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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Friday, October 29, 2004****Members Present**

Honourable Brendan Bell, Mr. Braden, Honourable Paul Delorey, Mrs. Groenewegen, Honourable Joe Handley, Mr. Hawkins, Honourable David Krutko, Ms. Lee, 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 morning, Members. Orders of the day, item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**Minister's Statement 71-15(3): Ministers Absent From The House**

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise Members that the Honourable Charles Dent will be absent from the House today to attend the federal/provincial/territorial Ministers of Culture and Heritage meeting in Halifax.

I would also like to advise Members that the Honourable Michael McLeod will be absent from the House today to attend to a personal matter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

Minister's Statement 72-15(3): Recognition Of Nellie Cournoyea As Energy Person Of The Year

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday night while in Ottawa for the First Ministers' meeting, I had the opportunity to attend the Energy Council of Canada's annual dinner. I was pleased to attend this event as the highlight of the dinner was the presentation of the Canadian Energy Person of the Year for 2004, which I am thrilled to say is Ms. Nellie Cournoyea.

---Applause

The recognition of Ms. Cournoyea is a very deserving one. For most northerners, Nellie Cournoyea is no stranger. She is a former Premier of the Northwest Territories and current chair/CEO of the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation.

Born in Aklavik, Ms. Cournoyea was educated through the federal Aklavik Day School by Alberta correspondence courses. She worked at CBC Inuvik for nine years as an announcer and station manager, was a land claim fieldworker for the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada and a founding member and later administrator and land rights worker of the Committee of Original Peoples' Entitlement. She was the first managing director of the Inuvialuit Development Corporation after being part of the land rights negotiating team. She also held the position of implementation coordinator for the Inuvialuit Final Agreement for several years and served on the board of directors of the Inuvialuit Petroleum Arbitration Board. Having decided not to run in the 1995 NWT election, Ms.

Cournoyea returned to the Beaufort-Delta in January 1998. She was re-elected chair/CEO of IRC, a position she holds today.

She has received many other awards including:

- Woman of the Year Award from the NWT Native Women's Association, 1982;
- Wallace Goose Award from the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, 1986;
- National Aboriginal Achievement Award, 1994;
- Honourary Doctorates in Law, Lakehead University, 1995, Carleton University, 1996 and the University of Toronto, 1996.

The Energy Council of Canada is the Canadian Member Committee of the World Energy Council. It is made up of over 100 members from Canada's energy sector, dedicated to enhancing the effectiveness of Canada's national energy policy. The council seeks "to forge a better understanding of energy issues among the public and private sectors and the country at large, through discussion and exchange of information on all forms and aspects of energy." The primary goal, as Canada's pan-energy association, is to work with the sectoral energy associations to create a vigorous and effective energy strategy dialogue in Canada, engaging a broad range of players in industry and in governments.

Mr. Speaker, Members of the Legislative Assembly, please join with me in congratulating Ms. Nellie Cournoyea for being the much deserving recipient of this national award. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**Member's Statement On Canadian War Memorial At Vimy Ridge**

MR. BRADEN: Mahsi, thank you and good morning, Mr. Speaker. Earlier this year on a family vacation to Europe, my family and I took the opportunity to visit one of the most remarkable and inspiring places I've seen and that was the Canadian War Memorial at Vimy Ridge in France, Mr. Speaker. The time allotted won't allow me to go into a description of everything that we saw and felt, but it was a very calm and a very quiet day in June when my family and I walked amongst the monuments. Those 30-metre-tall white marble spires dominating the landscape are indeed inspiring. The rows and rows of graves of

Canadians and other allied service people who gave their lives in that remarkable First World War battle and the tours of the tunnels and the front lines and the remarkable damage and carnage that happened during that battle were very humbling. They made me feel very grateful for the sacrifices of Canadian and other service people over the three years of that campaign, and they gave me a great feeling of pride, Mr. Speaker, for what our Canadian nation has done since then and today around the world.

Mr. Speaker, there are still many veterans of World War II and the Korean War; 25, I understand, who live in the Northwest Territories. I salute them. I hope that we all do that on Remembrance Day on November 11th, and I want to express the gratitude that I have in a sense that I hope we never take for granted the sacrifices that they made to give us one of the most remarkable things and that is freedom to have our say, to speak our minds and for the democratic institution that we all work with and celebrate day after day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On NWT Council Of Sport And Recreation Partners

MR. ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, leading an active lifestyle, getting outside in the fresh air and participating in sports improves peoples' lives. For elders, leading an active lifestyle can prevent diseases like diabetes and being active can help you to better manage an illness. For youth, being active improves self-esteem, their coordination and even their performance in school. Benefits of an active lifestyle are...(inaudible)... and one of the answers to a lot of our social problems in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, that's why I want to say that I'm glad that the implementation plan for the Northwest Territories Council of Sport and Recreation Partners is complete now and this is a very worthwhile initiative. Before this new council was created, a lot of small communities didn't feel like they were involved with sports and recreation. Recreation in the communities suffered. Programs weren't being coordinated very well, and there just wasn't enough money for them.

Mr. Speaker, I'm particularly excited by the NWT Council of Sport and Recreation Partners proposed duties. The new council will have an advocacy role, and they promise to engage and involve every community while respecting their individuality. The NWT Council of Sport and Recreation Partners is also promising to listen and respond to the communities. The council is going to ensure community support, which I think is a good initiative, Mr. Speaker, and a long time coming.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the new council is supposed to make sure that all residents of the Northwest Territories have access to sports and recreation programs. Mr. Speaker, three years of consultation went into creating the council and it wasn't an easy process, but I think it is a very worthwhile initiative. The new council is supposed to be appointed by February 2005 and they are going to have

their first meeting in April. I just want to wish them the best of luck. Mahsi.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Zoe. Item 3, the honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

Member's Statement On Need For A Medical Detoxification Facility

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the need for a medical detox facility in Yellowknife. I'd like to talk about this subject because I don't want Archie Tsetta and Vawn Ruthven, who are two of hundreds of northerners who struggled with drug and alcohol addiction problems, to have died in vain. Eighteen months ago, coroner's juries in both Ruthven's and Tsetta's case called for a medical detox facility, but the Minister of Health and Social Services has failed to respond to those recommendations. In response to a report calling again for a new addictions strategy, including medical detoxing, Minister Miltenberger's response was, and I quote "we have to make a fundamental decision about whether we want to put money into bricks and mortar or do we want to put money into programs at the community level."

