



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Thursday, October 28, 2004****Members Present**

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

ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good afternoon, Members. Orders of the day, item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**Minister's Statement 70-15(3): Report On Ottawa Meetings**

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to provide a brief update to Members of the House on meetings held earlier this week in Ottawa, including a meeting with Prime Minister Martin and Members of his Cabinet on October 24th and the First Ministers' meeting that the Honourable Floyd Roland and I attended on Tuesday, October 26th.

On Sunday, October 24th, the Premiers of Yukon, Nunavut and I met with the Prime Minister, Ministers Goodale, Robillard, Scott and Blondin-Andrew to discuss the commitment set out in the Throne speech to develop a comprehensive strategy for the North. The Prime Minister provided his assurance that he would work with northern Premiers on developing and implementing this strategy.

Mr. Speaker, in summary, we agreed the strategy must be jointly developed by the federal and territorial governments and in cooperation with aboriginal people and northern residents, should include joint priorities and would include short, medium and long-term objectives.

Mr. Speaker, an important outcome of this discussion was the commitment made by the Prime Minister that the strategy would be developed on the principle that northerners must have control over their resources and be the primary beneficiaries of development in the Northwest Territories.

Our officials met with federal officials a number of times this week to jointly develop a work plan on how to move forward with the development of this strategy. These meetings will continue next week. I hope that we will be in a position to formally launch this initiative with the Prime Minister in late November.

Mr. Speaker, a separate meeting was held in Ottawa between the Deputy Premier, the Honourable Floyd Roland, and federal Ministers Scott, Efford and Blondin-Andrew. The primary purpose of the meeting was to discuss resource development in the Northwest Territories and the need for the federal government to begin discussions with northern governments on an agreement that ensures northerners are the primary beneficiaries from the development of our resources.

This meeting follows the advice we received from the Members of this Legislative Assembly last week to pursue the negotiation of an agreement that provides northern governments with an equitable share of royalties from northern resource development.

Mr. Speaker, the focus of the First Ministers' meeting on October 26th was on equalization and territorial formula financing. These are the key federal transfer programs designed to allow all jurisdictions in Canada to provide reasonably comparable public services. The meeting on Tuesday focussed on three issues:

- the total amount that Canada will dedicate to the equalization and formula financing programs over the next few years;
- the allocation of those transfers amongst provinces and territories; and,
- the mandate and makeup of the panel of experts that will be appointed to make recommendations on the issue of allocating equalization payments and territorial formula financing transfer in the longer term.

Mr. Speaker, I can advise the House that the First Ministers' meeting resulted in the following outcomes:

- The federal government has committed to provide the three territories with a minimum funding floor of \$1.9 billion in 2004-05 and \$2 billion in 2005-06. This is an increase of \$68 million in 2004-05 and \$100 million in 2005-06 in new funding over the most recent federal estimates for 2004-05.
- The total base funding amount will escalate by 3.5 percent on an annual basis starting in 2006-07.
- The three territories have agreed on a funding allocation based on the average grant provided by the Government of Canada over the last three years. Under this arrangement, the Northwest Territories will receive 35.7 percent of this. This will result in increases of approximately \$25 million to the Northwest Territories grant this year and \$38 million next year.
- An expert panel will be established to make recommendations on how equalization and territorial formula financing levels should be allocated in 2006-07 and beyond.
- In addition, this arrangement includes an agreement that the federal government will not rebase the tax effort adjustment factor next year. The net result of this is a further increase of approximately \$50 million next year.

---Applause

Mr. Speaker, this new arrangement is a fundamental change in the way our formula arrangements have worked over the last 20 years. The base funding allocation to the territories will now be fixed, as it is for the provinces, and will escalate at a fixed amount of 3.5 percent annually starting in 2006-07. After the initial two-year period, the allocation of the grant amongst the three territories will be decided based on recommendations by an independent outside panel.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of outstanding issues with respect to the treatment of adjustments for prior years and other technical issues with respect to the territorial formula financing agreement. We intend to work with the federal government to resolve these issues over the coming months.

Mr. Speaker, in summary, the First Ministers' meeting and the bilateral meetings we had when in Ottawa were a good beginning. We are committed to work with the federal government to develop a forward-looking northern strategy. We are also committed to working with our aboriginal government partners to ensure that northerners benefit fully from the development of our resources. With respect to future First Ministers' meetings, we are looking forward to working on other critical issues facing the North and Canada, including the issues facing aboriginal peoples, childcare and post-secondary education. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Motion To Move Minister's Statement 70-15(3) Into Committee Of The Whole, Carried

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that Minister's Statement 70-15(3) be moved into Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. There is a motion on the floor, the motion is non-debatable. All in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Minister's Statement 70-15(3) will be moved into Committee of the Whole for today. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On The Need For Whistle-blower Protection Legislation

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak today about the urgency for whistle-blower protection legislation in our jurisdiction.

---Applause

I appreciate, Mr. Speaker, that this was a topic of discussion nationally, prior to the last federal election, but it somehow fell off the federal agenda with the call of the June election. I do not know when this will get back on

their agenda, but I don't believe we need to wait around for some other governments to do the job. I believe we need to do this ourselves, and the sooner we deal with it, the better, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the primary responsibility of an MLA, as I see it, is to be the voice of the people we represent. Our job is to listen to their views and to their grievances. We are to learn from their views and to work hard to help them resolve them, but this is very difficult when people are afraid to speak out. Even when they get enough will and courage to contact their MLA, we're limited in what information we can use as long as they are afraid of having their identities known.

Mr. Speaker, the fear is the greatest among those who work for the government, even if it is a legitimate issue that they are entitled to raise as a private citizen, regardless of the fact that they work for the government. The latest concerns being raised from employees from correctional facilities is one more example, but I've seen this from people who bring up concerns about their WCB claim, health care professionals, or those who are concerned about the split of RWED, goings-on at the Power Corp, and the list goes on and on, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I believe we all understand deeply that democracy is a very fragile machinery, and that all of us need to be ever so vigilant in protecting her every day. Democracy means protecting its citizens from the authoritarian tendencies of their government, and undue powers of the people in the system who have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo. Surely one of the most important things to protect in democracy is the people's right to speak out against the government in their private time and in private life. We need to make sure that the freedom of the citizens to speak out without the fear of retribution or fear of losing their jobs or fear of losing their livelihood is secure at all costs. I believe, Mr. Speaker, our very own whistle-blower protection legislation will make this possible, as well as providing safeguards and checks and balances for all the parties involved. I would urge the government to put this on the top of their legislative agenda immediately. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Unsuccessful Attempts To Gain Employment At North Slave Correctional Centre

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to use my Member's statement today to tell my colleagues in the government about an individual who is an employee at North Slave Correctional Centre. This story, Mr. Speaker, epitomizes the concern that many have, that something is definitely wrong with the way in which human resources are handled at North Slave Correctional Centre. I have heard the Minister of Justice stand up in this House time and time again and defend his department and insist that nothing is wrong. He is still not ready to admit that there are problems at North Slave Correctional Centre.

The story begins with this individual who has been a casual at North Slave Correctional Centre for three years. This person is one of the few casuals who work at the centre who has an education in the field, and they have a

diploma in law enforcement from a recognized college. They have applied for a full-time position on two separate occasions. The first time they applied, the department said sorry, you failed your interview. They appealed the decision and, to their surprise, they were denied the appeal.

The individual then went on to write the entrance exam for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. On that exam, they scored 92 percent, Mr. Speaker. Normally only 25 percent of applicants even pass that RCMP exam.

Another job competition then comes for a full-time position. Again, the individual applies on the position. This time, whether or not his previous appeal had anything to do with it or not, they didn't even get an interview. What they did get was a six-question aptitude test. They were informed that they could not get to the interview stage because they failed the first question on that aptitude test. The first question, Mr. Speaker, on that aptitude test was "Why are you here today?"

---Laughter

Mr. Speaker, I don't understand how human resources could fail anybody on that question.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Shame, shame.

MR. RAMSAY: This employee then went on to his interview for entrance into the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and, Mr. Speaker, they passed that personal interview with flying colours.

How can the Minister of Justice still maintain that there are not problems in human resources at the North Slave Correctional Centre? This individual I'm speaking about is deemed worthy of protecting the interests of national security; however, they cannot get a full-time position at North Slave Correctional Centre.

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

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

MR. RAMSAY: Yet, Mr. Speaker, this individual is deemed worthy of looking after interests of national security, but they cannot get a full-time position at North Slave Correctional Centre, even after three years of service as a casual. The person was away and they are unable to be interviewed for the current review that's underway for the human resource issues at North Slave Correctional Centre. Mr. Speaker, this is an example of what is wrong. It has to be told, Mr. Speaker, and the Minister has to finally admit that he has some serious issues at North Slave Correctional Centre to deal with. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Acceptance Of The Value Of Hydro Power In The NWT

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Every northerner watches daily, nervously, as the world price of oil rises. It looks more and more like it's going to settle in the \$50 U.S. a barrel range, and that means yet more dollars out of pockets for essential heat and transportation and fewer dollars for the other necessities of life. We look at a world suffering more and more from the effects of pollution from fossil fuels, how it affects our health and the environment around us, and we know that our northern regions, Mr. Speaker, are going to take the earliest and the most severe hit from global warming.

We all know this is a no win, lose/lose situation. Yet here in the NWT we have one of the answers. It flows around us everyday, 365 days a year, and is as constant as the sun. The answer is our rivers. This government has been engaged for the past three years in a concerted effort to increase awareness of this potential among northerners, and to increase the understanding of the impacts and the benefits of hydro development. I believe these efforts are paying off, Mr. Speaker, as there seems to be a growing acceptance among aboriginal and community groups of the value of hydro power to our economy and there is an appetite to take the process to the next business steps.

Mr. Speaker, the further development of the NWT's hydro capacity can turn the energy future and fortunes of the NWT around. It can turn the lose/lose fossil fuel crisis into a win/win for us, for our environment and our economy. It will eclipse the value of the diamond, oil and gas resources that we have and, Mr. Speaker, we know how much we are getting out of that these days. But with hydro it's an economic resource that we control, that we manage, and that can be a legacy for many generations to come.

We have been producing hydro power in the NWT since 1938, Mr. Speaker. Sixty-five percent of our electrical energy comes from it today. We can be part of Canada's energy future and it deserves our continuing attention and investment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Absence Of Alcohol And Drug Workers In Fort Liard

MR. MENICOCHE: Mr. Speaker...(English not provided)

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to what I consider to be a failing on the part of this government. I refer to the situation regarding alcohol and drug counselling services in the community of Fort Liard. The point I wish to make is there are no alcohol and drug counsellors in Fort Liard.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Shame, shame.

MR. MENICOCHE: Until a short time ago, those services were available. There was a counsellor working in the community who was hired by the band through a program sponsored by the Department of Health and Social Services. The department, in an effort to consolidate alcohol and drug programs, decided to cut the funding.

The intent was to hire a new counsellor who would be a departmental employee and thereby standardize their service across the NWT. At the time the department first proposed the move, it created a lot of controversy amongst community residents. People were concerned about losing a valuable resource, a counsellor whom they knew and who knew them, in exchange for an unknown entity.

Well, the department finally made its move. Funding to the program was cut, the counsellor closed up shop and no one has been hired to replace him. The very thing people were afraid would happen has happened: they lost their alcohol and drug counsellor.

Mr. Speaker, we presume this is only a temporary situation, that one day the community will see another counsellor; that is what has been promised. But, Mr. Speaker, the community was also promised there would be a smooth transition and continuity in service as the government made changes to the program, and that didn't happen. I find that inexcusable, and I will be asking the Minister responsible to account for this during question period, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Family Violence Awareness Week

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to go back a bit to October 3rd to 9th, which was Family Violence Awareness Week in Canada. I would like to recognize this special week in the importance of violence awareness in our lives.

There were many activities held across the North trying to raise awareness of family violence. In Hay River, as you are no doubt aware, Mr. Speaker, the Hay River Hub published a very informative seven-page section on family violence in their September 29th issue, which we both helped to sponsor. I thought this section was particularly well done. It focused on letting young people know what family violence is, what constitutes abuse, and how to recognize when you are in an abusive relationship. It also provided information on where to turn for help. It is important for all residents of the Northwest Territories to know that they have the right to say no to unwanted sexual attention, and that being hit, verbally abused, or degraded are not things that happen in a normal, healthy relationship.

Parents have a role to play in ensuring that they model what a healthy relationship is to their children. The studies are very conclusive that a person who has been exposed or subjected to abuse is very likely to become an abuser themselves. Parents also have to make sure their children are in healthy relationships and watch for warning signs, such as withdrawal or moodiness, that may signify something more than just ordinary teenage angst.

Teachers, family and friends all have roles to play in ending family violence. If you think a friend is being abused at home or is in an unhealthy relationship, talk to them or talk to someone in authority who can help.

Mr. Speaker, the statistics in the Northwest Territories paint a grim picture. The use of family shelters is eight times the national average. There were 221 spousal assaults reported between January and August in 2003, and there were 28 reported cases of sexual assault on young people under the age of 18. We need to all work together to help the victims, to educate young people and the general public, and to make sure that abusers get the help that they need to deal with their issues so that they can become better parents, partners and family.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize and thank the staff of the Family Support Centre in Hay River who continue to work tirelessly towards providing a safe and secure environment to those in need in my home community and they are: Crystal Ball, executive director; Annette Rideout, administrative assistant; Jennifer Lennie and Angela Farnsworth, family violence support workers; and Melissa Beck, the youth activity coordinator at the Family Support Centre. Thank you for all that you do to help others. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Federal Bill C-14, Tlicho Land Claim And Self-Government Act

MR. ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday marked a very significant day for the Tlicho people. The national spotlight was on us as Bill C-14, Tlicho Land Claims and Self-Government Act, passed second reading in the House of Commons.

---Applause

As Members are aware, it was a great disappointment for our people when this bill died on the order paper before the last federal election, so this latest progress is very welcome.

Mr. Speaker, as I said last week when I spoke to the Tlicho Community Services Act currently before our Assembly, the Tlicho people have been waiting a long time for their land claim and self-government agreement to come into effect, after many years of long, difficult, expensive negotiation.

