

Written Question 55-15(3): Power Generated At Jackfish And Bluefish Plants

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My second question is for the Honourable Joe Handley, Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation.

Please provide details of the amount of power being generated at the Jackfish plant and Bluefish hydro plant, respectively, with highlights for significant increases or decreases in each plant over the last three years. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Item 7, written questions. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Written Question 56-15(3): Market Housing Initiative

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Honourable David Krutko, Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

1. How many market housing units will be installed, in what community and by when?
2. As of today, how many units are occupied?
3. By what professions?
4. What market research did the NWT Housing Corporation undertake to identify potential tenants and determine their needs/expectations before committing to the market housing initiative?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Written Question 57-15(3): Benefits From Oil And Gas Exploration

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my written question today is directed to the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development.

Could the Minister provide detailed information of the direct financial benefits the GNWT has received over the last five years as the result of oil and gas exploration programs in the Sahtu and in the NWT?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 8: RETURNS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, I am in receipt of three returns to written questions: Return to Written Question 34-15(3), asked by Mr. Yakeleya to the Honourable Michael McLeod, Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, regarding Fort Good Hope water treatment plant; Return to Written Question 36-15(3), asked by Mr. Villeneuve to the Honourable Michael McLeod, Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, regarding the need for a youth centre in Deninu Kue; Return to Written Question 37-15(3), asked by Mr. Menicoche to the Honourable Michael McLeod, regarding communities without gymnasiums. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Return To Written Question 34-15(3): Fort Good Hope Water Treatment Plant

When conducting testing on its water treatment plant, Fort Good Hope follows the sampling and testing requirements and guidelines established by the environmental health officer of the Department of Health and Social Services, as follows:

- free chlorine and total chlorine levels are measured three times daily;
- bacteriological sampling is done four times monthly;

- chemical and physical parameters are measured 24 times per year; and,
- trihalomethanes are measured twice per year.

The water treatment system in Fort Good Hope is maintained by the community government, and consists of a seasonal fill reservoir and truck fill station. The reservoir is filled twice per year and works as a sedimentation tank, as well as a storage reservoir. This water is chlorinated before filling of the water delivery truck occurs.

The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs is providing funding over three fiscal years to Fort Good Hope from the water and sewer systems deficiencies budget, to provide for upgrades to the truck fill station. This project is still in progress and is anticipated to be substantially complete during the 2005-2006 fiscal year.

There are three other communities in the Northwest Territories -- Tuktoyaktuk, Jean Marie River and Trout Lake -- that use a reservoir and truck fill system similar to the system in place in Fort Good Hope.

As part of the annual capital planning process, Municipal and Community Affairs staff last met with Fort Good Hope community members on July 12, 2004, and provided an update on the truck fill station upgrade project. Municipal and Community Affairs would be pleased to meet again with council and elders to discuss any issues surrounding the Fort Good Hope water treatment plant.

Return To Written Question 36-14(3): Need For A Youth Centre In Deninu Kue

The community of Fort Resolution received funding of \$80,000 from Municipal and Community Affairs Community Initiatives Program in 2003-2004, for the renovation of the Deninu Kue Youth Centre. Due to technical delays, work was not completed in that fiscal year, and only \$17,000 was spent. In 2004-2005, the community council again requested funding of \$63,000 from the Community Initiatives Program to continue the work. This request was approved.

Subsequent estimates by the community placed the cost of this project in excess of \$100,000. The community council has indicated that they would seek the remaining funds for this project by writing to various northern companies to request financial assistance for the completion of the project.

The community is hoping to receive favourable responses to its request by the end of October 2004.

It is the community's decision how they want to proceed in the event that third-party funding for the youth centre is unavailable. One option that the community may pursue is to request that previously approved funding of \$63,000 from the Community Initiatives Program, which has not yet been spent, be used to make the existing community hall more functional for Fort Resolution youth.

Municipal and Community Affairs regional staff have worked closely with the community, and will continue to provide assistance to the community government on this matter.