Mr. Speaker, I think the money should go where the people need it most, and that is to a dedicated detox facility. That, to me, is fundamental, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

Mr. Speaker, for some addictions like the addiction to crack cocaine, you need to be able to medically detoxify. Your withdrawal has to be managed safely and medically. Twenty percent of addicts die while going through delirium treatments, or the DTs. Currently, Stanton and Hay River are the only places in the North that have detox beds and these services are inconsistent. Stanton is currently spending \$5,000 per week to care for addicts. That's \$250,000 per year, Mr. Speaker. The time and resources used to deal with addictions takes away from the hospital's ability to deal with other medical issues. We have a serious drug problem in the Territories and it's only getting worse.

A while ago the RCMP found 541 grams of crack cocaine destined for Yellowknife in a truck that went off the road. At the beginning of this month police seized 193 grams of crack cocaine out of a hotel room in Hay River. One million dollars annually is spent on the drug trade in Hay River alone, and about \$100,000 of that is for crack cocaine. Really, no one knows how much is spent in Yellowknife.

The RCMP have noticed a drastic increase in cocaine usage. The Nats'ejee K'eh Treatment Centre, who two years ago used to only treat those addicted to alcohol and marijuana, is now starting to see a rise in those addicted to stimulants like crack cocaine. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. 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: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Drugs are reaching the North from the highway system and the dealers are attracted by the high prices they can sell crack cocaine for in the North. The going rate is \$120 per gram. That's \$40 to \$50 more a gram than it sells for down south. Mr. Speaker, apparently we have become a Disneyland for drug dealers. Our drug use is going through the roof, but we have very little to offer those who are addicted and those who need help. We have to be able to help addicts when they need help and we need to do it safely, humanely and effectively. We need a medical detox facility and we need one now, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Territorial Power Rate Support Program

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the last government and again recently there have been concerns raised about the cost of power in communities served by diesel generators. This is particularly of concern at this time because of the unprecedented high price of crude oil and the volatility of supply issues. I would like to see this government look at two things: first of all, a proactive and immediate response to anticipated riders in diesel communities. These communities need to be protected where the costs of other essential goods and services are already higher than other communities.

---Applause

For the longer term, a Territorial Power Support Program will go some ways towards addressing price increases, but the gaps in the Territorial Power Support Program, as related to small business, will be magnified by price increases and rate riders. This is why I believe the GNWT needs to take a serious look at the territorial support program now. Previous opinions and rulings of the Public Utilities Board have been quite categorical about the fact that their mandate is to regulate NTPC as a utility like any other, regardless of who the shareholder is. This is based on normal principles regarding allowable expenses and rates of return. It is then the mandate of this government to address the concerns of social and economic fairness to the regions and the constituents that we represent. This issue requires immediate attention. It will cost money, however, I consider it a priority of this government to mitigate the high cost of energy where that cost is prohibitive to economic growth or it denies residents a reasonable and affordable cost of living in our communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Community Support For Persons With Disabilities

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, growing up in Fort Norman as a young boy I first began to

notice that not all people are born the same. Mr. Speaker, it was my grandfather who taught me this. You see, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Noel Gladue, my grandfather, was in his latest stages of his life as being labelled "normal person" as I saw him as a young boy. Mr. Speaker, shortly after that, my grandfather was confined to his wheelchair until he passed away in the early '80s.

Mr. Speaker, I watched on CBC last night about a young boy who was born disabled, and yet he made great strides to live his life to the fullest in spite of the challenges he faced everyday. Mr. Speaker, what my grandfather taught me, my brothers and sisters, was patience, persistence, life is what you make of it, and count your blessings, just do things.

Mr. Speaker, there are people with disabilities in each of our communities and there are specific programs and services available to them offered by this government and the Government of Canada. However, at times these programs and services make it very difficult to make the most of these programs by our special people. We need to pay close attention to these issues. They often go unnoticed or are pushed aside as not being important. Mr. Speaker, some of these people who are labelled disabled have a hard time living in our small communities or even in larger centres. We, as government legislators, must really step up to the plate and hit a homerun for our special people. Mahsi.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Proposal To Establish Nahendeh Airline

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, mahsi cho. Today I want to address the issue of business opportunities. Everywhere in the North right now people are beginning to look ahead to the construction of the Mackenzie Valley pipeline. However, if we in the North are going to benefit from the opportunities the pipeline project is expected to bring, we need to be prepared, with businesses up and running for when the ball starts rolling. The opportunities that are expected to come will be diverse.

Construction of a pipeline will require a wide range of services, not all of them directly related to pipeline construction and engineering. One area that will see a significant increase in business opportunities is the airline business. Leaders in my riding have identified an opportunity there and are trying to take advantage of it. Chiefs from six communities have developed a proposal to consolidate existing local airlines into one large company that will be able to respond to the coming changes and take full advantage of them and profit thereby. The chiefs see the proposal as a way to take control of their own destiny.