Mr. Speaker, this will be the first self-government legislation for the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, aboriginal people across Canada will be watching to see how Parliament handles this legislation and will look to the Tlicho agreement as the new standard. I hope that they will be inspired and encouraged by what we have accomplished to seek just settlements for themselves. We are proving that it can happen.

Mr. Speaker, indications are that third reading of the bill is expected within the next six months. The Tlicho people's dreams of regaining our lands and powers to govern ourselves is fast becoming a reality and our future is looking very bright. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Lutselk'e Community Learning Network Partnership

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to talk about a significant step towards improving an education program within my constituency. Mr. Speaker, next week, on November 2nd, there will be a celebration to mark the unique educational programming initiative in Lutselk'e that was spearheaded by four organizations.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Lutselk'e Education Authority, South Slave Divisional Educational Council, Aurora College and the Fort Smith regional office of Education, Culture and Employment for working collaboratively on this important undertaking of raising awareness in the community on the value of education for all persons, by establishing a unique community learning network partnership.

Mr. Speaker, because this jointly-funded initiative will provide better access to education programs and courses for residents, this venture makes it possible for all residents of Lutselk'e to enjoy the varying courses and training being offered that will better suit and develop their interest and their skills which they can eventually use in pursuit of their employment aspirations in the various sectors of our northern economy.

Mr. Speaker, cooperation and goodwill among one another can and will achieve great things, such as addressing the educational concerns that are prevalent in all our smaller communities. This is a good example of what community organizations and community members working together cooperatively can accomplish on a very important issue, such as continued education, personal growth, and seeing recognizable achievements to advance career developments for both youth and adults in small communities. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Keeping Government Contracts And Jobs In The Sahtu Region

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, all too often I hear stories from my constituents about government contracts for work in the Sahtu being awarded to companies outside of the region, and about local people being turned down for government jobs. All too often, Mr. Speaker, I hear excuses from government, like they did not meet the educational requirements, did not meet our standards. These excuses tell me that the GNWT is not living up to the spirit of the Sahtu Land Claim Agreement and, in particular, the economic measures chapter.

There are many capable people and businesses in the Sahtu, and there are no excuses for them not to be getting government jobs and contracts. If the GNWT is really convinced that the Sahtu people and businesses are not up to their standards, Mr. Speaker, then what is the government doing to change this? The economic measures chapter mentions a lot of things that should be happening: training, assistance to develop commercially-viable businesses, encouragement of the employment of the Sahtu people, including employment in public services

and public agencies. It also says the government shall -- shall, Mr. Speaker -- review job qualifications and recruitment procedures to remove any corporate requirements in respect of cultural factors, experiences and education. All these are written in the Sahtu Land Claim Agreement. For me and for the people of the Sahtu region, we like to think that means that they're as good as written in stone.

Mr. Speaker, the Sahtu Land Claim Agreement was signed in 1993. The government had 11 years to figure out how to live up to its economic measures obligations. It is time this happened. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Impacts Of Global Events And World Oil Prices

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because I am very concerned about the world oil prices and how they can effect and cause crises elsewhere in the world. Mr. Speaker, years ago we could not assume what happened somewhere else would have an effect locally. One hundred years ago, you know, the perspective on the world was much different; 50 years ago it was much different; and even this summer oil prices were much different and we never would have thought that they would have a link.

Mr. Speaker, today what happens in Iraq and Venezuela has an effect in the Northwest Territories, not just Canada. Mr. Speaker, I am getting at the fact that the reality has changed. We are not just a global economy, but we are a global community and we need to look at those issues. Mr. Speaker, I am concerned about the quagmire that we are heading into because of our reliance on non-renewable resources and the fact is, it is a fact of today.

Mr. Speaker, I am concerned about how we, as a government, are dealing with this situation. Are we monitoring this crisis, or are we going to wait until the bills show up and just act as a reactive process? Mr. Speaker, I would like to see this government be proactive. What are we doing about these problems? What are we doing to reduce our usage? Are we looking at dialling back those heat registers? Are we looking at turning off the lights at the end of the day?

Mr. Speaker, we need to take proactive choices and they need to be implemented now. Mr. Speaker, I would like to see this House someday, in the near future that is, set up a policy where we reduce every area by five percent based on consumption, not on the end bill, but clearly consumption. We need to change the attitude, and with the crises out there as it is, it's insane.

Mr. Speaker, at lunchtime I went to a website to find out the current crude oil price. It's \$50.80 per barrel. The 52-week high was \$55.67. Mr. Speaker, this summer I believe the 52-week low was \$28.26. Realities have changed and we have to get on board with the changes that are happening. Mr. Speaker, I need to see drastic action and I hope our government will be taking drastic

action through a policy to work towards solving this issue. We need an action plan based on consumption.

Mr. Speaker, I will be closing in seconds, but I want to emphasize I don't want to see March madness for oil bills, Mr. Speaker. I don't have a crystal ball or magic eight ball to tell me what to do or what not to do on this problem, or else if I did I would have invested in oil this summer. Mr. Speaker, I foresee a lot of special warrants coming forward in the spring, I see a lot coming in the new year. Later this afternoon I will have questions for the appropriate Minister at that time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Item 4, reports of standing and special committees. Item 5, returns to oral questions. Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

ITEM 6: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a friend of this House and my partner at Tim Horton's and still my very favourite MLA, Mr. Tony Whitford. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Laughter

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Indeed, welcome to the Assembly, Mr. Whitford. Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize some people who are in the gallery for the Northern Teachers' Council. Amanda Mallon is president of the NWT Teachers' Association.

---Applause

Mr. Dave Roebuck is the executive director of the NWTTA.

---Applause

Mr. Ian Oostindie is president of the Yukon Teachers' Association.

---Applause

I understand he is also the Premier's brother-in-law.

---Applause

Dennis Rankin, the executive director of the Yukon Teachers' Association, is with us.

---Applause

Lou Budgell from the Nunavut Teachers' Association is in the gallery.

---Applause

Jimmy Jacquard, who is vice-president of the Nunavut Teachers' Association. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Indeed, welcome to the Assembly. Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I, too, wish to acknowledge Mr. Whitford. From my understanding, Mr. Whitford has an extra smile on today and I believe he got a special phone call, so I think this Assembly needs to recognize Mr. Whitford. He will explain the phone call later to all Members, but I have a feeling we will be seeing a lot more of him. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased, as well, to recognize my brother-in-law from the Yukon and welcome him here. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

ITEM 7: ORAL QUESTIONS

Oral Question 325-15(3): Sahtu Economic Measures Chapter

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier today in my Member's statement I spoke about the economic measures chapter of the Sahtu Land Claim Agreement and how businesses and people in the Sahtu do not feel that this territorial government is living up to its obligations under this chapter. It's very disappointing for my people to see the government taking 11 years to work on this chapter here. My question is to the Premier. Would the Premier be willing to meet with the Sahtu people to hear about their concerns and disagreement about the economic measures chapter and to work with them to develop an implementation plan? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 325-15(3): Sahtu Economic Measures Chapter

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am certainly willing and, in fact, eager to meet with the people in the Sahtu to talk about the implementation plan which was just recently negotiated. I did want to go there a while ago, but the weather prevented it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 325-15(3): Sahtu Economic Measures Chapter

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Premier knows that I also tried to get into that region

to meet with the Sahtu people. How soon would the Premier be able to contact the Sahtu officials to set up a date and a meeting with them? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 325-15(3): Sahtu Economic Measures Chapter

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, my information is that the three parties -- the Sahtu, GNWT and Government of Canada -- are planning on meeting November 16th to 18th in Inuvik and I'm not sure why Inuvik was chosen, but that is where the scheduled meeting is, I believe. I intend to be there, if at all possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 325-15(3): Sahtu Economic Measures Chapter

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Premier assure me that there will be a process set up for coordination amongst the departments that will have a role to play in implementing the economic measures chapter? For example, Aboriginal Affairs, RWED, Education, Culture and Employment, Public Works and Services, and FMBS. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 325-15(3): Sahtu Economic Measures Chapter

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes, Mr. Speaker, it's our intention to have that sort of arrangement set up. I don't know the structure of it, but we will do that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Question 326-15(3): Renovations To The Hay River Hospital

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for Mr. Miltenberger, the Minister of Health and Social Services. I have a number of outstanding issues with respect to commitments that have been made regarding delivery of Health and Social Services programs in Hay River. I'm going to try and cover them off within one set of questions. Mr. Speaker, there has been a plan for some time now to do some fairly significant renovations to the Hay River hospital which houses a lot of the Health and Social Services programs. There was information that had somehow ended up at a staff meeting there which lead some of the employees to be concerned that the schedule and time frame for the hospital renovations had somehow been changed to move some of them back. I wanted the Minister to provide clarification of that today for the benefit of the workers and the residents of Hay River. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 326-15(3): Renovations To The Hay River Hospital

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the renovations in Hay River are slated to go ahead. We are just in the process of concluding a report that's been looking at the facility review of all the facilities in the Northwest Territories on the acute care side, the long-term care side and the usage and anticipated needs in the future. Once that report is done, we will be moving ahead with the actual master planning for the mid-life renovations in Hay River. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 326-15(3): Renovations To The Hay River Hospital

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, so at this time then the Minister can confirm that there have been no alterations made to the renovation plans and the capital dollars that have been identified for future years for the Hay River hospital. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 326-15(3): Renovations To The Hay River Hospital

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the project is in the capital plan and main estimates and it will be done.

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

Supplementary To Question 326-15(3): Renovations To The Hay River Hospital

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, then in keeping with other commitments that I've had issues and concerns raised to me about, that I have been in the presence of the Minister on visits to Hay River, which I thank him for, but there was an outstanding issue with respect to wage parity for the workers in health and social services in Hay River who are not UNW employees and have a separate collective bargaining union. I was wondering if the Minister could confirm for the House that this commitment has been delivered upon. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 326-15(3): Renovations To The Hay River Hospital

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this issue has been on the table for some time. There's another round of collective bargaining that's going to be underway here and that will continue to be discussed. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 326-15(3): Renovations To The Hay River Hospital

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if the Minister could indicate for us, are the workers of the Hay River Health and Social Services Board at parity and equity for benefits and salaries as are the UNW employees who are employed in the other communities in the Northwest Territories at this time? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 326-15(3): Renovations To The Hay River Hospital

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is one of the key pieces in the negotiations that are going to be underway. One of the outstanding issues, let me put it this way, is the issue of pensions. That has yet to be resolved. Thank you.

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

Question 327-15(3): Monitoring Energy Consumption

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question will be to the Minister of FMBS, the Honourable Mr. Roland. Mr. Speaker, my concern is we need an attitude change out there because of the high cost of fuel. What is our government doing to monitor the consumption of energy, referring to both power, as well as fuel oil with respect to GNWT assets? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 327-15(3): Monitoring Energy Consumption

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as a government, we have on a number of occasions through budget exercises, looked at the consumption of our resources, whether it be heating oil, electrical, water and sewer; we've looked at those in areas and targeted areas we think we could have some savings in. The Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development has done some work in the past. The Housing Corporation has done some work in the past in trying to save the precious resources we have out there. As the Government of the Northwest Territories, we do have a number of other things that we do to try to mitigate the costs to individuals in the Northwest Territories; through our Territorial Power Support Program or subsidy programs that we have in place for seniors, for example, on fuel. So we do a number of other things, as well. We've done some things during normal budget exercises and we're hoping that departments, through those exercises, are looking at those on an annual basis. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 327-15(3): Monitoring Energy Consumption

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister for his overview of an annual basis but, Mr. Speaker, I'm referring to the crisis of oil prices. We need an action plan, a new policy, that looks at everything from idling our cars and trucks, our buildings, by turning our lights off, by turning our fuel heat registers down a little bit. We'd be foolish to think that there wouldn't be a rider on this year's power bill due to the oil prices. What is the Minister doing to avert this potential crisis that we'll be seeing in endless amounts of supplementary appropriation bills or special warrants to deal with this crisis? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 327-15(3): Monitoring Energy Consumption

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on an annual basis, we work with the departments to try to come up with their costs they will need to run the programs and services identified for that year. One of the things we do, again, is we do our work and look at the existing costs of services out there. The Member is right, though; we will be having to look at and address the issue of the increased price of fuel. That is something we have directed the departments to live within their means at this point because we knew that the prices were changing quite substantially; either on the high side or dropping. We're going to have to wait for actual costs to come back and address them at that point. We haven't tried to do things in the sense of providing departments with funding up front on an estimate basis, because the prices were fluctuating too much when we put our plans together. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 327-15(3): Monitoring Energy Consumption

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister knows I have a lot of respect for him but, Mr. Speaker, I think we're losing the point and losing sight of this issue. When he talks about annual basis, we didn't foresee this in March of this year. We didn't foresee this when the business plans were being built a year ago that oil prices would practically double, Mr. Speaker. I need to hear that we're doing this on a proactive rather reactive basis, Mr. Speaker. I need a commitment that this Minister will take a proactive position rather than paying the bills long after the energy has been spent. Can the Minister commit to that proactive approach? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 327-15(3): Monitoring Energy Consumption

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I started out in response to the Member, the Government of the Northwest Territories has, on an annual basis, as well as targeted for future cost initiatives, looked at the way we do business, looked at what type of fixtures we use in our offices, lighting fixtures, for

example, as well as looked at vehicle operations, and looked at the appliances that were being put into the Housing Corporation units to ensure that they were cost effective and knew that we would see a savings. So we have done a lot of those things on a daily basis, in a sense, to try to mitigate the cost of power and fuel in the Northwest Territories. It is difficult on a budget planning exercise on an annual basis to try to build something in there for an anticipated price. I know departments have raised the issue already that we're going to be looking at increased costs that were not committed for at the time. There is difficulty there. We will, on an ongoing basis, continue to work around lowering the costs of government in whatever way it may be. One of those areas would be the cost of utilities in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 327-15(3): Monitoring Energy Consumption

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Minister talking about an annual basis, a global basis, but, Mr. Speaker, this crisis wasn't here a year ago. This is why I'm stressing that we need action today to avert the crisis of the spending we're going to need to do and make up and borrow in the new year. Mr. Speaker, bills are doubling, oil and fuel bills are doubling. Mr. Speaker, I need some type of commitment that we will do this up front before we get the bills. We'll turn down those lights. The Legislative Assembly glows all night long. Let's turn those lights down. This affects every school. This affects every power plant. This affects everything that we do. Mr. Speaker, can I get some type of commitment that we're going to start dealing with this up front, now. We can do it now before these oil bills come in. We can do it now before these power bills come in. Let's be proactive, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 327-15(3): Monitoring Energy Consumption

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I guess we can send a directive out that all light bulbs will be no brighter than 40 watts, but we are doing our work on a daily basis and trying to address the very issues the Member has raised. The problem is that we cannot build into a budget exercise anticipated costs where we might see some of those double. But on the ongoing basis of daily program services, how long a vehicle idles for, what type of fixtures we use in buildings, hours of operation, we've done those things. Departments have put those things in place. When we set targets for departments, hopefully they're looking at those things before they decide to cut a program dollar and they're looking at how they operate on a daily basis.