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

Mr. Speaker, I would like to provide Members with some background information on the various types of gymnasiums which may be present in a community. A community gymnasium is a facility which can serve as a combination community hall and gymnasium, and is suitable for recreation games, fitness activities and organized sports. A community hall is a larger public recreation facility suitable for social recreation activities such as feasts, dances, meetings and cultural events, and also meets the Government of the Northwest Territories requirements for school physical education programs. A community assembly hall is a public recreation and administrative facility that can serve both social recreation activity functions, as well as community administrative and assembly needs.

Mr. Speaker, the non-tax-based communities of Enterprise, Kakisa and Nahanni Butte do not have either a community gym or a community hall in place. However, each has a community assembly building that is used for low-structured recreation activities.

Although there are no other indoor sport facilities in Enterprise, Kakisa and Nahanni Butte, there are many other recreation facilities in place. Enterprise has a ball diamond, outdoor active living centre, snowmobile trails, a sliding hill and camping facilities. Kakisa has a ball diamond and playfields. Nahanni Butte has multi-purpose trails, waterfront area, youth centre, playground and playfield.

It is important to note that during the late 1980s and early 1990s, a significant amount of funding was allocated to construct recreational facilities in non-tax-based communities in the Northwest Territories. However, in keeping with today's fiscal realities, the Government of the Northwest Territories must target scarce infrastructure funding to those capital projects that attain high priority through the corporate capital planning process.

The Government of the Northwest Territories recognizes the importance that recreational facilities play in the lives of community governments, and how important it is that community members identify which infrastructure projects are of high priority to community residents. I traveled to the community of Nahanni Butte with the Member of the Legislative Assembly this past summer and I am aware of their desire for a community gym. My department will continue to work with the community to try to identify resources for this project.

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

ITEM 13: TABELING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 85-15(3): Letter From Tulita Teachers To The GNWT Re: Housing for Teachers

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table a letter I received from Lorraine Kuer, a teacher at Chief Albert Wright School in Tulita, which is signed by 19 staff and teachers in Tulita.

Mr. Speaker, the letter is addressed to the Government of the Northwest Territories and it describes the housing crises facing teachers in the Sahtu region and other small communities in the Northwest Territories, and it challenges the government to take immediate action to redeem the situation. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Item 13, tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: 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; Minister's Statement 68-15(3), NWT Housing Corporation: From the Ground Up, Celebrating 30 Years; and, Bill 13, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2004-2005, with Mr. Pokiak in the chair.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Good afternoon, I call the meeting to order here. In front of us we have for consideration: Minister's Statement 48-15(3), Minister's Statement 49-15(3), Minister's Statement 54-15(3), Minister's Statement 68-15(3), and Bill 13. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Chair, the committee wishes to consider Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2004-2005. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Bill 13. Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): At this time I would like to take a short break here for about 15 minutes and then resume. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Good afternoon. We'll resume our Committee of the Whole meeting again now. At the present time we would like to ask the Minister if he would like to introduce any witnesses.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, please.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Can the Sergeant-at-Arms please bring in the witness?

Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Dent. Would you like to introduce your witness for the record please? Thank you.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have with me today the secretary to the Financial Management Board, Mr. Lew Voytilla.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you. We are now on page 19, detail booklet of Supplementary Appropriation, No. 2, airports, special warrants, \$3.4 million. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In discussion on this item in the previous day, I believe the Minister of Transportation said that he would bring back some information regarding the relative comparison of CATSA's investment in the Yellowknife Airport's detection system. In asking for this information, Mr. Chairman, what I wanted to do was see just how Yellowknife was fairing in comparison to other airports that need to make an investment for security reasons. Has the Minister had a chance to assemble any of that information and give us a picture of just how Yellowknife fairs as far as the federal investment goes? Thank you.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think that we've been told that the information is considered confidential because of security issues with CATSA, and CATSA will not agree to the release of the information. So it's a situation where they have decided, I guess, that if we tell people what the value of investments are, that people can figure out how to get around that investment in security screening devices. So they have said that the information is classified, therefore, we can't answer the question in as much detail as we would like to. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. BRADEN: Well, that's a disappointing bit of news. It obviously takes away from the ability of this Legislature, and I would think others across Canada, to be able to make good decisions. We are handed a huge bill of goods, given the size of our airport and our population -- \$11.2 million -- and we're told pay it. There are good reasons for it -- security -- but I need to be convinced that as part of the Canadian traveling public and under the demand from a federal system, that we're getting as square a deal or perhaps as bad a deal as anybody else in Canada. Mr. Chairman, I'm sort of layering this silence from the CATSA people on top of the difficulty we are having with our own Department of Transportation, which has had, I think by information we have been given, at least nine months to look at this. They are suggesting that up to \$6.6 million may be recovered from airport user fees from the traveling public, but we have no idea how. So this program, as rushed as it is deemed to be, I think we've got, what now, Mr. Chairman, 14 months left. Unless we have this stuff built, hey, folks, nobody from the North is going to be able to land anywhere else in Canada. Fourteen months to implement an \$11.2 million program that we have so very little detail about.