I believe a proposal like this would be an efficient use of local resources and would contribute significantly to the economic independence of communities and would be a source of pride. As a government, we are supportive of such initiatives. In fact, one of our goals is self-reliant people and communities on the Northwest Territories. With this proposal, we must act quickly and efficiently or else there is a great danger we will lose out the

opportunity that is being presented to us. Once again, established southern interests mainly move in, take over and our wealth will move out.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the government doesn't seem to understand the urgency of this issue for the chiefs. The Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, upon receipt of this proposal, indicated that historically it will take a year to process and make this proposal a reality; a year, Mr. Speaker. There probably won't be an opportunity a year from now. The opportunity will have been lost to some other investments somewhere else. I want to impress upon the Minister and the government the need to respond quickly to this proposal and treat it with the urgency it requires. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Monitoring Consumption Of Fuels And Power

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise again because I still have concerns about the rising oil prices. Mr. Speaker, I spoke yesterday to the Minister of FMBS about these concerns. Unfortunately, I felt that my answers were lacking any true lustre. Mr. Speaker, I am concerned again and I will have questions about the monitoring and consumption of fuel and power. I don't believe that I got solid answers on how we are doing this. So, Mr. Speaker, attention needs to be looked at this issue. It's a serious issue. We need direction. I'm not suggesting that we need to spend oodles of government money that we do not have. I'm talking about a directive. I'm talking about conscious steps that we could be taking. As I said yesterday, we could be suggesting turn down those lights, turn down those heating register dials. We could be doing things like that. Don't let our cars idle as long. I'm not talking about well, we budgeted for this a year ago on an annual basis, we'll readdress this. I'm not talking about costly renovations either. I'm talking about simple, conscious choices.

Mr. Speaker, it's time this government gets running with those stone legs. Mr. Speaker, I think this government has lead feet on this issue. Unless this Finance Minister knows how to turn lead into gold, we're in real trouble, Mr. Speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER: Big trouble.

MR. HAWKINS: We need a directive that looks at this problem. This is a simple solution. We need to personalize this solution as a commitment to the people of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Critical Need For Drug Treatment Centres

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to also talk about the critical need for a drug

treatment centre in the NWT. This grave concern I have is not because of the numerous calls I have received in regard to this issue, it has also developed into something more personal now. This epidemic is becoming increasingly more visible in our everyday lives with close friends, relatives and families becoming victims to this crisis in only a matter of a few days or weeks, Mr. Speaker.

We are all aware that the migration patterns reveal a distinct urbanization trend toward larger centres and more noticeably by aboriginals. With these changes, the communities are faced with increased pressure on health programs, education and our housing programs, but we cannot forget about the increase in violent crimes, Mr. Speaker, which is now five times our national average; and the property crimes going up every month it seems, is 40 percent higher than our national average.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to encourage our government to initiate an action plan to address this public concern before we are faced with a full-blown epidemic, which gets totally out of our control. We need a plan which involves all governments and community organizations, a plan that encompasses goals on support programs and preventative activities for our youth and adolescents to treatment and aftercare of adults and families.

Mr. Speaker, I realize that this issue is not something that can be resolved overnight, but I do know that we have a responsibility to our northern residents, and especially our youth, to take immediate pro-action so that we are not left so far behind that we can no longer assist or provide the needed help that our residents require. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Tuktoyaktuk To Inuvik Highway

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I rise to speak on the Tuktoyaktuk-Inuvik highway. The deputy mayor of Tuktoyaktuk and I invited a number of MLAs to meet with the Minister of Transportation recently, and I thank them for attending. I also thank the Minister for hearing us out.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, the Tuk-Inuvik committee are planning to revitalize the committee. There is strong support to make this road a reality, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in a report by Ferguson Simek Clark in 1997, I know it is sort of outdated but, in the report, Mr. Speaker, a service road may be completed over time. The estimates of the annual cost of the road being done in five years, \$7.2 million annually; 10 years, \$3.6 million annually; and 20 years, \$1.8 million annually; for a total of \$40 million. However, this estimate may raise the cost of the amount in 2004. Mr. Speaker, this government has always put the onus on the federal government. I understand this is the case. However, we should take the lead role to make this service road a reality in order to travel from coast to coast to coast.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Transportation should work with the Tuktoyaktuk-Inuvik committee, and together

they may be able to put this partnership forward. In closing, Mr. Speaker, I urge the Minister of Transportation to immediately contact his federal counterpart to discuss this project about the Tuk-Inuvik service road. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Lack Of Addictions Treatment In The NWT

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are well aware the toll that addiction to alcohol, drugs and gambling is having on our people and our society. The problem is getting worse every day, Mr. Speaker. We are also aware that the toxicity of the new drugs, especially crack cocaine on the street, is getting more intense and very unforgiving to those who come in touch with it. There is almost no second chance, Mr. Speaker. I believe we are also aware, Mr. Speaker, that we need an agreement that so much needs to be done by this government if we are ever to make inroads into what we are facing. Otherwise, I don't believe it will be too long before this monster destroys most of our social, political, educational, and correctional infrastructures at a cost that no government can bear.

Mr. Speaker, a couple of weeks ago, I attended an unveiling ceremony of the new drinking and driving legislation sponsored by the Minister of Transportation. One phrase that struck me there was coroner Percy Kinney's description of alcohol addiction as a slow-motion, silent killer. Mr. Speaker, I believe we are now dealing with a bundle of slow-motion silent killers in addictions. We have a monstrous and multi-pronged addiction in alcohol, drugs, and gambling that our people are battling with. This government has to become a much stronger partner with the service providers and those who are suffering from these addictions.

Mr. Speaker, the third week of November is designated as National Addictions Awareness Week. The theme is to keep the circle strong. I have placed a beautiful hand-beaded ribbon on each Member's desk this morning. These ribbons are made and designed by Nechi Institute in Edmonton. I am hoping that the Members will either wear it or keep it close to them to remind us of the task at hand that we need to deal with and to really wrestle the monster down for the good of our territory and for our people who are suffering. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Sobriety Challenge To Youth Of The NWT

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to put out a challenge to the youth in the Mackenzie Delta. Mr. Speaker, as a young leader and a young man 14 years ago, I can recall the elders of the Mackenzie Delta put out a challenge to myself and the

other leaders in the Mackenzie Delta to set the example and be sober and be an example to others.