We have a number of programs, as well, as a government trying to assist residents across the North. RWED has a program around the environmental protection services where they do have an Energy Conservation Program. We're trying to reach out in ways of that nature to try to help individuals across the North with the increasing prices. We realize that there are going to be some impacts and we're doing what we can to try to mitigate those as we're going forward. But we are going to be hit by them because of our process of planning. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

Question 328-15(3): Teacher Education Program Graduates

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 go back to the Premier's address of January 2001, where the government-of-the-day was intent on showing northern students that they were valued, and I'll quote, "We intend to guarantee employment to every graduate from a recognized nursing or teaching program. In addition, by the end of March, we expect to have a program in place to guarantee a term position to every new NWT post-secondary graduate qualified in certain other priority occupations." Mr. Speaker, my question for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment is, since the Premier's address in 2001, what are the numbers of northern graduates from the Teacher Education Program with Aurora College that have gotten jobs within the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 328-15(3): Teacher Education Program Graduates

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can't say the exact number of teacher graduates since 2001 off the top of my head, I'm afraid, but I do believe we've had a very good success rate of finding positions for people who are interested in teaching the Northwest Territories once they've graduated from the program. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 328-15(3): Teacher Education Program Graduates

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm wondering if the Minister could supply the Regular Members with the statistics that back up the claim that all northern graduates from the TEP have gotten employment in the Northwest Territories and are gainfully employed in the teaching profession, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 328-15(3): Teacher Education Program Graduates

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will commit to provide all of that information to the Regular Members. I will do that within the next two or three days.

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

Supplementary To Question 328-15(3): Teacher Education Program Graduates

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to hearing the response from the Minister on the statistics.

I'm just wondering if the Minister is aware that there are graduates from the Teacher Education Program in the Northwest Territories that can't find employment and that some of the larger district education authorities are still recruiting teachers from southern Canada in large numbers, Mr. Speaker. Is the Minister aware of this fact? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 328-15(3): Teacher Education Program Graduates

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I am aware of that fact. I know some teachers who have not been able to find employment. The Premier's guarantee and the one that this government is standing by is one that a position will be offered; not necessarily in the community to which the person is interested in applying though. So we are convinced that the positions are available across the Northwest Territories, but not every graduate is prepared to go to every community. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 328-15(3): Teacher Education Program Graduates

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for that, Mr. Minister. So I'm just wondering, and the Minister has spoken of the fact that they're offered positions, but what is the Department of Education, Culture and Employment doing with the school boards in Yellowknife in terms of recruitment of teachers and why can't some of these teachers that take the program that live in Yellowknife not get jobs in Yellowknife? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 328-15(3): Teacher Education Program Graduates

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have raised the issue with the chairs of the two Yellowknife boards, but the department does not get directly involved in deciding who should be hired by which board. We make sure that all of the boards are aware of people who are looking for positions and are interested and at this point we are confident that there are positions available if teachers are prepared to take them, but we can't guarantee what community the positions will be available in. Thank you.

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

Question 329-15(3): Absence Of An Alcohol And Drug Worker In Fort Liard

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the honourable Minister of Health and Social Services with respect to my Member's statement on the absence of an alcohol and drug worker in the community of Fort Liard. I would just like to ask the Minister what the transition plan was and why there isn't an alcohol and drug counsellor there today. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 329-15(3): Absence Of An Alcohol And Drug Worker In Fort Liard

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, back on August 18th the Member and myself and some other folks sat down in Fort Liard when we were doing a tour of the Nahendeh. We met with the chief and we talked about the concern about the alcohol and drug worker in the community which has been converted into a community wellness worker and a mental health and addictions counsellor that was being hired. Those are two separate positions. It was agreed at that time that there would be a staffing process initiated for the mental health worker. As well, we would be looking at filling the community wellness worker locally with an individual that was currently working in the community at the health centre who was fluent in Slavey. That process is underway. My understanding was that there was an interview held for the mental health position. The person doing the interview did not pass. That position is being re-advertised. As well, we are still in the process of trying to arrange for a direct appointment for an individual in Fort Liard to take over the duties of the community wellness worker. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 329-15(3): Absence Of An Alcohol And Drug Worker In Fort Liard

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess the contention here, Mr. Speaker, is that there was quite a bit of controversy when they cancelled the programming that was run by the band. We had asked to extend it as long as possible and they did, but they assured us of a smooth transfer, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to ask the Minister again how soon will the community of Fort Liard be getting an alcohol counsellor? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 329-15(3): Absence Of An Alcohol And Drug Worker In Fort Liard

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker it is unfortunate that there are no current services but, as I indicated, the process is already underway to re-advertise for the mental health position. I will commit to the Member to get more specific detail of the direct appointment of one of the local staff who is currently working at the health centre in terms of having her moved into the community wellness worker's position. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 329-15(3): Absence Of An Alcohol And Drug Worker In Fort Liard

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister tell myself and the community what provisions are in place today to address those that may need assistance or may need help with their counselling needs today? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 329-15(3): Absence Of An Alcohol And Drug Worker In Fort Liard

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there will be contingency backup arrangements made out of Fort Simpson to fill in the service gaps on a temporary basis until we can rectify and staff these two positions. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 329-15(3): Absence Of An Alcohol And Drug Worker In Fort Liard

MR. MENICOCHÉ: I would like to thank the Minister for his answers, Mr. Speaker. That's an immediate concern. As well, he did bring up the mental health position. Perhaps I can ask the Minister when that will be filled, as well. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 329-15(3): Absence Of An Alcohol And Drug Worker In Fort Liard

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there were interviews held just recently, and the person being interviewed didn't pass the interview. So they are re-advertising that as we speak. So hopefully in the next few weeks we'll get some successful applicants interviewed and staffed. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Question 330-15(3): Human Resource Review At North Slave Correctional Centre

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister of Justice and it's in regard to the human resource internal review that's being held. Mr. Speaker, I accept the Minister's statement in the House that this review is going on and that we should wait for the report to pursue further questions, and I am prepared to go with that except that I want to be sure that we will have the information from the review to make decisions or if things need to be done. The reason why I am not so sure if that's going to happen for sure is that I have not had a commitment from the Minister so far. Also, from my understanding, there have been two reviews done in the department in core services, as well as in SMCC in recent years, and none of the findings of those reports have been made available nor have any decisions been made. So I would like to get the commitment from the Minister that with the provisos that there be no personal and private information available, but the major findings of this review will be shared by the Members either in the House or in a committee setting. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 330-15(3): Human Resource Review At North Slave Correctional Centre

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the report is being done by corporate human resources and I believe that the Minister responsible, Mr. Floyd Roland, has briefed committee and did tell them that they would receive a copy of the information the Member just requested. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 330-15(3): Human Resource Review At North Slave Correctional Centre

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to need some help here, because I don't know if I am supposed to direct my question to the Minister of FMBS or Minister Dent to confirm. I have said in both our meetings with Minister Dent and Minister Roland I don't believe there were firm commitments that this will be shared. So could I get the Minister to commit today that insofar as is possible, without violating anyone's private rights, that he will make the findings of the report available to the Members? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 330-15(3): Human Resource Review At North Slave Correctional Centre

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I just previously said, that commitment was made by Mr. Roland, but I will make it again. Yes, that information will be shared with Members. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Question 331-15(3): Response To The Action Plan On Family Violence

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for Minister Dent. Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories has produced a response to the NWT Action Plan on Family Violence, and I believe that Minister Dent is responsible for this. It indicates that this response was put together and prepared by the Coalition Against Family Violence and yet today, Mr. Speaker, I hear that representatives of the NWT Status of Women Council are displeased and not supportive of this response. I would like to ask the Minister who were the NGOs or agencies or departments that comprise the Coalition Against Family Violence? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The Minister responsible, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 331-15(3): Response To The Action Plan On Family Violence

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The response to the report, which we just released last week, was largely done within government. It was done with representatives from Justice, Education, Culture and Employment and Health and Social Services with the special advisors to the Minister responsible for the Status of Women. Outside agencies were brought in. For

instance, the executive director of the NWT Status of Women was offered on many occasions an opportunity to be briefed and comment on the public education plan, but, unfortunately, that did not get responded to, so that briefing never took place. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 331-15(3): Response To The Action Plan On Family Violence

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we all know that there are many NGOs across the territory in our communities that are involved with family violence. So I would like to know which NGOs in the Northwest Territories were invited to sit with these government departments that you've listed to form the Coalition Against Family Violence. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 331-15(3): Response To The Action Plan On Family Violence

HON. CHARLES DENT: Mr. Speaker, I apologize; I don't have a copy of the report in front of me and I can't name off the outside organizations that were invited. So I don't have that information in front of me right now. Sorry, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 331-15(3): Response To The Action Plan On Family Violence

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister please confirm for me then that the Coalition Against Family Violence did constitute more than the government departments that he just listed as full participants? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 331-15(3): Response To The Action Plan On Family Violence

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Coalition Against Family Violence was a large number of groups that included federal agencies as well as territorial and non-government agencies. The response that I brought forward last week was our response to their report. So the response did not have everybody from the coalition at the table. It was developed as a government response, so it wasn't exactly the same group that was involved in developing that response. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Final Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 331-15(3): Response To The Action Plan On Family Violence

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, so could the Minister then just confirm for me that the NWT Status of Women's Council was invited in

the preparation of the NWT Action Plan on Family Violence? Were they invited to be full participants in developing that action plan? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 331-15(3): Response To The Action Plan On Family Violence

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it was a government response to the coalition's recommendations, so outside agencies weren't necessarily invited to be full partners. However, an invitation was extended on numerous occasions to the executive director of the NWT Status of Women to attend and be briefed on the status of the development of the response. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

Question 332-15(3): Gas Microturbines In Inuvik

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Premier, the Honourable Joe Handley, Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation. Mr. Speaker, the first question I have for the Premier is why did the Power Corporation spend close to \$500,000 on two gas microturbines, which were designed by Mariah Energy and installed at the community recreation centre in Inuvik without some type of warranty on these microturbines, Mr. Speaker? Can the Premier advise the House of why there was no warranty on these pieces of equipment? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 332-15(3): Gas Microturbines In Inuvik

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, the supply of those turbines was done after looking at a number of models and, in fact, several visits to the plant and the office; I can't remember if it was in Calgary or Edmonton. This was a joint project done with the Town of Inuvik. Mr. Speaker, that's some time ago and I don't know the nature of the warranty on it although, as I recall, there were a number of visits by the people who provided those gas turbines. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 332-15(3): Gas Microturbines In Inuvik

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Is it the policy of the Northwest Territories Power Corporation to purchase equipment valued at half-a-million dollars without proper warranties or service contracts attached to those pieces of equipment, because the two microturbines were only there for two years? Mr. Speaker, I am wondering if the Premier can state that that's the policy of the Power Corporation, that they don't really mind if there is no warranty or guarantee on pieces of equipment that cost the Power Corporation half-a-million dollars. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 332-15(3): Gas Microturbines In Inuvik

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, those kinds of gas turbines are new technology. There are warranties on them, but when the Power Corporation looks at new ways of saving energy costs, it sometimes has to take some risk. The turbines that are provided in Inuvik are the same ones that I saw at one time myself in a recreation facility at one of the community colleges in Alberta. There was, by the corporation, as much due diligence on making sure that they were buying something that was reasonably sure. The company that provided them still does business there and does the service work that is essential. There have been problems, there's no doubt about that; but, again, it's new technology and we must continually be reaching out, although we don't want to be too far out front of the technology where we do increase the risk too much. Mr. Speaker, this is typical in these kinds of projects. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 332-15(3): Gas Microturbines In Inuvik

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it seems quite a risky decision to spend half-a-million dollars on two cutting-edge microturbines to be placed in Inuvik, which is, as we all know, far removed from a major centre where they could get some servicing on the pieces of equipment. I know that the Power Corporation is going to try to run these two microturbines for another year and I am wondering if the Premier can advise us...I know they had to go out and get a new service contract to look after these microturbines. Can the Premier tell us today what that's going to cost the Power Corporation to get a new service contract in place for these microturbines? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 332-15(3): Gas Microturbines In Inuvik

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I don't know if the Power Corporation yet knows what the new service contract will cost. But, Mr. Speaker, I can assure the Member that as soon as the Power Corporation has a quote on that, then we will provide it to the Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Final supplementary, Mr. Ramsay. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Question 333-15(3): Position On Missile Defence System

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again to follow up on some of my questions to the Premier last week; that was Friday, October 22nd. I had asked the Premier many questions in regard to my concerns about Canada's involvement with the missile defence program. Mr. Speaker, briefly I asked him to bring forward a policy that does not exist for a position that does not exist to the Prime Minister's view. If I may quote on page 2131 of

unedited Hansard referring to Question 288-15(3), the Premier is quoted as saying "I've already made that request to the Prime Minister in earlier discussions. I am meeting with him on Sunday, and that will be reinforced" and that was in the context of would he bring our message to him. Could the Premier cite to us what he discussed with the Prime Minister, if he can in this House today, with regard to my concerns with the missile defence program? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. You are referring to a Minister's statement that was moved into Committee of the Whole today and you can ask questions on that before Committee of the Whole. I rule that question out of order.