I'm really uncomfortable with the way this whole package is put together, Mr. Chairman. I have gone over most of my points yesterday so I'm not going to prolong this item, other than to put on the record my deep dissatisfaction with the way this is being put forward to the Legislative Assembly and, of course, ultimately, to the traveling public. It's not acceptable.

AN HON. MEMBER: Shame, shame.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Braden. I didn't hear any question. Mr. Minister.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I'd like to make it clear, so that members of this

committee understand, that the government is not being provided this information either. CATSA says that it's classified information and will not provide information on the levels of security at airports across Canada. Each one, they say, is an individual situation. They are saying that no two are the same and that each one is based on the study of traffic, the volume and where the passengers are flying to and from. Then an individual solution is set for each one, but they won't tell anybody what the levels of security are for any of the airports across Canada. We get this all as direction as to what must be provided if we want to be part of the national airport system.

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

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Chairman, I guess I'd just like a bit of procedural help here, and perhaps you could advise what is committee's ability to deny or exclude this item from the bill. What kind of procedural options do we have in this respect? Thank you.

---Microphones Turned Off

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Can I call the meeting back to order here? Thank you. In regard to Mr. Braden's guidance, I have been told that special warrants cannot be deleted. In effect, they are information items. Amounts for items not previously authorized may be deleted. However, a motion to amend the bill would be required in that instance. Thank you. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: So just to confirm then, there's absolutely nothing we can do about this expenditure.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you. At this time this item cannot be deleted. Mr. Braden, it cannot be deleted. Thank you. I have next Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's quite nice that the government has spent this money and it can't be deleted and we find ourselves in this position today. I know I made my points pretty clear yesterday, but I would like to add a couple of things. I just want to state for the record that I'd like a commitment from the government, you can criticize something to death, Mr. Chairman, and I've been critical of this expenditure, but I think the government needs to have a look at its airport, the grand scheme of things. I know there is a master plan that was developed for the airport property, and before we spend this money on the current terminal building, we have to ensure the residents of Yellowknife and of the Northwest Territories that that terminal building is going to be in its exact location not 10 years from now, maybe 20 or 25 years. We have to give them some type of guarantee that that building is going to stay there. Mr. Chairman, I haven't seen that type of commitment. I see a government that is intent on spending \$11.2 million and we know the government's track record in terms of design/build and how things can quickly go off the rails. We don't have to look too far to find examples of that, Mr. Chairman. So my concern is it's going to cost the government probably \$15 million, let's just say, and it has to make a commitment to stay where it's at. Why are we looking at moving the terminal building to the west side of the airport property, over by the sandpits and who knows what that would cost, probably over \$100 million, Mr. Chairman? So I think the government has to let Regular Members here know, let the public know, that if we are going to spend millions of dollars on the current terminal

building, it better well stay there for the foreseeable future, Mr. Chairman. That's my concern in this and I'll offer that to the government. You can be critical, but you have to be able to offer something, and that's my solution to this is I don't mind spending money if the government can commit to the terminal building staying where it is today.