---Applause

I took up that challenge some 14 years ago and have been sober since.

---Applause

I would like to challenge the youth of our communities to stop drinking, stop the abuse with regards to alcohol and drugs, but also take on the challenge to be our role models in our communities. By challenging your friend, your brother, your sister and set the example for your younger brothers and sisters, you can definitely make a difference like I did to set the example for who we serve. As young individuals, you can make a difference. You can show other people in your communities that it is okay to be sober. It is okay to live a healthy life. It is okay to set the challenges to people around you. You may not be speaking out in a public meeting, but by just taking on this challenge, you can show other people that they can also make a difference. Living in our small communities, we all have to be role models, and we realize that the challenges around us are vast in regards to alcohol, drugs and the abuse that happens in our communities. Again, I would like to put out the challenge to our younger people in our communities to be role models and not for yourself, but for your younger brothers and sisters, so that you can make a difference. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 337-15(3): Community Services For Disabled Persons

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I talked about the people with disabilities in our small communities and larger centres. My question today is to the Minister of Health and Social Services. In larger centres, there are support groups and NGOs that provide services to disabled persons. The same cannot be said for small communities. Can the Minister of Health and Social Services tell me what services are available for disabled persons living in the smaller communities? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 337-15(3): Community Services For Disabled Persons

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have a territorial organization for people with disabilities. In the communities, we have social workers and health care staff that work in the communities to assist people. We also have people in Income Support that work with people with disabilities. I know in housing-built units, they make them disabled-friendly where that is required in terms of ramps and such.

I know when they designed the new seniors' units, they are all designed to be disabled-useful and friendly. We have, across government, a number of services that are available for people with disabilities. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 337-15(3): Community Services For Disabled Persons

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Minister listing off a number of services and programs available for people who are disabled in the smaller communities. Mr. Speaker, I understand that in some of the smaller communities, the staff is so limited and possibly so overworked that they have very little time to look after the needs of people who are disabled. Can the Minister tell me specifically as to how much time is given to the people who are disabled by the Health and Social Services staff? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 337-15(3): Community Services For Disabled Persons

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the amount of time is obviously going to be dealt with on a case-by-case and need basis. There is no set formula that indicates an amount of time for specific concerns or issues or problems. So there are also the efforts that are going to continue on in terms of trying to expand the homecare services that are available to assist people to stay in their homes longer and more comfortably, but there is no set formula that dictates any given time. It is based on individual case need. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 337-15(3): Community Services For Disabled Persons

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to hear that the homecare services will be expanded and looked at in the small communities. Can the Minister tell me what funding is available to local governments and NGOs that deliver programs and services to disabled persons at the smaller community level? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 337-15(3): Community Services For Disabled Persons

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that is a fairly broad question. If it is to deal with house construction, if it is to deal with actual program delivery, if it is to deal with specific client concern in the school, all would have access to different funding arrangements, different funding pots that may exist. There is also federal government money that may be available to do with the disabled as well. So there is a range of funding agencies out there that could be accessed by the community depending on what the particular circumstance is. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 337-15(3): Community Services For Disabled Persons

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell me whether the recent review of the disabled services in the Northwest Territories investigated the delivery of services at the community level? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 337-15(3): Community Services For Disabled Persons

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there was a strategy that was done, an action plan for persons with disabilities, and the response has been worked on by the government across departments that are involved in education, health, housing and MACA. That response has been built into the various business plans of the departments. Thank you.

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

Question 338-15(3): Government Consumption Of Fuels And Power

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise again with questions to the Minister responsible for FMBS with regard to my Member's statement today as well as my Member's statement yesterday that was made with regards to my concerns of the consumption of fuels and power with the Northwest Territories government. Mr. Speaker, I would like to hear today in the context of reasonability, what is this government doing to monitor fuel and power consumption of our government assets; that would be buildings, cars, etcetera? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 338-15(3): Government Consumption Of Fuels And Power

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I stated in response to the Member's questions, overall, each government department has a different role to play. One is to look at their own assets and see if they are making proper use of them. As well, we do have a number of programs that are out there to help support individuals with the impact of the high cost of power, as well as the Seniors' Fuel Subsidy Program. So, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of things that go on, but I could not give the Member a specific example, for example, the Department of Health may be doing around its consumption of heating fuels. There have been initiatives undertaken to try and lower the cost of O and M. As I stated yesterday, through the normal budgetary exercise, as departments come forward, when they come forward for items around forced growth, we send it back to them and ask for further substantiation on some initiatives that are out there and try to ensure that they are making

the best use of the resources that are provided to them. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I won't go to the length of yesterday's transcripts, but I will refer to pages 2380, 2381, 2382, and 2383. I will just paraphrase to put it all together. The Minister spoke about departments consulting with RWED, the Department of Housing. He talked about on an annual basis. Some of these problems we can't build into a budget exercise, anticipated costs, operational things are being done. We realize that there are going to be some impacts, but to mitigate them, we have to work forward at the time with real bills. Mr. Speaker, I am basically talking about the fact that we could be doing things. Yesterday I said let's be proactive. Let's get a directive from this department, from this Minister, about turning down the lights. These are things we can do. Engage the Arctic Energy Alliance and say come up with a five-point plan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. I didn't hear a question there, Mr. Hawkins. Do you want to rephrase that and ask a question? Mr. Hawkins.