---Ruled Out of Order

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

Question 334-15(3): Review Of South Mackenzie Correctional Centre

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is again to the Minister of Justice. I mentioned earlier in my previous question about this internal review, I don't know if it's an internal review, but some kind of review that was done on SMCC, and I'm wondering if the Minister can make the findings of that report or the whole report available. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 334-15(3): Review Of South Mackenzie Correctional Centre

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't believe that can be made available. I don't think that there is any way that that report, the way it was written, that the information could be severed to protect the individuals involved. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 334-15(3): Review Of South Mackenzie Correctional Centre

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand there was another study done on the Department of Justice and that was a review of court divisions. Could I have that copy available? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 334-15(3): Review Of South Mackenzie Correctional Centre

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That must have been done before my time as Minister. I have no knowledge of that report; I'm sorry.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Ms. Lee, I would caution you to remain with your original topic in your line of questioning. Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 334-15(3): Review Of South Mackenzie Correctional Centre

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess the thing I could say to tie these two together is I'm learning more and more, because people are telling me about this, that they are having a lot of administrative studies done and I'm assuming that they were done in public interest, there were some public interest questions that were being sought. There was probably a problem that they were looking to get answers to, and I would hate to see all these reviews being shelved with nothing being done. I'm not interested in knowing private and personal information, but is there any way the Minister could revisit these two reports and if there were any findings there that are of public interest that he could share? Could he do that please? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 334-15(3): Review Of South Mackenzie Correctional Centre

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I said already on the one report, I don't believe that there is any way to sever the personal information from the one report and bring anything forward from it. On the courts, the one the Member has referred to, I'm not aware of that report, so I will have to look into it and find out whether or not anything from that report can be made public. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 334-15(3): Review Of South Mackenzie Correctional Centre

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Minister's commitment on the courts division report. With respect to the SMCC review, even if he cannot give us information on what the findings were, could he at least provide us with the information as to why the study was necessary in the first place? Explain what it was about, why they had to do it, who did the study, when it was done and what was done with it, without going into the details. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 334-15(3): Review Of South Mackenzie Correctional Centre

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will take a look at that report and see whether or not it is possible to do that by way of a letter to the Member. Thank you.

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

Question 335-15(3): Strategy To Deal With Drug Addiction In Small Communities

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it was reported, on October 26th at 12:15 p.m., that communities along the Mackenzie Valley, specifically in Fort McPherson where they are dealing with underage drinking, ran around to see how they can resolve this issue. It's also reported that communities are dealing with

the hard drugs like crack addiction, and also in Yellowknife and in Hay River. I would like to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services, can he inform this House of what type of strategy he is working on in terms of dealing with these issues in the small communities and the larger centres and bring that back to the House? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 335-15(3): Strategy To Deal With Drug Addiction In Small Communities

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have a Mental Health and Addictions Strategy that has had the first two years completed. We've put staff in nearly all the communities, both mental health workers as well as community wellness workers. We're working on ensuring they are properly trained and able to deal with the alcohol and drug issues that arise.

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

Supplementary To Question 335-15(3): Strategy To Deal With Drug Addiction In Small Communities

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I understand the process that the Department of Health and Social Services has taken over the years in terms of getting community wellness workers in the communities. Can the Minister provide some type of report card and see how effective these workers are in terms of combating the drug and alcohol issues? It seems like it is on the increase, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 335-15(3): Strategy To Deal With Drug Addiction In Small Communities

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member is correct. In the North, we continue to, for example, consume and abuse alcohol at two-and-a-half to three times the national average. There is an increasing inflow of drugs from the South like cocaine and crack cocaine and probably crystal meth. Northerners have shown a prodigious appetite for those substances. It is not something that we have been able to turn around at this point. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 335-15(3): Strategy To Deal With Drug Addiction In Small Communities

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that is why I asked the Minister to look at some innovative solutions in terms of curbing the hard drugs in our communities, by talking to these other Ministers and saying that this is a comprehensive approach. Again, go back to the report that Mr. Andre, deputy mayor from Fort McPherson, is talking about, having underage children who have been dealing with underage drinking in the community of Fort McPherson. I am asking the Minister, can he look at other solutions with

other colleagues in terms of coming up with a northern solution? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 335-15(3): Strategy To Deal With Drug Addiction In Small Communities

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will commit to the Member that we will make sure that this is an agenda item on our next meeting with the social envelope Ministers, which is going to happen within the next couple of weeks. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 335-15(3): Strategy To Deal With Drug Addiction In Small Communities

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when he has this social envelope meeting with the other Ministers, would the Minister commit to possibly looking at bringing some other people from the communities in terms of maybe looking at a solution in the North? I know we can deal with this issue in the Northwest Territories. That can be done. We could pull our people together; they are smart. I believe that the Minister wants to have that happen also, so would he look at possibly bringing in some people from the communities to look at this issue? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 335-15(3): Strategy To Deal With Drug Addiction In Small Communities

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the meeting, we will, of course, look at all aspects of this issue and how best to proceed with the fundamental issue: how do we encourage and educate people to make the right personal choice so that they don't start abusing alcohol or start using the drugs that have been mentioned in this House today. That involves the individuals. It involves the parents, families as well as the community, so, when we have this discussion at our next meeting, we will make sure that we look at all those aspects. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Question 336-15(3): NWT Council Of Sport And Recreation Partners

MR. BRADEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My question this afternoon is for the Honourable Michael McLeod, the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, and in his capacity for the NWT Council of Sport and Recreation Partners, which, Mr. Speaker, has been in the making for arguably more than four years now. I understand, Mr. Speaker, that this council has now finally been formatted and put together. I wanted to ask the Minister, Mr. Speaker, when this council is going to actually get off the ground and what its mandate is. Thank you very much.

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

Return To Question 336-15(3): NWT Council Of Sport And Recreation Partners

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our plans for this new sports council coming into operation is April of 2005. We want to have one year or some time for transition to allow for Members to develop some new business plans and budgets and plan for the integration of some of the programs and services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 336-15(3): NWT Council Of Sport And Recreation Partners

MR. BRADEN: Yes, Mr. Speaker. The creation of this council, it seems, is something very much driven by the government. The history was one of expectations and things that people from various sectors, various communities and regions thought should be in there but weren't quite being delivered on. I would like to probe again just what is the mandate of this council and how is it going to improve the delivery of sport and recreation services in the NWT. The mandates, please, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 336-15(3): NWT Council Of Sport And Recreation Partners

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in my first answer, the committee is going to be formulated over this next while. The plans are to have it operational by April of this year. The mandate and business plans are all yet to be developed. The intention of creating this new council was to have the amalgamation of all our sports priorities under one umbrella to create a forum where all communities would have a voice...

---Applause

...and be able to reduce some of the overlap in terms of providing programs and services and also have the ability to coordinate some of our services and, at the same time, reduce some of our costs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 336-15(3): NWT Council Of Sport And Recreation Partners

MR. BRADEN: Okay, so we are getting somewhere. Those are very positive and desirable goals. I guess, in that though, whenever we create some new organization or some new system, Mr. Speaker, we should always be looking for ways in which we are going to measure its progress. How are we going to assess its value and see if it is, indeed, sticking to those goals? Could the Minister advise the Assembly what are the measurements by which we would be able to assess this new council's aspirations? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 336-15(3): NWT Council Of Sport And Recreation Partners

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I am not aware, at this point, if we have developed the process areas or time frames where we would perform an evaluation. We certainly could work on that and develop and build it into our business plan as we work them out in the next while. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 336-15(3): NWT Council Of Sport And Recreation Partners

MR. BRADEN: Okay. I guess this leaves me wondering, and I think it shouldn't leave the communities wondering and the volunteers and the many participants in our sport and recreation system wondering, Mr. Speaker, why we are taking this step. It has been a torturous journey for the creation of this council, but we really have the thinnest and most skeletal of arrangements for how it is going to work. When can the Minister bring back to this Assembly a better plan and a framework for how it is going to work, and how we will be able to gauge its success? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 336-15(3): NWT Council Of Sport And Recreation Partners

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the implementation plan has been drafted. I did table it in the House. Maybe the Member could take the time to refer to that document. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 7, oral questions. Item 8, written questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

ITEM 8: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Written Question 64-15(3): Federal Funding To The Government Of The Northwest Territories

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier, the Honourable Joseph Handley.

Please provide to all Members of this House the total yearly funding contribution made to the Government of the Northwest Territories by the federal government in the last 10 years. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Item 8, written questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Written Question 65-15(3): Chipsealing In The Sahtu

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

1. Please provide the dates for completion of the Main Street Chipsealing Program for all of the communities in the Sahtu region.
2. Please also provide a cost estimate of each project.

3. Other than chipsealing, please provide information with regard to alternate methods of paving roads and controlling dust.

Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 9: RETURNS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Return To Written Question 38-15(3): Guidelines And Processes For Sole Source And Negotiated Contracts

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, I am in receipt of Return to Written Question 38-15(3), asked by Ms. Lee to the Honourable Floyd Roland, Minister of Public Works and Services, regarding guidelines and processes for sole source and negotiated contracts.

Government contract regulations specify that a sole source contract can only be used if:

- (a) the goods, services or construction are urgently required and delay would be injurious to the public interest;
- (b) only one party is available and capable of performing the contract; and,
- (c) the contract is an architectural or engineering contract that will not exceed \$25,000 in value or is any other type of contract that will not exceed \$1,000 in value.

When awarding all sole source contracts, due diligence is exercised to ensure that the best possible product is purchased. In the case of an award based on the "only one party" criteria, the contract authority must use their judgment in determining that only one party is available and capable of providing the good or service. This will vary from situation to situation.

In the case of the family law clinic, a public request for proposals was issued on August 9th and closed August 27, 2004. The request for proposals was publicly advertised in l'Aquilon and News/North newspapers and on the GNWT contracts website. Yellowknife landlords had ample opportunity to provide proposals, and those that did were considered.

Following cancellation of the unsuccessful proposal call, a decision was made to negotiate a sole source contract with the one developer that declared that they had suitable space. The decision was justified by the poor response to the public call for proposals, which confirmed the department's understanding that there is very little available office space with the features required in downtown Yellowknife

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to opening address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS**Tabled Document 86-15(3): Annual Report On Official Languages, 2003-2004**

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document entitled Annual Report on Official Languages, 2003-2004. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Bell.

Tabled Document 87-15(3): NWT Development Corporation 2003-2004 Annual Report

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled NWT Development Corporation 2003-2004 Annual Report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Item 13, tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

ITEM 16: MOTIONS**Motion 20-15(3): Affordable Electric Power**

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS electrical power is an essential service;

AND WHEREAS affordable electric power is essential to the economic growth and viability of NWT communities;

AND WHEREAS the Government of the Northwest Territories' strategic plan identifies reducing the cost of living in the North as a priority;

AND WHEREAS there is a wide disparity between power rates paid in small communities that rely on diesel generated power compared to communities with access to hydro or natural gas power with residential rates ranging between the extremes of 12.13 cents per kilowatt hour and \$2.66 per kilowatt hour;

AND WHEREAS the current full cost recovery rate structure disadvantages consumers within small communities and who rely on diesel generated power;

AND WHEREAS the price of crude oil recently exceeded \$55 per barrel U.S.;

AND WHEREAS the Territorial Power Subsidy Program only equalizes residential rates for the first 700 kilowatt hours and qualifying business rates for the first 1,000 kilowatt hours, which is inadequate for many small businesses;

AND WHEREAS the Public Utilities Board, in decision 5-95, stated in the context of the affordability of power rates, that it is the responsibility of the GNWT to set policies with respect to matters of social engineering;

AND WHEREAS affordable power rates would have long-term social and economic benefits and would result in equal and fair treatment of all NWT power consumers;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that the government review the Territorial Power Subsidy Program immediately to ensure that consumers in communities which rely on diesel power do not suffer any further hardship as a result of increasing oil prices;

AND FURTHER that the government direct the Northwest Territories Power Corporation to provide information on options respecting the current community-based rate structure in light of practices in other jurisdictions and general principles of fairness.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

---Applause

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; and, Minister's Statement 70-15(3), Report on Ottawa Meetings, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

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

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Madam Chair, the committee wishes to consider Ministers' statements.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Okay. In any particular order, or just all of the Ministers' statements that are on the order paper? Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Madam Chair. We will begin with Minister's Statement 70-15(3), and then we will discuss 48-15(3), 49-15(3) and 54-15(3).

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I am going to call Committee of the Whole back to order. The first Minister's statement that we are going to look at today is Minister's Statement 70-15(3), Report on Ottawa Meetings, that was

given by the Premier today. Are they any general comments? Thank you, Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I just had a few comments on the Premier's report on his Ottawa meetings. I just wanted to ask the Premier if he had the opportunity to look at setting up meetings with the leaders of Canada's opposition parties, especially the Conservative Party of Canada and the New Democratic Party of Canada -- Mr. Layton and Mr. Harper -- and if he didn't meet with those two gentlemen on this trip, when he might be looking at meeting with them. Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Madam Chairperson, I didn't have time on this trip to meet with them. The schedule was full from when I arrived to the hour I left. I did have a conversation with our staff person in Ottawa and asked her to set up meetings for when I am next in Ottawa. Right now I believe I'm in Ottawa on November 26th or 29th for other things. I do intend to meet with Mr. Layton and Mr. Harper at that time. Thank you.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The next thing I just wanted to mention, I'm not sure exactly what happens when the Premier and the Finance Minister go to Ottawa and I haven't been part of those meetings, but if they get an opportunity to have a face-to-face meeting with the Prime Minister himself, or is it his staff, how does that work exactly? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: The Prime Minister is very good at giving us the opportunity to meet face to face, one on one when we need to. If he can fit it in at all, he will and the meetings are generally face to face. When I was in Ottawa this week on Sunday, the Prime Minister, Premier Fentie, Premier Okalik and I met with the Prime Minister for a half-hour before any other Minister was brought into the room, and we had time to discuss some things privately. Then following that private meeting, the process is that we will bring in whoever we have to. The only officials who attend the meetings that we have with the Prime Minister though on this kind of situation were one note taker from the territories' side and one note taker from the federal side. These two individuals will compare their notes to make sure that they have got the same record. But it is face to face with the Prime Minister.