One of the other things I wanted to mention, Mr. Chairman, while I've got the floor, is the airport today. In its operation today, one of the biggest issues that I find with the Yellowknife Airport is in scheduling. I know the government is not in the business of telling companies how to run their business and how to compete with other companies but, Mr. Chairman, it doesn't make a whole lot of sense to me that airplanes take off and leave within five to 10 minutes of each other. That results in the airport being crowded. It doesn't make much sense and I don't know how we communicate that to the companies that are using the airport, but even if it was a half-an-hour or 45 minutes, Mr. Chairman, it would make a world of difference for that airport. It's never busy except for one hour in the morning and one hour in the evening. That's when it's at its busiest and I think that's something that we have to address too, before we rush off and spend upwards of \$12 million on an expansion. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I think I've said my piece. Thank you.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, yesterday I think I told this committee that, for the foreseeable future, the passenger terminal building would stay where it is, that's why the money is being spent. We have to confirm to CATSA that their investment is good for at least 10 years. We believe that it's good for more than that, at least 10 to 15. But it's pretty hard to get accurate traffic volume forecasts that go that far out. Based on best knowledge, the best estimate that we have right now, the Department of Transportation believes that that facility will still be in use in 10 to 15 years. It may be still in use in 25 years. If volumes don't go up, it could be in use even longer. But based on current growth patterns and what the expectation is for the economy, this is a long-term solution and one that you know the government is looking at. Even if it were a 10-year investment, it's only \$666,000 a year. So it is not something that we are spending \$50 million on.

It is also not the construction management process, which is the one that I think the Member was actually referring to rather than design/build. The government has a fairly good track record with design/build. It doesn't with construction management. That's my opinion. I guess I should be careful about saying that. The design/build process has done fairly well for the government, so I don't think we should be afraid to take a look at that process.

To the best of our knowledge, the building is going to be there for a while and the process that we are looking at for construction has been utilized successfully in the past by this government.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I guess the Minister and his definition of foreseeable future and my definition of foreseeable future are two different things. I can't see us spending that type of money on a terminal

building that is only going to be in its current location for 10 to 12 years. To me, that is not the foreseeable future, Mr. Chair.

I have a question. I am not sure if Minister Dent can answer this question, or perhaps Minister McLeod might be better equipped to answer this question, but this master plan for the Yellowknife terminal building or the airport property, the government has spent a tremendous amount of money on getting this master plan developed. They are setting forth on implementing some of the things that are included in that master plan, Mr. Chair. What happens to this master plan now that the government is going to invest this money into the current terminal building? Does it go on a shelf, or five or six years down the road are we going to have the Department of Transportation come back and say we need this new terminal building? The current location isn't big enough. It doesn't address the needs of the airport and we are going to have to look at moving that terminal building again, sooner rather than later. I would like to know what is going to happen to that master plan. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think this question can more appropriately be answered by the Minister of Transportation.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the airport plan is in its final phase of coming towards completion. Be expected to have a completed document for review right shortly. We are planning to still do a number of things: to consult with the city, for example, and also other carriers and stakeholders of intentions. We still will be moving forward. It was our intention to look at relocating the facility to the west side of the airport. That initiative would cost \$50 million. It was part of our long-term plan. It is not something that we can realistically expect to do in this case. We looked at it as an option, of course, but it is not realistic. However, we still would like to follow the details of that plan once it is approved and accepted. This airport, this facility, as the Minister has stated, has a 10 to 15-year life forecast. Our traffic is growing at three percent a year. However, that changes and this facility may have a longer lifespan. As to the question that was raised by the Member; yes, we expect to follow the airport plan for the long term in terms of development.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Dent, would you like to add anything?