Supplementary To Question 338-15(3): Government Consumption Of Fuels And Power

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could this government engage the Arctic Energy Alliance in getting something like a five-point plan on simple steps we can do, because we need to personalize this problem? We need to pitch in.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is a question I believe should be more appropriately directed to the Minister of RWED. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 338-15(3): Government Consumption Of Fuels And Power

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the Member is referring specifically to our ability to reject the costs that it will have internally for our own GNWT assets. We do have a program that the Minister of Finance referred to yesterday, the Energy Conservation Program. This program does provide financial assistance to territorial and community-funded departments, boards, agencies, non-profits, to undertake capital projects that will result in long-term reductions in the usage of electricity, heat, energy, water, et cetera. I think it is a very good program. There are a number of examples that have been funded and are usually funded in partnership.

The organization has to come forward with some equity as well, but in the areas of lighting, space heating, ventilation, and issues to deal with building envelope, the servicing of water, electrical systems, I think there have been many good initiatives. The goal here is to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels and to make sure we are doing things as efficiently as we possibly can. I think the Member has

already indicated that we have a very difficult time projecting what the cost of fuel will be. One thing we know for sure is if we can lessen our reliance on it, Mr. Speaker, we are in better shape, and we are aiming to do that. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 338-15(3): Government Consumption Of Fuels And Power

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If all three Ministers are going to be dealing with this, maybe I will send my next question to the Premier. Mr. Speaker, I am not sure if we just continue to direct it to the Minister of Finance or what. I look for direction, but I will direct it to the Minister of Finance and allow you to redirect it as appropriate. Mr. Speaker, we need to tighten our belts. That doesn't cost money. Mr. Speaker, it has been mentioned that we use the Arctic Energy Alliance and we have been. We fund them through our programs. We can do this. I am not talking about expensive renovations, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister of FMBS direct all departments to use Arctic Energy Alliance solutions to solve some of these crises? We can tighten our belts. It doesn't cost thousands of dollars; it costs just a little time and effort. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 338-15(3): Government Consumption Of Fuels And Power

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the support for the Arctic Energy Alliance. I think the Member makes a very good point. This is something that is funded by a couple of government departments and by the Power Corporation. I think there has been a lot of good work over the years and a lot of merit in continuing to work with this organization to find solutions, especially in the case of this organization, primarily on demand side issues. As a government, we recognize that we do need an energy plan, both for supply side and demand side issues. We will be moving that agenda forward.

I think the Arctic Energy Alliance can play a key role in this regard. We certainly look forward to the advice of the GED committee on issues that relate to energy and this conservation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 338-15(3): Government Consumption Of Fuels And Power

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what is the plan to deal with these increasing power bills and oil bills? Is it just to pay after the fact, or is there any plan to mitigate that potential significant bill that will be increased this year? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 338-15(3): Government Consumption Of Fuels And Power

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the Member knows, from the discussion at committee, that

the Power Corporation, for instance, has been working on issues related to hydro development and other renewable sources of energy. This is around the theme of trying to lessen our reliance on fossil fuels. In some regard, we are hostage in the short term to the crisis of oil. There is not a lot we can do in the very short run to lessen that reliance. I think, as the Member heard yesterday, the Finance Minister has sent out a directive to departments to come forward to make sure that they update the projections because of the cost of oil which is very volatile, but to do their best to come forward with some understanding of the impact that this will have. We will have that discussion in Cabinet. We saw recently \$55 a barrel for oil. It has come back a little bit to \$50. It dropped some \$2 a barrel yesterday with the announcement on something that seems as fickle to us as an indication from China that they will be raising interest rates going forward to cool off their economy somewhat. I think this speaks to how interlinked and interwoven these issues are on a global basis. It's very difficult for us to influence the price of a barrel of oil but, as I've indicated earlier, we can do as much as possible to lessen our reliance. Thank you.

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

Question 339-15(3): Territorial Power Support Program

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for Minister Roland with respect to the Territorial Power Support Program to offset the high cost of power in the communities that are on diesel generated power. Mr. Speaker, this program has been in place for a while now and it is an attempt to level the rates for the small communities. I believe for residential consumers it's to bring the rates down on the first 700 kilowatts of power consumed in a month, and for small business for the first 1,000 kilowatts of power used. Mr. Speaker, I would like to know what the government has done to prepare and anticipate for there being a rise in the cost of this subsidy program in view of anticipated riders because of the high cost of fuel, if the government has built this into their financial plans. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister responsible for FMBS, Mr. Roland.

Return To Question 339-15(3): Territorial Power Support Program

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the area of the Territorial Power Support Program, as the Member stated, is to try to even out the cost of providing power to residents of the Northwest Territories, and we have, over the last number of years, been increasing the amount because of the growth and demand -- more houses out there as well as people in the North. We feel, however, initially when we put the plans together that there was no anticipation of such a jump in the price of oil, hopefully it will continue to come down somewhat. A lot of it depends on when fuel was purchased and how that falls out in the next resupply and having that impact, and then we would have to look at making possible further adjustments.

For this year we have estimated that we would be fairly close to the previous year's targets. For example, in 2003-2004 the Territorial Power Support Program cost in

the area of \$7.2 million. That is something that we are concerned with, in earlier questions yesterday as well as today, about what can we do. It is fairly difficult to try to plan ahead if we are not sure, for example, a rate rider going forward will get approved. So that makes it a bit more difficult to try and project some of those changes. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 339-15(3): Territorial Power Support Program

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with regard to the Territorial Power Support Program, as well, because the rate is already set, the consumption of subsidized power is set at 700 and 1,000, as I previously mentioned. Anything exceeding that is going to, if the rate for power goes up, impact residents and businesses quite significantly. I'm wondering if the Minister has given any contemplation to how we might address that. Has the Territorial Power Support Program been reviewed lately to find out if those are realistic levels; 700 and 1,000? When was the last time the Territorial Power Support Program was reviewed for adequacy? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Two questions there, Mr. Roland, you can answer one or both.