I might also, add, Madam Chairperson, that the Prime Minister also takes a great deal of pride in being able to say I return phone calls to Premiers; and I can say that he has been very good at doing that in returning any calls that I have made to him. Thank you.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Thank you, Mr. Premier, for that. I know the meetings were on equalization and on the territorial formula financing agreement, but did you have an opportunity to again address the issue of setting aside our resource revenue in

trust for the citizens of the Northwest Territories? Did you have a chance to discuss that with the Prime Minister on this trip to Ottawa? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Madam Chairperson, I didn't talk to him specifically about setting up a trust fund or a heritage fund, but I did raise, as part of our discussions on a northern strategy, the need for consideration of resource revenue sharing and the need for us to begin to negotiate an interim process fairly quickly. I might also say that I also emphasised that we don't want to get some of these kinds of exercises like negotiating in terms of resource revenue sharing arrangement tied up in some long, drawn-out strategy development process. I made that point to the Prime Minister: let's not slow down some of the quick wins by rolling them into the strategy. He was in agreement with that.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Premier Handley. Thank you. Next on the list I have Mr. Hawkins and Mr. Braden. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, my question is in regards to the concerns I was raising last week, which was Canada's involvement with the missile defence program specifically with the United States, and my questions were directed to the Premier during question period at that time. I can refer to the page and whatnot but, just in a brief summary, I was asking about our involvement and where is our policy and what are we doing about it. The last item mentioned in a return to my question by the Premier was basically this issue would be brought up with his meeting with the Prime Minister of Canada. I can cite the specific pages, but I've already done that earlier when I got called on that point of order; however, I'm sure it's not necessarily necessary at this time.

Could the Premier explain today what he did bring up in that regard to the Prime Minister, as he did sort of commit at that time that he would bring that issue to the front of some of their discussions? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Madam Chair, I didn't talk specifically about ballistic missiles; I may have mentioned it. But certainly one of the issues or one of the items I had identified in our proposal to the Prime Minister on a long-term strategy was sovereignty and security, and within that package would fit the ballistic missile defence system.

Madam Chair, I also have on my desk a draft copy of a letter that I am looking at signing, along with the other two territorial Premiers, and sending to the Prime Minister, that deals specifically with the ballistic missile defence and the need for us to be involved and briefed on what is happening here and be kept up to speed as this unfolds.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have to really say thank you, Mr. Premier, I think that's a good day for the Northwest Territories as well as a good day for the other two territories taking a serious look at this issue. I

think it's a great day. I'm excited to hear that, I guess. All I can ask at this stage, assuming that the letter is probably in draft with some confidence between the other Premiers, would the Minister be able to share a draft copy with MLAs at this time to see what you are asking to get a sense of that perspective, as well as I think you indicated or alluded to a package? Would the Premier be able to share that package of information with all Members to keep us up to speed on this issue? Madam Chair, can the Premier commit to that at this time? Also recognizing that some of this information may be confidential, maybe if the Premier could speak to that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Madam Chairperson, I don't have a problem with sharing with MLAs, but I want to check with the other two territorial Premiers as well, to make sure that they are fine with that. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. If the Premier could give me some indication as to when this letter may be going out, I suspect it's probably under some quite significant scrutiny to make sure on a big issue like this that it gets written properly so the messages are clear. Would the Premier be able to indicate roughly when this letter would be going out? Because I'll give the Premier the latitude of the assumption that if it's going out this week, maybe next week, I am certainly satisfied to wait until the letter goes out, but if the letter is going to be sitting on his desk for another month due to the...(inaudible)...scrutiny, I don't want to wait a month. I don't mind waiting a week, I think that is probably reasonable if he has to consult or if the letter just needs to be formalized, but when does the Premier think the letter will go out? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Madam Chairperson, the main thing that has to happen with the letter now is for it to be updated, since it was first drafted, to reflect the meeting we had earlier this week. So as quickly as that is done, I expect it will go out. We will have a letter to that effect going out this week, unless the other Premiers were to change their mind in the meantime. But it's basically a letter that just says look, let us know, Prime Minister, what is happening on this front, we want to be briefed before actions are taken. We live here, we are concerned about these things flying around over our heads and the possible landing in our territory. So I expect this letter will go out pretty quickly, not months from now.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you, Mr. Premier. I'm quite enthused by the fact that assuming that no major significant changes to the letter happens, that the letter will be going out. I am more than happy to wait for a copy of that letter after it goes out. I think that is probably reasonable. It sounds as if it's going to be out in a timely fashion, so I think a few days, a week, is very, very reasonable for the Premier to get all updates or whatnot to address the letter.

I think my final question would be is, the Premier did allude to some type of package and whatnot, I wasn't sure I heard, I thought I said some package for this earlier, and if the Premier could maybe further elaborate, the package of information in regards to this ballistic missile information. I'm not sure; I thought I heard the word package. It's hard to hear on this side of the House. I wasn't wearing my earpiece.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Madam Chairperson, no, there is no package. It's just a joint letter from the three Premiers.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess then that's fine. I must not have been able to hear it on this side of the House without my earpiece. What I will say is kudos to our Premier, because without us having a letter out there to say we want to know more, it's difficult to make good policy. So I will lend my support to the Premier of seeking further information at this time. He can have my support on that basis, and we will proceed to the next level when we get to see the letter and we get the reaction from Ottawa on that potential briefing some day. Thank you, no question.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. The press reports from the activities in Ottawa earlier this week make quite an interesting package of reading. I was looking at a summary of the last day or two of coverage in the southern press. An interesting thing about the whole process, Madam Chair, is that it's viewed in so many different ways depending on where you're from in Canada and you're perspectives or your expectations. The process does not seem to have really connected with a whole lot of certainty in the rest of Canada. We had one Premier literally storming out of the process, others saying that they did fine, others saying that they thought they should have done better. Equalization in Canada is one of those things that I think people's eyes kind of glaze over when they hear it. It sounds like a very complex and bureaucratic thing and it is. But it is something that we in the NWT should really pay close attention to because I think it's somewhere around two-thirds of our revenue or 70 percent of our revenue that comes directly from Ottawa through processes based on the idea of equalization and formula financing.

The Toronto Star says that it's a laudable principle and it holds that all Canadians, regardless of where they live, should have access to reasonably comparable levels of public service at reasonably comparable levels of taxation. Ottawa supplements tax revenues collected by the so-called have-not provinces with part of its own revenues and theoretically Canadians from coast to coast to coast can live on essentially the same standard. In practice, the Toronto Star goes on to say, the whole process reads like a recipe for a pot of borscht soup. So it is a complex thing, but we have to pay attention to it.

With two-thirds of our revenue coming from Ottawa, we were set up for some fairly strong expectations, Madam Chair. Especially after the First Ministers' meetings at the

end of September when the Premier, joined by the Premiers from our sister territories, came out with quite a glowing expectation of what had been agreed to with the Prime Minister. But in the statement that Mr. Handley has given today I think we're seeing something that's been tempered, that's been downsized. It's regrettable that the expectations of just a few weeks ago aren't realized here and I'm trying to get a sense of where this puts us now and where we go from here.

The Premier has already indicated that a certain amount of money is going to be allocated to the three territories. There is an escalator clause in there of 3.5 percent for five years. If we look at just this fiscal year, the current fiscal year, the NWT is going to realize \$25 million more and \$38 million more next year. Given the size of our budget, we are approaching \$1 billion in operations and maintenance costs for the territorial budget. This is, I guess I would have to say, a disappointingly small number. I had anticipated something that would be more, that would really give us some room to start moving and making a difference up here.

I think where the Premier and his team and the people at Finance Canada deserve a pat on the back is that for the second year in a row, I understand, we are going to see left on the table, to our credit, a \$50 million credit for the tax effort adjustment factor. I won't even begin to try to explain it, but it does work in our favour and this is perhaps the singular thing that's going to help us through our fiscal situation.

Madam Chair, we are in a tight fiscal situation here in the NWT. We are under instruction and direction to find, I believe, this coming fiscal year \$20 million in our programs; to reduce our spending by that much. Hopefully we'll be able to do so without going in and getting rid on a wholesale basis any programs or too many programs. We are also in need of restoring our capital spending in the Northwest Territories, Madam Chair. We have to protect the investment that we're making and continuing to make in our infrastructure. We, of course, want to avoid the debt wall as much as we can. I have the understanding of our go-forward financial situation now, Madam Chair, given what Premier Handley and Minister Roland have come back with, that we will indeed be protecting our capital spending plan and, in fact, there may be some anticipation that it could be enhanced.

There is no indication here that we will be threatening our position in terms of the debt wall. So we can stay out of unnecessary debt. Through this five-year deal, Madam Chair, we will have some greater stability and predictability in what our revenue stream is going to be. So those are positive things and I congratulate the Premier and his people for bringing these things back to us.

But on the less optimistic side, Madam Chair, I was really genuinely hoping, as just about every other region in Canada was, that we would see some fiscal arrangement that would allow the Northwest Territories to break through some of the log-jams that we're facing. Because of our revenue situation we are more and more compelled or restricted, Madam Chair, only to look after what is essential. We are forced to try and accommodate forced growth, the pressures of inflation and the higher cost of doing business. We just talked about what energy is going to do to us this winter.

While we have some of these advantages and some more stability and a bit more security in how we're going to go about our financing, Madam Chair, we are essentially still in a status quo. We are still more in a management stream here. We are tied down and limited to the scope and the range with which we can grow the Northwest Territories, with which we can develop our infrastructure, and with which we can go and really make aggressive strides, especially in our social arena, Madam Chair. We have not changed that situation. Of course, I want to remain optimistic and be a cheerleader for our Premier and the other northern Premiers to make some headway on this, but what I've learned today from the statement, Madam Chair, is that we have not broken any new ground.

I'd welcome the Premier's comment or reaction or challenge to those impressions. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Madam Chair, I think we have had some very significant new ground broken. I'll explain it to you. Under our Constitution we have an equalization program with the provinces. Section 36 of the Constitution says that Parliament and the Government of Canada are committed to the principle of making equalization payments to ensure that provincial governments have sufficient revenues to provide reasonably comparable levels of public service at reasonably comparable levels of taxation. That has always existed for the provinces. It has not existed for the territories. We used to have one where we'd have to go to Ottawa and defend our spending line by line and negotiate each thing. Then we got onto a formula that was different. What the Prime Minister has done is he has said from here on I want to treat the territories the same way I treat provinces. That's a big step to me because we're now in a different league. We're not just little territories, part of DIAND, in the Prime Minister's mind and how he'll deal with us. This is a step in our evolution and I think a very important step, as we'll find in the years to come.

In doing that, then that piece of the Constitution is also going to apply to us, in my view. Because if he's going to treat us like the provinces, then as the provinces equalization program builds -- and it will, over 10 years it's going to go up by almost \$29 billion -- then so is our money going to go up. In fact, we now have the same rights in many ways as do the provinces under the Constitution. I think that's pretty important that we've achieved that rather than just be funded at the whim of the Department of Finance in Ottawa. That one is significant. It's hard to measure that in dollars, but I think it's significant to be treated as grown-ups.

The second major breakthrough, Madam Chair, is that having a floor amount, a floor...What's the term he uses for it? It's a minimum funding floor of 1.9 and 2.0 and so on as we move ahead. It says that those days when we had to worry about clawbacks and not know how our own-source revenue was going to be treated and all that stuff, that's all passed now. From now on it's going to make Mr. Roland's job a lot easier. I shouldn't say it's going to be easy, but it will be easier in that he knows how much money we can expect from the grant. In our case I believe it is around 70 percent. But that's a known quantity that we'll know from year to year what we're going to receive. We don't have to worry about, whoops, somebody made

an unexpected readjustment back for prior years and we just lost \$40 million or something like that. That's gone. That, to me, is significant.

The third piece is when he put a floor in place, then that is going to give a lot more flexibility for us in terms of our own-source funding. If we raise taxes, if we raise revenue in some way ourselves -- whether it's cigarettes or gasoline or whatever it may be, or liquor -- then that is not going to be adjusted back below that floor. We're guaranteed a minimum amount of money; that's the 1.9 and 2.0. To me, that is also significant. Our own-source revenues now become a much more important part of our budget. I certainly like that better than having to depend on the federal government for a grant. Any steps we can take toward becoming more self-sufficient I'm in favour of.

There are some questions that are outstanding yet and Mr. Roland and his people will certainly be looking into those and making sure we've covered all the bases as we move along. Not everything is 100 percent clear yet.

There are some pieces that I don't like as much, and I think Mr. Roland shares my view on it. One of them would be the 3.5 percent escalator. I'm hoping that when the panel does its work that it can, even though it's not within their mandate, hopefully take a look at the impact of that because I know our growth is more than 3.5 percent. If we were stuck on 3.5 percent year after year after year for a long period of time that could end up eroding any of the gains that we made. When you get a package, sometimes it doesn't come as 100 percent wins. We have to deal with it incrementally. So my sense is that this package is setting us on a path that is going to give us more benefits and more flexibility than we ever had before with the old formula.

I have to say that I agree with the Prime Minister in his approach. I do want to have more discussions with him to clarify what he means when he says treat us like a province. I have lots of questions about that.

In terms of how we spend the money, allocate it and so on, again, I'll leave that with our Finance Minister. We have money during this fiscal year. It's late in the year and I don't think any of us as MLAs really want to see us go on a shopping spree with this. We've got to work our way through and we can always carry money forward. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Next on the list I have Mr. Menicoche, Mr. Ramsay, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Menicoche is next.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to say I'm pleased with the outcome of the recent negotiations that the Premier and Deputy Premier had down in Ottawa speaking with, of course, the Prime Minister and respective Ministers.