HON. CHARLES DENT: No, I don't have anything to add, Mr. Chair. The Minister has outlined the situation. On this issue, I don't think we can take too lightly the issue of terrorism. That is what this is all in response to. We have been ordered to take certain actions at this airport in order to protect the Canadian air transport system from terrorist attacks. The responsible course of action is to follow through and do what is required. The experts have looked at our airport and said this is what you require, have them placed there in order to tie into the national airport system. It is unfortunate that we have had to come forward because of the timing with a special warrant. I

think if the negotiations had been concluded more quickly, it would have been better if we had been able to get the money in for a supp in the June session. Unfortunately, because of the timing, that wasn't possible. The government would always prefer that we could do things by supp rather than by special warrant simply to avoid the issue that we seem to always wind up with in the House here. But, this is a Canadian security issue. It is one that we have to take seriously: the threats. We have to make sure that we are moving to do what is the responsible thing in keeping the air transport system safe. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I am really glad that Minister Dent just gave that little litany that he did about how we have to be concerned about terrorism and how we have to do what the federal government tells us to do with respect to protecting our airports and traveling public against terrorist threats. Mr. Chair, I would like to know that the Minister conveyed this to the federal government. I think this entire suggestion of X-ray equipment for explosives at the Yellowknife Airport is the most ludicrous thing I have ever heard of in my life. Maybe in southern Canada, other small airports feeding to a main airport, where you have the sophisticated and very expensive equipment, but it is a very different situation when you are going north and south. This is like the gun registry. This is a boondoggle. This is a federal government imposed farce because there is a 737 jet that takes off from Inuvik with no security. There is a 737 jet takes off from Hay River en route to Edmonton International Airport with no security. So to put an X-ray machine to see if there are explosives getting on an aircraft in Yellowknife would hardly address the threat of terrorism in the Northwest Territories or any imposition of a threat on the traveling public in the Northwest Territories.

Why doesn't somebody just call this for what it is? This is ridiculous. It is the federal government imposing on our government a multi-million dollar expenditure for something we don't need and it is not going to help. In fact, if somebody actually wanted to do something, they wouldn't get on the plane in Yellowknife. They would get on a plane someplace else with a direct connection to an international airport in the South. Why doesn't somebody call this for what it is? This is ridiculous. I hope somebody conveyed that to the federal government. If not, it is now on the record. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

---Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. If I could just say the language that was used earlier, on parliamentary stuff, can Members be careful? Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. You may have to ask the Minister of Transportation to confirm this, but my understanding is that after January 1, 2006, a 737 will not be allowed to take off from an airport where this kind of security system is in place and land at another one like Edmonton. So as of that date, this will be a system that is enforced all across Canada. It will not be possible to fly that size of airplane to an airport like Edmonton from anywhere except an airport that has this kind of screening

process in place. Perhaps, Mr. Chair, we can confirm that with the Minister of Transportation.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chair, as of the January deadline that was imposed on us, there will be five levels of explosive detective systems in place at 87 different airports across Canada. Yellowknife has been rated at the highest level. Because of its high volume of passengers and check baggage traffic, our traffic volumes are a lot higher than Whitehorse, as well as Iqaluit. Consequently, we are rated at the highest level for EDS/HBS deployment. The equipment is going to be operated and supplied by CATSA. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Menicoche): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Maybe the equipment is going to be supplied and operated by CATSA, but the consequential effect of this being located in the Yellowknife Airport has some very serious dollar ramifications for this government in terms of capital that we have to build around it. Maybe the federal government should just pick up the tab for those consequential costs. Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Menicoche): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll refer that question to the Minister of Transportation.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, I certainly agree with the Member's comments. That was our intention. We did in fact negotiate, as I indicated yesterday, very aggressively to have the federal government pick up the costs. We had initially brought forward the scoping and project costs and insisted that the government look at covering all the expenditures required. However, we were unsuccessful. There was displacement of aircraft parking on the air side, there was space used up in the terminal building that the federal government would not cover. Having looked at this, we had the option of going and taking only the funding provided by CATSA as an option, which would have left us in a situation where there would have been congestion in the airport as traffic volumes grew, and also on the air side where the airplanes were landing and parking that would have caused a lot of problems. We figured this would not be an option, so we went to our second option where we looked at and agreed to bring it forward; that we would increase some of the size and relocate some of the space inside the facility, along with the parking on the air side and the parking lot. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Menicoche): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess I just feel this is another case where our government needs to play a little bit of hardball with the federal government. I don't know what the outcome would

be if we didn't step up with all this cash in an effort to accommodate this security program.