Further Return To Question 339-15(3): Territorial Power Support Program

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the work that we do on an annual basis in preparing for budgets and so on, we do look at the rates as they are and the impact that they would have, more for a budgeting process. I don't have information offhand as to when the actual work was done on looking at the 700 kilowatt hours per month or the 1,000 kilowatt for small business. We haven't done that work since we took office. It is something that we have to keep in mind; if we change those we also change the cost drivers in that. If it is something the Members of the House would like us to do a review on, we can look at doing that. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 339-15(3): Territorial Power Support Program

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I think it would be a very good time to do a review of that. I don't think that the territorial power support program is adequate when it comes to the support for small business. We hear this from the small communities and, of course, this always precipitates discussion about a single-rate zone. Mr. Speaker, I have my own thoughts as to whether or not applying a single-rate zone is the solution to this problem. I think that there are other things that could be done. The one gap I recognize is with the small business support. Could the Minister please indicate what that costs and what kind of uptake there is on that for small business? I think it is very inadequate, but what kind of uptake in cost is there? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 339-15(3): Territorial Power Support Program

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the subsidy we have for small business is 1,000 kilowatt hours per month at the subsidized rate, but beyond that then it is full cost recovery in the sense of the rates themselves. We know that it's out there, it's an application-based program. I don't have the actual percentages right now, but it has been discussed and we know that it depends on the amount of income businesses have on an annual basis if they qualify or not. The uptake hasn't been as high and it fluctuates on a year-to-year basis, but I will get the information for the Member. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 339-15(3): Territorial Power Support Program

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the Minister commit to taking a look at this territorial power support program, perhaps even working with Members on this side of the House to address this? I think it's very timely right now, I think it's fairly safe to say that there are going to be some price riders coming into effect, and I think particularly we need to address the business support. I think that the cost of running a business in small communities is hindering economic development and I see this as a good solution. Will the Minister commit to coming forward with a process and a plan to review these subsidies? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 339-15(3): Territorial Power Support Program

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think in the whole area of energy and the impacts on our government, this program is one of those that would be a good thing to sit down with Members of this Assembly and go through to see if there are changes that we can make within the fiscal environment we operate in as well. Thank you.

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

Question 340-15(3): Availability Of Federal Economic Development Strategy Funding

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. I just wanted to ask the Minister with regard to the federal northern strategy funding that came from DIAND earlier this year, at what stage is that funding in our system, so to speak, Mr. Speaker? Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just to apologize, I would like some clarity from the Member. I am wondering if the Member is referring to the Northern

Economic Development Strategy money, the \$90 million that was referred to in the Throne speech. If that is the case, I can get into some detail. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Menicoche, do you want to clarify your question?

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Minister is absolutely correct; that was my reference in the question earlier.

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

Return To Question 340-15(3): Availability Of Federal Economic Development Strategy Funding

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is something that I have been having a fair amount of discussion on and the department has been working on for a number of months now with the DIAND officials. There is a Northern Development Ministers' meeting being held in Chibougamou, Quebec, right now that I wasn't able to attend because of session, but my deputy minister is there in attendance, working with the two Ministers from the other territories, Ministers Kenyon and Simailak. They are in agreement on several fundamental principles as to how this money should role out. We have communicated those to the federal government, to the DIAND Minister and to Minister Ethel Blondin-Andrew who has responsibility for this program. The \$90 million we feel there was some discussion about doing some funding announcements and trying to role out at least \$10 million of that between the three territories this year. We've had further discussion, it's been taking awhile to get project approvals. I think we are at the point now where we would prefer to see us go forward April 1st with the whole \$90 million, hold the \$10 million this year. It would be very difficult for us to spend that \$10 million effectively before year end, so our preference would be to talk about a \$90 million strategy next year.

In addition, we are not interested in new administrative mechanisms or regimes that would talk about and determine the rollout of this money. All three territories have economic development agencies that are more than capable of handling this money. We would like to see bilateral deals with the federal government and see us make the decisions on the programs as opposed to a policy committee in Ottawa.

So those are several of the things that we are discussing now and we are hoping that we will have an announcement from Minister Ethel Blondin-Andrew soon in this regard. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 340-15(3): Availability Of Federal Economic Development Strategy Funding

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Minister for providing an adequate breakdown of where we're at with the process. My other concern, Mr. Speaker, is that the priorities are northern priorities and not direction from Ottawa where to spend the funding that they have allocated for us, for this year or, indeed, if, as the Minister says, that we start allocating on April 1, 2005. I just want to get assurances from the Minister that any of the priorities will be priorities. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 340-15(3): Availability Of Federal Economic Development Strategy Funding

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is certainly our position. The federal government had sought to, as I had mentioned, have a policy committee in Ottawa to determine which projects could qualify for this money. We don't feel that is adequate. We feel those decisions need to be made in the North. We are prepared to defer the \$10 million that would need to be spent this year in a very quick manner, we don't think effectively, probably, and talk about the \$90 million going forward. But that would be based on decisions made in the Northwest Territories for the Northwest Territories, and likewise for Nunavut and the Yukon.

I think the longer-term solution here is a northern economic development agency much the same as Western Economic Diversification or Atlantic Opportunities. We've been pushing that and the federal Minister, Minister Ethel Blondin-Andrew, certainly seems to like the idea as well. Having said that, we don't want to see this \$90 million held up as we work towards the formalization of such an organization. So we think that a northern economic development agency is a long-term solution for the \$90 million over the next few years. We want to see those decisions made in the respective territories. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 340-15(3): Availability Of Federal Economic Development Strategy Funding

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I guess once we identify ourselves as say an economic development agreement or a similar type region, what typically happens with a lot of these agreements is that we offer low interest loans or even no interest loans to stimulate the businesses, Mr. Speaker. I was wondering if the Minister had had any thoughts towards that area in terms of this strategy, in terms of stimulating our regions and our businesses. Thank you very much.