I just wanted to speak to a few things. We all know that our formula financing is very old, Madam Chair. I can say about 30 years old and I'm glad that there is some appetite in Ottawa to say yes, you as the NWT are an important part of Canada and, yes, you do have a base in which to control your own destiny and futures. Here's a way of doing it; by loosening up the formula financing agreement, giving us this floor base that the Premier speaks about. That's a good thing for us because then we can start looking at some tax efforts that can raise some

extra revenue for us. The next logical step is going to be the huge step to say let's generate tax and revenues from our lands and our resources. That's the next huge step that we have to do.

I still believe that, yes, in the year 2005, we're planning on another northern leaders' conference and we are still going to have to use that as a lobbying effort. We even may have to all go down to Ottawa. We've talked about that time and time again. I believe that worked to some effect. I think it was the 12th or 13th Assembly that actually went down when they were bringing the Constitution home to Canada. Because of that effort, we were able to get aboriginal rights recognized in the Constitution before it was all voted on by the provinces.

I have a few other concerns. I'll bring it up right now and the Premier can address them for me. Can the Premier assure our northern leaders and our First Nations partners that we, as the Government of the Northwest Territories, are not going to interfere with the opportunity to devolve or take responsibility for their lands and resources? What I mean by that, Madam Chair, is that our aspirations are the same as the aspirations of aboriginal groups and now they're saying, well, what's going on; why is the government speaking on our behalf. In that sense, what are the Premier's plans in order to address that? We don't want to, of course, weaken our position. We want to have a nice united front as we approach Ottawa and say yes, we're ready for the next step and we're united. So how is the Premier going to broach that subject?

As well, I believe one of my colleagues brought up the question should we be lobbying other political parties federally. Is there benefit in doing that to lobby these other parties and ask will you help us lobby Ottawa as well for our aspirations and goals? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Madam Chair, yes, I will certainly be respectful of the rights and aspirations of the aboriginal governments. There's no intention at all to try to take over or interfere in other people's rights when it comes to devolution or anything else. But we will work with the aboriginal governments. We made that commitment ourselves.

Having said that, we, as 19 MLAs, represent all of the people of the Territories. Hopefully the thoughts of the people in your constituencies all come back here, and we can debate how far we should go or shouldn't go on various issues.

On the discussions on territorial financing formula, I view that the territorial financing formula is just an issue that is internal within our government. It is how we are funded as a government. When we get into the issue, if we do make headway on that side, on resource revenue sharing, then that is where we have to work with the aboriginal leaders, because they also have rights in some land claims. In fact, even in all of the land claims, there are some provisions for resource revenue sharing, and, in some cases, even when there isn't a land claim in the Deh Cho, there is a provision there. So we recognize that and we have to work together on that.

Quite honestly, a concern that I have is that we need to complete devolution and resource revenue sharing quickly

because there is a lot of economic development going on, and it is much easier to have an agreement before we have some of these major projects maturing and in operation. We have already gone a long ways with the diamond mines. There is a lot of revenue going out of here. I did look, following up on a Member's question last week, at how much revenue is raised by the federal government in the Northwest Territories. Last year, it was in the neighbourhood of \$170 million. A few years ago, it was only \$38 million, so it is going up fast. I believe we should be getting our fair share of it. That is another argument besides territorial financing.

You made reference that we all have to go to Ottawa and so on. I don't want to suggest it, but I think we should keep in mind that we don't have to wait to do something like that until we are so desperate that we have to go there and then beg for things. I don't think there is anything wrong, personally, and if we wanted to have, for example, a Northwest Territories day in Ottawa and let the MPs in Ottawa know what is going on up here, what the potential is and so on, we don't have to wait for a crisis to do it. If the Members were interested in doing that, then I think it is something we should talk about. It may be worth it to spend a day just saying here is what we are all about, here are the issues we live with. You will have to pay for it, but...

---Laughter

...we can work it out. I don't think always waiting until there is a crisis is the best way of doing business. I think we can be open to other ways of getting our message through to Ottawa. It is important that we do that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Anything further, Mr. Menicoche? Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: I have no further comments, Madam Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. I am not reading the sign language that well; sorry. I have Mr. Ramsay, Mr. Yakeleya, but Mr. Yakeleya hasn't had a chance to speak yet. Would it be all right to let him speak? Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. I have short comments to the Premier. I want to thank the Premier and the Deputy Premier for going to Ottawa and working on our behalf. You came back with some good news. We see some changes that would affect our government. But, also, I believe you took the message to Ottawa from our last discussion here last week. I want to ask the Premier regarding his discussions about the aboriginal land claim groups that have settled and the other land claim groups that are in negotiations on self-government or land claims issues themselves in terms of the resource revenue sharing process.

I want to ask the Premier if he would help me understand how and what types of engagement is going to involve the aboriginal groups in developing a comprehensive strategy for the Northwest Territories. By mechanisms I guess, because it says in his first page here, that the federal and territorial governments, in cooperation with the aboriginal people and northern residents, should include joint priorities -- some of these groups are in self-government -- to see how these aboriginal governments would be

involved in this process. I think that is all I have, Madam Chair.

I guess what I'm looking at is the Premier is right; we do represent all people of the Northwest Territories. Part of the reality is that some of these aboriginal claimant groups have a special relationship with the federal government. That is part of the reality. They are going to be a third legitimate government in the Northwest Territories. Maybe one day we will see that. Right now, we are the government that the federal government wants to negotiate these arrangements with. At the same time, Mr. Premier, that is still the opinion of the federal government, that we are the government that they want to have some discussions with or they open up the doors to the aboriginal governments to talk about resource revenue sharing and some of the other transfers of federal funding to the Northwest Territories.

I know it is a sensitive issue, a complex issue, but it is an issue that is very important to the people in the small communities who believe and who have strong support for their aboriginal governments, just for them to see how they look at negotiations and how they look at their government. I think that is about it.

But I want just to say in closing that I thank the Premier and the Deputy Premier for going out to Ottawa, getting something and coming back to us. It is good news. I know sometimes it is hard to deal with them. I am glad that the Premier is saying that the Prime Minister is looking at the Northwest Territories more like a province now. Maybe one day we will have some other discussions on that. His attitude is changing, I guess, with the Cabinet Ministers down there, that the Northwest Territories is becoming more of the South in terms of how we are going to see our governments in the future. That is all I have to say, Madam Chair. Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Madam Chair, I think I will deal with the questions in the reverse order. First of all, in terms of respecting the relationship that aboriginal governments have with Ottawa, we will fully respect that relationship and have no difficulty at all with it. We are not trying to say to Ottawa we are the government that you should deal with and then we will deal with the aboriginal governments at all. In fact, while I was in Ottawa, most of the Akaitcho and the Tlicho were well represented in Ottawa, holding their own meetings. I think that is healthy and it was good. The one thing that I would like to do, as the Member suggests, is make sure, as much as we can, that our messages are consistent.

Going to one of the questions that the Member asked is how do we engage people in this. I would like to say that at the close of the meeting on Tuesday, the Prime Minister offered to the Premiers that he would like to have the next First Ministers' meeting held next spring and that would be on national priorities where we would meet as a group of Premiers and the Prime Minister to determine what the national priorities are and what we have taken on. We've taken on the health issue, the financing issue. What should the next major issue be? Before that meeting takes place, I think we should have another meeting with northern leaders to be able to clarify what our priorities are and what we need to take forward to that Premiers'/Prime Minister meeting.

So we need to engage it. I think the northern leaders' meeting we had last year was a good forum for doing it. I have continued to meet as well, Madam Chair, with the aboriginal leaders on various issues. I've had a face-to-face meeting, I've had a teleconference meeting and I was going to have another meeting with them, but it was postponed a couple of weeks ago. We want to continue to work with them. When we come to issues like resource revenue sharing, then clearly we have to work very, very closely with the aboriginal governments and other people in the Territories because this is an issue that goes broader than just financing our government.

One of the issues when we talk about resource revenue sharing that we are going to face in Ottawa is they have to figure out how would they pay us for resource revenues from the extraction of non-renewable resources of land that is still federal land. The federal government owns the land and water in their terms legally and also has the sub-surface rights, not us. So they are grappling with that. How do they pay us royalties or share with us when we don't have any legal right to it? So that's why devolution is important to me that we need to complete devolution in order that we're then more like a province. We own the land and resources, but until then it's going to be a hard struggle for us to be successful on interim resource revenue sharing, in my view. It will take all of our negotiating skills. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Next I have Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I wanted to ask the Premier a little bit about the work that the territorial government is going to be working on or doing with the federal government in terms of developing this northern strategy and we can go back a lot of years, Madam Chair, to even the 12th Assembly, the 13th Assembly when they had the road map. In 1998, the Premier at the time said in this House from Hansard in 1998 that the federal government has committed to working with the Yukon and Northwest Territories in developing an economic development strategy. Where is the EDA? It's six years later, Madam Chair, and we still do not have an EDA and we're in desperate need of one. My big concern is and my colleagues here know that I'm sceptical of what Ottawa has to say and what Ottawa is doing, but my big fear in this is again they are putting us into this strategy and developing a strategy.

Madam Chairperson, this takes time, effort, money and I hate to think that we're going to be spinning our wheels for another six years, another 10 years. Where do we draw the line with Ottawa in terms of getting us where we need to be in terms of resource revenue sharing and devolution? We have to have a timeline, Madam Chairperson. This can't go on forever and I'd like to ask the Premier today what is this northern strategy, the forward looking? We've been looking at a strategy here for a number of years. Can the Premier please tell us how we are going to work with the federal government to develop this northern strategy? What's going to be in this strategy, Madam Chair, that's any different than all the other reports, all the other studies that led us to where we are at today? What's going to be different, Madam Chair? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Madam Chair, it's true that there have been good words said about various strategies over the years like devolution has been around for years and never borne any fruit. The biggest difference on this one, in my view, is the engagement of the Prime Minister himself. When we talked about the strategy, he brought in the key Ministers. We talked about it and he directed his officials to get to work. This was in the afternoon and he directed that they be meeting the next day on it, starting to work out some of the detail.

The presentation that we made to the federal government included a set of principles of what we thought should be there. There should be a government-to-government process that should be comprehensive, should be inclusive. Some of the main things that were included in the strategy include things like governance, land claims, implementation, for example, economic development. We're close to having a mechanism for delivering the \$90 million economic development fund that was announced months ago.

Regarding environmental issues, there is \$3.5 billion that has been announced for waste site cleanup. About 60 percent of them Minister Goodale tells us are going to go to the North. We need to make that into an action plan. Let's get the plan together and get on with that now. It's been sitting there. We don't need to announce it again, we just need to get on with doing a cleanup.

Regarding infrastructure, housing, northern science and research, there's a whole list of things that are included in there. The one recommendation that we made and I spoke to in the meeting was that general oversight and direction for this project should rest with the Prime Minister and the three northern Premiers so that right from the top, it's being led by the Prime Minister and Premiers themselves; that there be a steering committee made up of Ministers who are responsible for the various areas and, of course, the work areas.

The Prime Minister also agreed that we have to work toward quick, short-term deliverables, medium-life deliverables and longer-term. I think the difference between what I want to work toward here is one that is going to show us some deliverables within months. It's not all going to be a long-term strategic planning and visioning exercise, but one that's aimed at getting some things moving right way. I can't be 100 percent sure that we won't get frustrated again and just find ourselves bogged down in another big strategy.

The other point I should mention is that when we talked about this, I also reinforced the message that we don't want to get our initiatives that are currently underway tied up into some strategy where it's to the point where we're saying we go to talk about resource revenue sharing and say leave that because we are dealing with a strategy right now. I don't want to go that route either. So the only thing I could give, Madam Chair, at this time is my commitment that I am going to work along with the other Premiers as hard as we can to make sure this thing does get legs this time. Thank you.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair, and I thank the Premier for his response and I'm glad to hear that the Prime Minister might have a steady hand in overseeing

this and that the three northern Premiers will be working together on this committee to try to develop this strategy. But the Prime Minister six months ago put Minister McLellan in charge of the pipeline file and to be honest, Madam Chair, we haven't seen Ms. McLellan in the Northwest Territories since she's been appointed to overlook that file. To me, that is wrong.

Again, I'm sceptical of Ottawa of what they say and what they do and I think when we are talking about devolution and we're talking about resource revenue sharing, I think that the answer to it all, Madam Chair, is that we sit down with Ottawa, politician-to-politician and we leave the bureaucrats out of it because in my mind that is the problem. Once you include the senior level bureaucrats of DIAND, and we've got bureaucrats here, it gets into a quagmire that you can't solve and I think we have to sit down and hammer something out between us and between Ottawa. I see that as the key to us getting over this hurdle. Once you start looking at another strategy and you get bureaucrats involved, the tires keep spinning, Madam Chair, and they'll spin forever.

My fear is we're going to go another six years, or we're going to go another 10 years without anything. The time for talk has got to almost be near the end because we really, really have to get something concrete from Ottawa. Some of my colleagues were happy with what happened down there but, Madam Chair, it's not what the Prime Minister told our Premier three months ago when he was in Ottawa. He went back on his word already on the monies that he said would come North. So are we going to trust him again to oversee this process? We really have to get some firm commitments from Ottawa and, to be honest, Madam Chair, I have not seen one firm commitment. We're sitting here, it's 2004, and I hope to be here six years from now or eight years from now and I sure as heck hope I'm not talking about the same thing at that point in time six or 10 years from now. The way we are going in including all these bureaucrats, it becomes a real mess, Madam Chair, and we really have to do something about it and now is the time for action. Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. That issue certainly came up of getting it tangled up in the bureaucracy and, in fact, the Prime Minister himself referred to it as we don't want to get into bureaucratic morass, is what he had called it. So he's very aware of not letting this thing start to spin out of control here. Do we trust him? Do we work with him? I say yes, we haven't got a lot of choice. Has he delivered? I guess I'd differ with you if you say we haven't seen anything concrete because I tell you in the last month, it's been a lot of hard work, a lot of slugging from our side, but I think we got a lot on the health front that benefits the North greatly.

I'm pleased with what we achieved in September on the health front, both for ourselves, as government, and also for aboriginal governments. I also think that the arrangement we have now on the financing formula is a big step. It's not everything we want, but I tell you it's come a long way. Those two things specifically I think are more than what we have seen in years with other Prime Ministers. So yes, I'm going to work with Prime Minister Martin. I think he is delivering. He's not delivering

everything at once and we wouldn't expect anybody to be able to do that.