I just want it on the record that I think it's a shame that our territory, strapped for money as we are, our resources being dragged out of here by the day, that we can't even afford community halls in some of our communities, we need so much public infrastructure here and we're going to dance to the federal government's new security program.

I just want to say one more thing. Sure, after 2006 we won't be able to fly out of any airport directly into Edmonton, as the Minister has said, but the fact is, are we going to have X-ray equipment in Inuvik and Norman Wells? Oh, no, just here. So, therefore, a 737 has the capacity and will be well capable of flying from Inuvik to Edmonton.

Here's the scene, let's let everybody know: get on the plane in Inuvik or Norman Wells, take your luggage and when you get to Yellowknife they'll say now please remove all your personal belongings and we're going to take off all your luggage and we're going to X-ray it. I think if somebody actually had a master plan in mind, they might implement it before getting to the Yellowknife Airport where they knew their luggage was going to be X-rayed. Anyway, thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's all I have to say.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Menicoche): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I can't explain why the security requirements have been set up as they have. I have to accept that people who have looked at the situation have decided that in order to make sure our system of air transport is safe, that they have designed things to work around it. I can only say that we, as a government, feel it's necessary to follow through with these expenditures because we think it's essential that we live up to our responsibility to keep the system safe and still ensure that people can fly from the Northwest Territories to airports that are in the national airport system.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Chairman, just to follow up on Mrs. Groenewegen's comment, it just doesn't make sense that the only airport in the Northwest Territories that's going to have this type of equipment is Yellowknife, and 737s land in Inuvik, Norman Wells and other communities in the Northwest Territories that don't have this system. I want to know if the Minister would have any indications of future plans such as Inuvik and Norman Wells and maybe Fort Smith or Hay River...Has the federal government given any indication as to upgrading those airports also where 737s do land and take off? Thank you.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Not that I'm aware of, but perhaps we could ask the Minister of Transportation if he could respond to the question.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as far as we know, Yellowknife is the only place that is being required to install these facilities. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Menicoche): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With regard to the user fee, it's quite a large amount of money that's going to be spent for the user fee. I guess I want to see what type of recovery process or how long it's going to take, 10, 15, 20 years, to recover that money. I just want to ask Mr. Dent if he can shed some light on that.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. The direction to the Minister so far was to come back with a plan that would recover the money over 10 years.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chair. The activity in the Northwest Territories should – I'll cross my fingers here – the pipeline go through, is going to be quite busy with regard to the different regions of the Northwest Territories. Isn't the federal government a little bit concerned about that level of activity happening in light of what's happening around the world in terms of protection of our airports and our people? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. At this point, I don't know anything about that, so perhaps we could ask the Minister of Transportation if he could respond.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Madam Chair, that's a question that the conditions and process for that are a little different. Through the requirements for increased traffic volume in a lot of different airports, we've already done a number of projects through this program called the Airport Capital Assistance Program. We've dealt with a number of the issues relating to increased traffic volumes. We've invested some money in the Inuvik Airport and also done some work targeting Norman Wells. We've also accessed several projects at the Yellowknife Airport over the years. However, in this case we haven't been able to apply this project along with the CATSA funding for the increased space requirements.