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

Further Return To Question 340-15(3): Availability Of Federal Economic Development Strategy Funding

HON. BRENDAN BELL: The delivery mechanism I think that we have in mind, should it be successful in getting through the House and getting support of Members, is the new BDIC which will have regionally-focused program delivery. Largely the mechanisms used to deliver economic development lending and programs in the regions now would be those going forward, at least initially. I think there will be some evolution and some progression there as regions and communities gain the capability to deliver the programming themselves.

But we think as a transition, it would make sense to keep the current mechanisms in place and our idea would be to see our \$30 million, or whatever our percentage of this money, go through the BDIC and make sure the regions are involved. Those in fact are the people who have their ear to the ground and are working with people in communities and understand the needs in these

communities. It would be my preference that those are the ones reviewing projects.

Low interest loans are certainly a very good idea. I think we are more likely to look at loans as compared to contributions or grants, because we can make and stretch loans farther, especially if we are able to partner with other federal agencies, with Aboriginal Business Canada, and make our money go further and help more people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Final Supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

Supplementary To Question 340-15(3): Availability Of Federal Economic Development Strategy Funding

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to get clarification from the Minister. Did the Minister say that some of the money would be earmarked towards the business development centres in the regions? Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 340-15(3): Availability Of Federal Economic Development Strategy Funding

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. All this is predicated on us getting a successful agreement with the federal government. In the end, the \$90 million is federal money and they could determine that there are strings to be attached or that there are criteria to be met. We have given them our preference and our suggestions; we think they are strong because the three territories are in agreement. We hope that they will see the merit in doing it in this manner. At this point I don't have enough detail to tell the Member exactly the mechanism that we would use, other than to say if we get our hands on this money, the regions will certainly be involved in program delivery. It doesn't make any sense to have headquarters making determinations on the viability and validity of projects in the regions when they are not in fact there working with people on a day-to-day basis. So it will be regional program delivery, and I will certainly commit to that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 341-15(3): Need For A Medical Detoxification Facility

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Health and Social Services, the Honourable Michael Miltenberger. I go back to my Member's statement when I spoke of coroner's jury recommendations on the fact that the Northwest Territories and the city of Yellowknife needs a medical detox facility. I don't know if the government and the Minister do not pay heed to coroner's juries or Regular Members, and I know it was an issue in the 14th Assembly and I know it's an issue in the 15th Assembly, Mr. Speaker. I am wondering what it is going to take for the Minister of Health and Social Services and this government to get a dedicated detox facility in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 341-15(3): Need For A Medical Detoxification Facility

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for the record, I would like to note clearly that we pay very close attention to the reports from the chief coroner, and in fact we respond in detail to all the recommendations that pertain to Health and Social Services, as I did on January 20, 2003, and July 14, 2003, in regards to the two inquests and the findings. Both those referenced medical detox. I welcome the debate in this House and hopefully outside of this House the discussion about addictions and the best way to deal with addictions. We have chartered off on a course of action through our Mental Health and Addictions Strategy.

With regard to the medical detox, given our planning, given our fiscal realities, we are working with the four facilities -- Stanton, Hay River, Inuvik and Fort Smith -- to identify the number of beds in each facility to do medical detox. Clearly, Stanton, with its superior level of capacity and capability, will be the one where other patients would come to after they are initially stabilized in other communities. So we do have some capacity and that has been the approach we have taken, as opposed to going ahead to build a standalone medical detox centre. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 341-15(3): Need For A Medical Detoxification Facility

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister how come the Northwest Territories does not have a withdrawal management unit currently in place and, Mr. Speaker, if I could, what specifically, if a person is addicted to crack cocaine, are their alternatives in seeking treatment in the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 341-15(3): Need For A Medical Detoxification Facility

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, we have capacity at Stanton to do medical detoxification for alcohol and drugs. That's what we have in place. It is not a formal withdrawal management unit but it is the capacity that we do have. There is also a social withdrawal program that is run through the Salvation Army and some local groups like Crack Busters that have started. If there is further more dedicated treatment, then we would be looking to southern jurisdictions if that is what is required, as we have done on a client-by-client basis so far. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 341-15(3): Need For A Medical Detoxification Facility

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister, when he talks of having a look at the facilities that are currently in place, what is his intention on getting a withdrawal management unit? To me, that only makes sense, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to ask the Minister, when is the withdrawal management unit going to be set up here so that addicts have somewhere to turn? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 341-15(3): Need For A Medical Detoxification Facility

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated in one of my previous answers, I welcome this debate and discussion. If there is a concern with the plan that was agreed to previously in terms of mental health and addictions, and there is a need to amend it after two years of having it in place, then I am prepared to look at that through the work with the Social Programs committee. As all the Members know, we have to plan around any kind of capital expenditures that may be decided on or agreed to and look at the capacity of the current facilities and the resources and the manpower. So if there is a clear indication that we are looking for a change, then, as Minister of Health and Social Services, I am prepared to work with the committee and the communities and stakeholders to see where we can get the resources and try to adjust it. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 341-15(3): Need For A Medical Detoxification Facility

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the treatment centre in Yellowknife closed in 1999. It has been an issue since the closure of that treatment centre, Mr. Speaker. I know the Minister welcomes a debate, but this was brought up two, three and four years ago, and still the government hasn't addressed the need for a treatment centre. If there is a will on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, to look at a treatment centre for Yellowknife, I am wondering if the Minister will be responsive and will see to that happening. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 341-15(3): Need For A Medical Detoxification Facility

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would argue that we have responded, maybe not to the Member's satisfaction or to the degree that he would think acceptable, but as we balance the many priorities, dementia units, shortage of housing, the fact that we have a budget that has to meet its fiscal targets that have been set by the Minister of FMBS, that we have responded. We responded in the best way we can with the resources we have. If there is an interest, as I have indicated, I am prepared to sit down and talk to the Members. I am prepared to talk to the

stakeholders and the communities and see what resources we could possibly reprofile or what case can be made for any kind of improvement in services, but we have made our best efforts, I believe. Thank you.