I agree with Mr. Ramsay that we have to keep our hand on this ourselves and that's why we said the steering committee has to be the Prime Minister and ourselves. I intend to put whatever time is necessary to make it happen. Prime Minister Martin didn't walk into this one easily because I first talked to him about the need for a more strategic approach to northern development in January and his first question was how would this work and his statement to me was he did not want to get himself into a process that lead nowhere. So I'm going to work with him. I think he's delivering and I think we're much better off to work with him than to try to work against him. That's not going to get us anywhere. Thank you.

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

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess I have to commend the Premier with securing over \$100 million over the next few years with the federal government in our territorial formula financing and equalization. I have to express my scepticism in promises that are made and agreements made with our federal counterparts with regard to equalization and territorial funding just due to the fact that these programs are highly unpredictable and they are volatile depending on economic fluctuations in various parts of the country. Then our equalization gets off balance and new formula financing agreements come into play. So I guess we're just going to have to ride it out and see what happens on that initiative.

With regard to the development with a work plan on how to move forward to develop a strategy on devolution and resource revenue sharing, just to get back to a point the Premier made with regard to a joint working relationship with the federal government on developing this strategy, I know I've been getting and seeing some correspondence coming from a lot of the First Nations claim groups and negotiation tables that this whole approach and the whole initiative of government-to-government work plan on devolution and resource revenue sharing is undermining and may threaten to derail some of the First Nations negotiations that are going on right now between like the Akaitcho government, for instance, and the federal government.

I'm just wondering how the Premier is planning on integrating these First Nations. Not all of them really put all their trust and their confidence into the Aboriginal Summit or the Intergovernmental Forum. So I want to ask what other direction or options could be available to work with this resource revenue sharing and devolution because I know that everybody is in agreement. That is the common goal that we all want, but as far as the federal government devolving powers over land or water and resources to the territorial government and then the territorial government saying we're going to start devolving some of that powers to the First Nations group, once you get it, you are not going to let go as provinces have done in other jurisdictions with First Nations land claim negotiation groups. What can the Premier tell these First Nations negotiations that they are trying to coincide with what they are doing at their main table negotiations and how their input is going to be taken into consideration; how they can have some meaningful role in developing this devolution strategy?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Madam Chair, I can assure the Members that we are not at all going to try to negotiate devolution between the federal government and the territorial government. We will not go there. What we have done in going back to the last government is worked very closely with the Aboriginal Summit as the representative body or the body that represents the aboriginal leadership and try to work with the Aboriginal Summit and our government to negotiate a plan for how devolution would work. That has cost us a lot of time and money and the same with the aboriginal leadership.

Those who don't have settled claims have told me that they don't want to put priority on devolution. So rather than trying to just run over them with this exercise of devolution, I have proposed to this Assembly and to the aboriginal leaders that we carry on with devolution as it moves along slowly, but in the meantime lets work an interim resource revenue sharing arrangement that would enable resource revenues to be shared between the federal government, territorial government and aboriginal governments. This kind of arrangement would be without prejudice to what aboriginal people may negotiate in the future because I don't know what those look like five or 10 years from now, but we would want to negotiate something that makes sure that some of the resource revenues today stay in the North rather than flow to the South for another 10 years or whatever it will take for everybody to have their aboriginal processes completed and then start negotiating.

Otherwise, if we do that, I believe we stand the risk of being here for 15 years and resource revenues just leaking out of here like crazy. So I have focused on an interim resource revenue sharing arrangement as a way of getting some of those resource revenues into the hands of our people quickly, but there is no intention if anyone believing that we are going to try to negotiate devolution without aboriginal governments or just even have devolution negotiated only to our government and then we would negotiate with aboriginal governments, that's wrong. We're not looking at it at all that way. This is clearly a three-party or tripartite form of negotiations; aboriginal governments, our government and the federal government. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Premier. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As you are probably well aware, the First Nations negotiating groups right now are, I guess, in a bilateral negotiation process right now. So how are we going to integrate this trilateral strategy into their arena? I just want to find out how you plan on coordinating that with the First Nations right off the get go because I know they're kind of, like I said, the First Nations groups are right now sceptical about this whole devolution approach. How can we regain their confidence in the government saying we are going to go on a three-way tri-party system to get devolution, but your bilateral negotiations aren't going to be compromised? I'm just lost on that. I don't know how.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Premier.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Some aboriginal groups are frustrated with talk on devolution because they are not focused on devolution, they are focused on settling their aboriginal claim or process. Some aboriginal groups, on the other hand, are frustrated because they already have claims and we're not moving the next step. They feel they're losing economic opportunities and so on. So my view is that we need to continue to negotiate devolution, but do it in a way that it's not going to interfere or prejudice negatively anything with those groups who don't yet have settled their aboriginal rights; so the Akaitcho people, Deh Cho, for example. I want to be very careful that we're not somehow going to pre-empt them or trump something that they're doing. I've remained very open with them. I met with the Akaitcho chiefs in Ottawa while I was there and we talked about their process and about some of their frustration in trying to keep their negotiations moving. I saw some of the documentation they have on devolution and I have told them I will not do anything that's going to jeopardize what they are doing. If we ever cross that line, then I hope they will tell us that we have crossed it, but so far it seems to be working in way that they can't say we've done anything yet that's going to compromise their position. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Premier. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess it's good that we're definitely taking a strong stance on that issue with respect to the ongoing negotiations. I still am just having a problem trying to figure out what the big picture is going to look like at the end of the day when we have devolution negotiations in place. I guess there are going to be a lot of contingency scenarios with respect to ongoing negotiations when the land claims do get settled. Say they have a settled claim ratified after the GNWT and the aboriginal governments come together and sign a resource revenue devolution interim measures agreement. Is putting these First Nations negotiations processes in that, as in having a significant role in this whole devolution, resource revenue plan -- just getting back to what my colleague was talking about time frames -- is that going to make this whole strategy on devolution and interim measures resource revenue sharing a very long-term process? To me it's going to be a very big compilation of many different agreements with different governments up and down the valley, land claim settlement areas like the Tli Cho and unsettled areas. I just want to get what the Premier's view is on the big picture. Are we looking at a whole mirage of just small bilateral agreements, some large trilateral agreements and sub-agreements and in-sub-agreements? What's your take on it?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Premier.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, my view would be that we would have one final devolution, final resource revenue sharing arrangement for the whole Northwest Territories that all aboriginal governments would sign on to along with us and the federal government. Then depending on the specific nature of their land claim or aboriginal rights claim, then there would be different arrangements, particularly on the resource revenue sharing side. Because we have to respect each of the claims and if they're not identical, then we need to have a different one for the Inuvialuit, the Gwich'in, the Sahtu and someday the Akaitcho, Deh Cho and Tli Cho and so on. So

I see it as one agreement on devolution for the whole territory, one agreement on resource revenue for the whole territory and then sub-agreements that suit each land claim area. Mr. Chairman, I believe that is very close to how the federal government sees it as well. I don't think they want to create a whole bunch of little territories. I've never heard that from anyone in Ottawa. I think my view is that it would still be a central government, but full respect for each of the aboriginal governments and their settlements.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Premier. I have no other general comments. Does the committee agree that Minister's Statement 70-15(3) is concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Does committee agree that consideration of Ministers' statements 48, 49 and 54 are concluded? Mr. Zoe.

MR. ZOE: To Minister's Statement 48-15(3) I'd like to make a few comments, if I may.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Does committee agree that we consider Minister's Statement 48-15(3)?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Okay. General comments to Minister's Statement 48-15(3). Mr. Zoe.

MR. ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I'd like to say that I believe this Cabinet has done a good job to date in advancing our agenda during their first year of office. However, I'd like to comment on the use of special warrants by this government. I have a problem with the spending of the public purse without any kind of oversight. There are circumstances, Mr. Chairman, where the government will need to commit money in advance of the Legislature sitting, but I do believe that as much as there has to be an FMB/Cabinet meeting to approve a special warrant, there could be an AOC committee meeting to be briefed by the government on the need for the special warrant. Even if the debate on the special warrant is held during an in camera committee meeting, at least there has been some debate and the government has gotten feedback.

Mr. Chairman, I really think it's time to revisit the Financial Administration Act and change the provisions guiding the use of special warrants. Now I know the Ministers will say they need this tool to be able to do their job. I would like to say that I and my colleagues on this side of the House deserve the same consideration if we are to do our jobs. Therefore, Mr. Chairman, I'll be supporting amendments to the Financial Administration Act.

My second issue, Mr. Chairman, is with the quality of answers some Ministers are giving in this House. There are Ministers who can talk for three minutes and not address the actual question. This is a waste of everybody's time and causes resentment on this side of the House as we waste our precious questions asking the same one four times over.

Mr. Chairman, those are my two issues I wanted to bring forward in regards to Minister's Statement 48-15(3), Sessional Statement, made by the Premier. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Zoe. There wasn't a specific question there. Mr. Premier, would you care to comment?

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, with regard to supps and special warrants, we do deal with them very seriously and there are criteria we want to follow. I don't think any of us would have any difficulty with taking a look at the Financial Administration Act and seeing how we can make the whole system work better. I want to say though on special warrants, if we put something in that bound the hands of the government too much then we might find ourselves at some point in the future where we just didn't have the money to spend, because of having to go through some process. You could have a school burn down, you could have a water pump building burn down in a small community and we would have to put some extraordinary effort into getting something there, but we can't do it because we have to wait two weeks to meet with the committee. That wouldn't work. We have to have the ability as a government to be able to spend money where there is an emergency where something has to be spent right away.

If we are getting too far away from those kinds of purposes, then that is where we should sit down and figure out how we work together better on that. I would like to offer that the Minister of Finance would be ready to sit down and talk about how we can do this in a way that isn't going to create frustration for everyone either. I don't think anybody wants to be surprised by big special warrants or whatever it may be. So, Mr. Chairman, we are prepared, I think I can speak on behalf of the Finance Minister, he is prepared to sit down with the committee and say okay, let's work out something here that is more workable but still retains the purpose of having special warrants to meet these kinds of situations. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Premier. Does the committee agree that consideration of Minister's Statement 48-15(3) is concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Does the committee agree that consideration of Minister's Statement 49-15(3) is concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Does the committee agree that consideration of Minister's Statement 54-15(3) is concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Ramsay): Agreed. Thank you. If there is no other business in front of the committee, I will rise and report progress.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Ministers' statements 70-15(3), 48-15(3), 49-15(3) and 54-15(3). I would like to report that Ministers' statements 70-15(3), 48-15(3), 49-15(3) and 54-

15(3) are concluded. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Do we have a seconder? The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Zoe. A motion is on the floor. The motion is in order, it is non-debatable. All those in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

MR. SPEAKER: Item 21, third reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

ITEM 21: THIRD READING OF BILLS

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

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

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. A motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in opposition to this bill, I will be voting against it.

Mr. Speaker, it is not too often that I oppose this kind of legislation. Mr. Speaker, this is brought before us, in fact on the recommendation of the Commissioner, and it is a serious piece of legislation for this committee, for this Legislature. But there are elements of this bill that I believe must be challenged. As I have done during debate in Committee of the Whole of this spending appropriation act, I want to take this final opportunity to air my objections.

Mr. Speaker, this is a bill for approximately \$16 million in spending. Let's be clear; \$11 million of this has already been committed under the authority that Cabinet has under the special warrant category. So really the decision before this Assembly in third reading is that we are being asked for permission on only about \$5 million worth of miscellaneous projects. Two-thirds of this bill, the \$11 million before us, are only as information items, things that have already been committed to and are outside this Assembly's influence. The balance of these items, the \$5 million that is technically called "not previously authorized" are not trivial projects, Mr. Speaker, don't let me give you that impression. Rather, they do cover a number of things that will have some influence and some impact especially in the smaller communities. They range from everything from assistance to the community of Fort Smith to assist with problems that it encountered because of a land slide this summer, to buying employees houses. There is quite a range of things in there, and again I don't want to trivialize them. But I think that there are aspects of this bill that deserve to be challenged and I hope that I will be able to make myself clear over the next few minutes, Mr. Speaker.

I should explain, for people who are watching, for a special warrant there is generally a provision there that allows the Cabinet under emergency and unanticipated expenses to create allocations and provide for the normal course of business. I think they are a necessary part of

the authority that Cabinet should have. But in this bill the government is taking steps that while they may be legal, are not acceptable and are not responsible given our tight financial situation, Mr. Speaker, and I believe that they also violate the overall spirit of consensus in this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, we have a bill that authorizes \$16 million in spending and leaves us with only \$1 million in our supplementary reserve. We still have five months left to go in this government. The reserve is there for emergencies, things that are truly unanticipated. So if we have another crises in the Northwest Territories, say an outbreak of a disease such as we had earlier this year and we needed extra money to go in and spend for it -- I think it was a meningitis outbreak -- if we have another school collapse or something where we need to go in and make some emergency repairs, if there is an environmental disaster of some kind, we will have \$1 million left to do something with and then we are going to have to go into debt. Just debt.

I don't think that is a responsible way for us to have managed this supplementary reserve fund this year, especially in the face of the things that we are told were allocated.

---Applause

You know, Mr. Speaker, in the face of all this spending we have a \$20 million cutback that we're struggling to implement and it's going to be coming off programs such as health, education and justice and other pressing needs. So on one hand we have a Cabinet that's ready to put our entire supplementary reserve on the line, and yet we're instructed to withdraw \$20 million from current budgets. This is something that has been well advertised and well promoted about our fiscal situation, Mr. Speaker. This is not responsible spending and I oppose it.

Further, Mr. Speaker, is a particular issue of the \$6.6 million black hole that this government presented us with for the security upgrade at the Yellowknife Airport. The government has given in to the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority's order to upgrade our airport, but has left this economy with a \$6.6 million question mark as to how to pay for it. We've been told by CATSA that even a superficial review of the comparative costs that other airports have to absorb is secret. Why can't our Assembly at least have some say and some information about this expenditure?