In terms of responding to the question about the pipeline and the expected traffic increases, we are evaluating all the airports across the North and we have already embarked on doing some expansion work and renovation work in a number of different areas in airports across the Territories.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. With respect to the supplementary appropriation for \$3.4 million, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you. Just one final comment here, Madam Chair. I'm still trying to make sense of the restrictions on 737 aircraft by January 2006 with regard to the Yellowknife Airport, yet these types of aircraft leave other airports in the Northwest Territories, so this doesn't make sense right now. I wonder if the Minister would have some meetings with the federal Minister in terms of any future discussions or any future direction with regard to our airports that we would have some input, rather than showing up in our books here. It just doesn't make sense to me, so that's all I have to say, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you. Madam Chair, perhaps we could refer this to the Minister of Transportation, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Madam Chair, I don't know if I'm in a position to qualify whether the federal requirements make sense or not. At this point I'm obligated to follow through and implement this whole explosion detection system by the deadline. We have raised this issue regarding our additional funding requirements to the federal government. We have talked to the CATSA officials over a number of months from the time this funding application was submitted in December right until this spring when it was final, and all indicators showed that the government was not going to budge on allowing us any more money to deal with some of our requirements. We have met with the federal Minister, we indicated this is one of the issues we wanted to talk about, we've also indicated to our MP that this is an issue for us. However, I have a deadline, I'm obligated to follow through to have this in place by 2006. So we feel we have exhausted all avenues to get additional funding or to get CATSA to move on what they've approved. We don't feel it's right, we are not happy with it, however, that's as far as we feel we can go and, therefore, brought it forward to FMB for discussion. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm not arguing; you know, this whole national security for Canada was driven by 9-11 and anywhere across Canada and the world they're beefing up their security and I think we are falling in line with some other countries about beefing up our security. It doesn't matter where you live now, there is always potential. The establishment of this new facility or new thing that's going to happen here at the Yellowknife Airport, it's like having a restriction on young children buying cigarettes. Yellowknife is going to be like the official airport. All the other airports have to come through Yellowknife then get screened and then fly. You know, it seems like you are going to put a restriction on young children who are buying cigarettes, there is an official store where you go to get your cigarettes. So I guess in that sense it's just looking at this, and I understand that the Minister has legal obligations, that our government has to, and we have to follow in sync with the federal government in terms of their national security and the transportation. I guess I would appreciate if the federal government would advise the Members in the North here, and that we have some concerns in the future about

setting up projects like this that affect all of us, especially in light of things that we want to see happen in a community that we feel are more important than setting up this screening device at the airport. That's all I wanted to say. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thanks, Mr. Yakeleya. Any response, Mr. Dent?

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm sure that the Minister was listening to Member's advice and will make sure that the federal Minister is advised to that.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. I have Mr. Villeneuve and then Mr. Pokiak. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just have a quick question, probably more directed to the Minister of Transportation, I guess. With the Mackenzie gas project on the horizon and increased traffic both on the roads and in the air coming through the whole NWT -- that's including Inuvik, Fort Simpson, Fort Smith, Hay River and everywhere else where there used to be a lot of 737 service in Norman Wells, Inuvik and beyond to Alaska, Fort Simpson, to Whitehorse and the Yukon, and Hay River south -- I'm just wondering why the federal government has no plan in place or doesn't plan on upgrading or supplying these points of no return. I guess if you want to leave the NWT with explosive detection equipment, why would it only be Yellowknife?

When airlines want to increase their services and expand and start flying to remote places from Inuvik and Simpson and wherever, Smith or Hay River, why wouldn't they consider a long-term plan to have this equipment in all these points of interest? All these planes are going to have return to Yellowknife to get their baggage to put through the detection equipment. How is that going to limit the airlines and how do they feel about the future of this whole initiative? I just want clarification on that. Thanks.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. Could I refer the question to the Minister of Transportation, please?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Madam Chair, the explosion detection systems and the whole bag of systems is going to be located at Yellowknife. That decision was made by the federal government and the intention is to target transfer traffic that is going from other northern airports, such as Inuvik, Norman Wells, and Rankin Inlet and other northern locations, that is passing through and bound for southern destinations. The Member is asking for details of the assessments made by the federal government. I don't have that at my disposal, Madam Chair, and I don't know if I would be able to provide it. Thank you.

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

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess maybe it's something that this government should make the federal government aware of; that given the increase in the international travel, you see it all the time with big jets landing here in Yellowknife, landing in Inuvik or in Whitehorse, just due to security reasons or mechanical purposes, but eventually there is probably going to be flight services from Inuvik to Moscow in the near future. Who's to say that's not going to happen? I know we do a lot of work in that country as it is, and just not to have a plan in place to ensure -- if you want to ensure that there is some national security safety issues and whatnot -- that's all taken into consideration. I don't know how the federal government can come up with a one-stop shop for explosive detection, especially in a territory this big. I don't know what kind of input we had into it but, by the looks of it, I don't think we had any input into this whole CATSA initiative and, like Jane was referring to, we're just dancing to the federal government's tune as a national security issue and I don't think they have really put much thought into it. That's all I have to say.

---Applause

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Any response, Mr. Dent?

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think the Member has made it clear that there's an interest from other communities to be able to have flights originate in them and I have no doubt that the Minister of Transportation will pass that on to his federal counterpart when he has the occasion to meet with him.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Next on the list I have Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Madam Chair. In following in line with some of my colleagues here, the experience that I've seen in the Beaufort-Delta, when industry was doing a lot of exploration work up there, they completely bypassed Inuvik. They flew directly from Calgary to Edmonton and bypassed Inuvik. So with that experience, I'm just wondering is the department preparing for an influx. I'll give a good example: they expanded Tuk's airport from 3,000 to 5,000 feet to accommodate 737s back in the '80s. Right now, the information that was provided, the Department of Transportation wants to cut it back down to 4,000 feet, which the hamlet of Tuk doesn't want to happen. But with the experience I've encountered in the past, Madam Chair, industry will completely bypass Inuvik because they have ways of getting directly to the closest worksite and that's what they were doing in the past. So will the Minister have something in the plan to cover that in case it does happen, because I know it will, Madam Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. Could I refer the question to the Minister of Transportation, please?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will certainly take that concern and raise it with the federal government. However, I have to repeat again, CATSA

does not share their security implementation plans with us as to what they're going to do with other airports. Right now the focus is on Yellowknife, as far as we know in terms of what they're going to implement for security. As traffic volumes are increased in other communities, certainly I'm sure there would be consideration. Screening devices are based on traffic volumes, so if traffic volumes are on a rise as a result of polar flights or international travel or other means, we would have to look at that along with the federal government. At this point, we are not aware of other plans for security devices in any other airports. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Again, is this going to be a concern? As I say, I can pretty well guarantee that Tuk will probably be one of the biggest traffic volumes. With past experience, as I said earlier, Madam Chair, they were flying seven days a week and landing in Tuktoyaktuk and flying out of there, totally bypassing Yellowknife and Inuvik in some cases. So again, how will the department, Madam Chair, ensure that we're talking about security, ensure that that's going to be in place if they're going to completely bypass Yellowknife in that regard? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to refer that question to the Minister of Transportation.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Madam Chair, if the planes are coming from a southern destination, then they would have a security check there. However, there may be a concern, as the Member raises, as to the flights going from the North to the South. At this point I don't have an answer for that.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Madam Chair. If it's going to be a concern from the South to the North, there has to be concern from the North to the South. How can we ensure under CATSA that the security will be there? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the Minister has committed to raise the issue with CATSA. It will be a CATSA decision, so if they say that the planes have to stop in Yellowknife for security clearance before they go on to Edmonton, then they can issue that requirement. But the Minister has committed to raise this issue and I will follow up with it. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Transportation, capital investment expenditures, airports, special warrants, \$3.4 million. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that we rise and report progress.

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

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress. Thank you, Mr. Dent. Thank you, Mr. Voytilla. Thank you, Mr. McLeod.

MR. SPEAKER: Could I get 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 Bill 13, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2004-2005, and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Seconded? The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden. There is a motion on the floor, the motion is in order.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

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

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Orders of the day for Wednesday, October 27th, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motion
15. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
 - Motion 20-15(3), Affordable Electric Power

17. First Reading of Bills

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

- Minister's Statement 68-15(3), NWT Housing Corporation: From the Ground Up, Celebrating 30 Years

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

20. Report of Committee of the Whole

21. Third Reading of Bills

22. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Wednesday, October 27, 2004, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 4:43 p.m.