---Applause

The Department of Transportation in particular, Mr. Speaker, has let us down. Obviously it had many months, I think about 10 months -- at least according to the information that was provided in committee the other day, -- to plan the renovations, do the drawings, call tenders, but it didn't have time, obviously, to plan the cost factor; the consequences of taking \$6.6 million out of the travelling public's pocket. That is not responsible and it's not acceptable and it's one of the reasons I'm voting against this.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

MR. BRADEN: Because it's the kind of inaction that on this side of the House I don't want to tolerate any more from this government. I'm sending a signal.

---Applause

Mr. Speaker, I believe in a good security system for the travelling public in Canada. I believe northerners are prepared to pay a share of it, but I object to being handed an open-ended invoice with no plan and, therefore, no confidence in how we're going to implement this.

On a more fundamental issue, Mr. Speaker, related to this security business, all legislators must be on guard when independent security agencies can dictate conditions to government. It is a genuine concern, not only for our airport situation, but what is going to be next? All in the name of security? I don't want to treat it with any kind of triviality, Mr. Speaker, but my guard goes up when I'm told to do something by another agency, another level of government. When I don't have a say in how that is done, I think I have a duty to act on behalf of my constituents, and that's what I'm doing today. Cabinet on this one has clearly let us down and this is not acceptable.

Mr. Speaker, we're proud of our consensus system. We hold it up as a model for Canada and the Commonwealth, but it takes hard work and careful attention to make it work. It starts to break down, I believe, when Cabinet exercises its authorities in ways that erode our committee system and in the ability of each MLA to represent the interests of our constituents. I say that Cabinet in this bill has run roughshod over that consensus mandate and has forgotten its duty to act and think on behalf of all the people of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, my opposition today is a signal to the government that I want them to think and act more responsibly and more prudently. We have three years to go in this Assembly and I want the government to change the way it does business with the Members on this side of the House. My opposition is also a message to my constituents, the people of the riding of Great Slave, that I'm taking a strong stand on behalf of their interests. I want them to know that I'm doing what I believe is right in order for us to have a government that we can all have confidence in, that we can trust, and that we can rely on. Mr. Speaker, thank you, and I would like to request a recorded vote on this bill. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. To the motion. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I echo the sentiments of my colleague Mr. Braden, Member for Great Slave...

---Applause

...on the lack of consultation on behalf of the government in this expenditure of \$3.4 million. Basically, Mr. Speaker, what amounts to a black hole, as Mr. Braden referred to it as, but we don't know what this is going to cost us, we don't know where we're going to get the money from and, Mr. Speaker, it's very irresponsible of the government to put forth a plan when they have no plan, Mr. Speaker.

This bill has \$16 million in spending and \$11 million of that, Mr. Speaker, is already spent. I've thought long and hard about whether or not I would vote in favour of this bill or vote against it, Mr. Speaker, and I just wanted to mention the reasons why I'm going to vote in favour of this

bill. Mr. Speaker, I'm going to vote in favour of this bill -- as much as I'm going to have to hold my nose when I do so -- but, Mr. Speaker, it's for my colleagues here that I'm going to vote in favour of this because, as I see it, the government will pick on us. They will go after especially some of the Members' projects in their ridings and, Mr. Speaker...

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Ramsay, could you stick to the motion, please? To the motion.

MR. RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, just out of fear of retribution I am going to vote in favour of this bill today and because the government will try to blame this side of the House when something has to get cut here or something has to get cut there...

MR. SPEAKER: Did somebody call a point of order? Mr. Ramsay, I would caution you to stick to the motion.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will stick to the bill. I think it goes back to an accountability factor, Mr. Speaker, and to be quite honest with you I think in this instance the government has shown a lack of accountability, not only to the Regular Members for lack of consultation with them, but to the public. The public deserves better. This is an expenditure of \$3.4 million right now and \$6.6 million into the future. I think the public deserves better, Mr. Speaker, and I think the Regular Members deserve better and I would put the government on notice that we are going to be watching what happens.

Again, I really do appreciate Mr. Braden's conviction on standing up and voting against this bill, but I think the price would be too much to pay if we do vote against it. So I'm going to vote in favour of it today but, again, I express my extreme displeasure with the way this has all come about. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. To the motion. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Seeing as this is going to be a recorded vote, I'd like to just state my position on this. I am going to join Mr. Braden...

MR. SPEAKER: Ms. Lee. The mike is maybe not picking up here a bit, but I will...To the motion, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you very much. I thought I was being ordered...

---Laughter

...ordered out even before I've said anything. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Seeing as this is going to be a recorded vote, I just wanted to state my position on this. I will be voting along with Mr. Braden against this bill in protest for some of the items that are in this bill. Mr. Speaker, I just want to state very strongly that I don't want to impute motive on anything, but I really think the Members on that side are taking it for granted that we will just pass and we will stamp this supplementary bill because we always have. I don't think there were any in history where the supplementary budget bill was defeated. Certainly we wouldn't want that to happen, but at the same time I think it's really important that the government understands that this is a consensus government and that means that we should all have a say in how we spend money and how we do our policies and law-making. The last time we met

as an Assembly was in June. In July, we don't usually have meetings, but through the end of August and September we had committee meetings, so there was lots of time to advise us on some of the items, especially on the airport spending.

Mr. Speaker, all through the summer, people out there were telling us about what was going on in this bill before we were privy to this. I don't think that is fair. There is a lot of money being spent and we should have a say in that.

I have made my objections known clearly about another spending item on this bill and that has to do with the second legal aid clinic. I want to make it clear, for the record, once again, I support the second office, but the way it was done is in line with how everything else is done; we are always the last to know.

I can also tell you there are at least three reviews that will come out after we leave the House. This is related. I am objecting. I am voting against this bill because of the way it's being presented and there is a trend here.

The internal review on Justice is going to come out after we get out of there. The review on the...

MR. SPEAKER: Ms. Lee, I would caution you. We are not debating the merits of the bill. We are debating the motion, so stick to the motion, please.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are debating the merits of the bill and I believe I am speaking...

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Whoa!

MR. SPEAKER: Ms. Lee, I will allow you to continue speaking to the motion, but stick within the motion itself. You are straying into process outside of this bill, so stick to the motion, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe I have made my points clear. I think there are items in this bill that I agree with. There are many things that I understand are important and I support them. However, there are a few items that I don't think are suitable and that is the airport spending and the legal aid clinic. For those reasons, I am going to vote against this and put the government on notice that we expect them to bring things forward when we are meeting and not do everything when we are outside of here. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. To the motion. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be voting in favour of Bill 13, but I just wanted to indicate my displeasure as well. A lot of the things contained in Bill 13 could have been brought to the Members beforehand and debated. Instead, the government chose to do it after we finished sitting back in June. There were a few other opportunities and they did send us some memos, but it's not the same as sitting with us as Regular Members as a joint committee to debate the merits of some of the expenditures, Mr. Speaker. With that, I will finish up. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. To the motion. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to say clearly I will grudgingly vote in favour of this bill. I am disappointed because if we vote in favour, it goes through without any serious objection, unfortunately. If we vote against it, we create ripples that are difficult to see at this time. Will they still charge forward? I have no doubt, so I have to vote in favour of it because I feel like my hands are tied.

I can't see that far in the future, so I don't know what will happen if we don't. I feel left out of the process, so what do I do? Do I vote against it just because I feel left out of the process? I think Members could have been consulted better and earlier because we knew this. The merits on this bill stand on their own and it's not one of those things I really want to vote for, but I feel like my hands are tied.

The government may look at AOC as not united enough to fight against them to vote against this bill. I am not sure how they feel. They may think we are not ready to go. I don't know what the case is. I think AOC's time is coming to stand up and vote against bills like this and to show we really mean business. Whether we put on the gloves, as a metaphor, whether we do whatever we do, the time is coming. So you won't be getting many yes votes as easy as they may come today or as easy as they have come yesterday, so I think the government needs to know that that time is coming.

There are some displeasures I have for voting for yes and I wish I could vote for no. It's about the process. I think special warrants are wrong the way they are being used. I think the special supplementary issues are issues I have and that's why I want to vote no.

Again, I refer back and close by saying I can't foresee the ripples. I don't believe in the merits of this bill. I don't believe in everything that's been brought in with regard to this bill that other Members have had concerns about, but as a whole I will have to vote in favour. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be supporting the passage of Bill 13. The reason I am supporting it is very simple. If the government has to find resources from within to find funds that aren't approved here today, our communities will suffer. As an MLA, it's a choice I have to make. That's our responsibility to our communities. I can't blame the government or anybody else. I am responsible here. So the roll of the dice says I have to vote yes. That's what I am doing to support this bill.

At the same time, we are learning the process as working MLAs. We see how things move and some of my honourable colleagues from this side are also learning. They are seeing how the system works. We want to be included and part of the process. I think the government got our message. It's a clear message they got. They have three more years. For me, the logic is very simple. If you take \$20,000 out of the Stanton hospital, it won't have a huge impact, but if you take \$20,000 out of the health centre in Tulita, it has a big impact for our people. That's a big difference. I am not willing to risk it to the services to our communities.

Again, I will restate that the government has our message. We can deal with issues that brought us to where we are right now by changing our practices or possibly amending the Financial Administration Act. That's what I would like to say, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. To the motion. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for four days, we discussed this supplementary appropriation and the Members made it quite clear that they were concerned with a number of items and, as we hear here today, the process as well.

Mr. Speaker, the process that we used is one that is established and as the Premier said earlier, we will gladly sit down with Members to discuss how we would go about this. This bill was put together within the rules we operate by. Yes, there are a large amount of special warrants within this supplementary appropriation. Forest fires, which were in the summertime when we weren't meeting when the department came back and knew they would overspend their budget. The school collapse in Inuvik and the fire that followed them is another \$2.5 million, Mr. Speaker.

Now there was concern raised about the airport facility and the work that's going to go on there. That is now being established in the budget, after negotiations between the Department of Transportation and CATSA. They were trying to secure more money for the project, they realized there was a timeline in place, and if we don't get that project approved then CATSA itself will take over the project and put in place what they feel is necessary, without regard to how we operate, without regard to the industry out there that operates here in the Northwest Territories, and they have shown so. There's an example of Whitehorse and Nunavut where they're going to do the work to meet their timelines with the budget they have identified, without concern for the governments of the day.

So we're of the position that this needs to go ahead, that we should be in control of it, and that we should make the necessary repairs and infrastructure changes that would still see a useable facility that would still allow for the air carriers that operate out of there to make a go of it without being hindered more than necessary. Yes, we realize that the full plan isn't put together, but that plan will be brought back to Members of this Assembly for review. The rest of the plan that's going ahead is going to be within the business plans.

So, Mr. Speaker, we realize that there are times through supplementary appropriations, and especially special warrants, that are of concern. As a Member who sat on the other side of the floor, I have raised a number of issues about the use of special warrants. So, Mr. Speaker, in this bill particularly there are some large numbers in here around special warrants. It's not taken lightly that a bill that would come forward or if a request for came money forward that we would look at this and just throw it in there and say well, we think we've got the numbers.

Mr. Speaker, when we put this together I have not sat down with any of my colleagues and said if this does not go through then retribution will be paid to this Member and that Member on this project. That is not how we operate. Mr. Speaker, there have been many, many issues raised

on this bill since it went into the House. I could sit down and pull out comments that Members have said that are based on pure politics, but, Mr. Speaker, we are about getting the business done and we need to do this. We take the message coming from Members that we need to take a good look at how we're going to use special warrants in the supplementary process.

Mr. Speaker, there have been a number of issues raised out here that we just need to put some clarity to on this bill and the information that flowed, especially around the airport facility. I am prepared to table, if the Members want, a letter that did go out requesting time from the committee for the Department of Transportation to go through what had occurred. A decision was made in late June, a letter was sent in July, and, unfortunately, we couldn't get the time together between committee members and the department until September. So, Mr. Speaker, there's a concern here about what we do, and as Finance Minister it's like I have to just throw this out there without regard to what might happen and without regard to the rules.

Mr. Speaker, this bill was brought forward following the rules of this Assembly. We can't tighten it up. As the Premier stated, I'll gladly sit down with the Members to look at tightening up the process, and we have to make sure we're clear on how tight we want them to be because there could be things that happen as a result of that, but we'll have that time to go through it.

So, Mr. Speaker, this bill does, for the record, put it on the floor, has allowed debate, and residents of the Territories have heard the discontent about the process in a number of the projects. But I feel, as Finance Minister, in reviewing the request that came forward, they were brought to the table and we reviewed them. With the Members' concern raised here, I will definitely be using that when my colleagues come forward for requests, to tell them to think twice about it before it comes forward.

Mr. Speaker, for the record, I would like to let the Members know over there who have questioned my credibility in this process and said that I am not doing my job, I have followed the rules, the rules that are open and available to everybody, and I have not gone around those rules. This bill was put together and is needed for the legitimate expenses that have occurred in some cases and that will need money coming up.

So, Mr. Speaker, just for the record, we followed the process, we are tight on our money, we recognize that, and we've heard the concerns and will gladly work with the Members on trying to make the process go a little smoother. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. A recorded vote has been requested.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question is being called. All those in favour, please stand.

Recorded Vote

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Roland, Mr. Handley, Mr. Dent, Mr. McLeod, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Ramsay, Mr. Pokiak, Mr. Villeneuve,

Mr. Zoe, Mr. Menicoche, Mr. Yakeleya, Mr. Hawkins, Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. Krutko.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: All those opposed, please stand.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Ms. Lee, Mr. Braden.

MR. SPEAKER: All those abstaining, please stand. The results of the vote: 15 in favour, 2 against. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 13 has had third reading. Item 21, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, there will be meetings of the Social Programs committee and the Governance and Economic Development committee at adjournment of the House today.

Orders of the day for Friday, October 29, 2004, at 10:00 a.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motion
15. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
 - Motion 22-15(3), Issuance of Special Warrants
17. First Reading of Bills
18. Second Reading of Bills
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
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 Friday, October 29, 2004, at 10:00 a.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 5:32 p.m.