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

Question 342-15(3): Planning For A Medical Detoxification Facility

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My question is also directed to the Minister of Health and Social Services with regards to the lack of medical detox facilities in Yellowknife and other communities. I just want to ask the Minister if he can tell us, the Members, and the public in general, in the five-year capital acquisition plan of the GNWT, going up to 2008 or 2009, there is approximately \$60 million that is allocated for capital infrastructure requirements. That is not counting all this extra money that they are getting out of the federal government when the new health care reform comes through. I am just wondering if the Minister would consider or why is he not considering putting a formal medical detox centre on the capital acquisition plan in the next five years. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 342-15(3): Planning For A Medical Detoxification Facility

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to have that debate about the best approach, the numbers, the need, and is it the best course of action and the best investment to build a separate, standalone facility, or is it best to look at expanding the service at Stanton, and what is possible in Hay River, Inuvik and Fort Smith. The money that is allocated in the capital plan is clearly identified for urgent capital projects across the Northwest Territories. We have yet to find out the final numbers of what is available from the federal government for the new health care money. When that comes in, of course, we will be considering this issue along with many others in terms of how to best spend whatever funds may be available. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 342-15(3): Planning For A Medical Detoxification Facility

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not sure really what the Minister's sense of urgency is, but, to me, I think this is a very urgent matter, and I think it is something that should be a real priority for the Department of Health on healing facilities and treatment programs that are available to residents, especially residents of Yellowknife that already have a large influx of people coming in all the time every year and the population is steadily growing. With regard to one of the facilities that does offer some kind of assistance to people who are looking for treatment for their addictions, there is the Salvation Army. I know that the clients who are treated over there are treated through referrals by corrections services and the self-admitted people who are going there

for treatment on their own is double that, but there is no funding allocated for that and there is no funding provided by this government for the self-admitted program. I was just wondering if the Minister could let me know and the other Members and the public know why, if he is looking at outside sources of treatment and not a standalone system, why doesn't the government provide more funding, or any funding for that matter, for that program. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 342-15(3): Planning For A Medical Detoxification Facility

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in fact, we do have arrangements with the Salvation Army. In fact, the Salvation Army now is approved for medical travel as well, which it hasn't been in the past. I would be happy to provide the Members the detail of the various contractual arrangements we have with the Salvation Army. I would also like to acknowledge the work that they do, and that they are a very valuable resource. We are relying on them more and more because of their skills and abilities. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 342-15(3): Planning For A Medical Detoxification Facility

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't know what kind of new contractual arrangements the government made with the Salvation Army, but I was speaking with the program director yesterday. She just informed me that all of the people who are self-admitted won't get any funding for this and neither does the Tree of Peace. There was an announcement in this House last year recognizing the Salvation Army as a legitimate treatment centre, and they even received a letter just confirming that recognition, but I would be glad to see that the Minister is going to provide some information with regard to what kind of contractual arrangements that they have been ironing out over the past year.

Just with respect to the Somba K'e Healing Centre that was shut down in 1999, Mr. Speaker, and has been closed for a few years now, I know that this government still pays the mortgage on that facility, which has been sitting empty for a number of years now. I was just talking with the ex-manager who used to run that place. He was given assurances by the Department of Health and Social Services that this place wouldn't close. They closed it six months later. I just want to know what the Minister is planning on doing to maybe revisit the issue and revisit the possibility of renovating it, not spending an exorbitant amount of money, but I think that it is something to consider.

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

Further Return To Question 342-15(3): Planning For A Medical Detoxification Facility

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my recollection of the history of the Somba K'e is that they had an arrangement with

Corrections Canada that was severed and that they were looking around for an alternate way to get funding. We did look at the facility. We did have people take a look at it from a technical and structural point of view initially for the possibility of a childcare facility. What came back was a number to bring the building up to appropriate code both structurally and from a program point of view of over \$3 million, which exceeded the budget we had available to do renovations at the current facility. So we did take a look at that. I had a number of meetings with the Member for Weledeh and the board members from Somba K'e to look at an alternate use and what could be done to try to assist them in putting that facility to productive use. So we have made our efforts. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. A very short supplementary, Mr. Villeneuve.

Supplementary To Question 342-15(3): Planning For A Medical Detoxification Facility

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess maybe what I am looking at with the new funding arrangements this government has been coming across now with this new election in place and stuff, I am just wondering if the Minister can give the public some indication as to his commitment to see that this problem is near epidemic and is not going to escalate any more than what it's coming to right now and that he will look into the possibility of having a standalone management facility that deals strictly with that drug addiction. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 342-15(3): Planning For A Medical Detoxification Facility

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the term "near epidemic" has been used a number of times. I have seen it in the press, as well. The suggestion is that our response is going to be to just try to fix people once they are addicted. I would suggest that that is an incomplete response, that, very clearly, with the influx of drugs, there has to be a comprehensive response, trying to limit access, trying to convince people not to use it, trying to crack down on the people who are selling it as opposed to just focusing the attention on accepting the reality and let's just try to fix people once they are addicted. I don't think that is the intent of anybody in this House. I think we need that kind of broad discussion to look at that kind of comprehensive response. Thank you.

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

Question 343-15(3): Staffing Addictions Treatment Positions

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask my questions to the Minister of Health in his capacity and his responsibilities as Minister of Health and not a fixer of everything. Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the addiction and not necessarily just on the preventative measures, which is important as he has indicated, but I want to deal with the fixing side of it, which I believe the Minister is responsible for. Mr. Speaker, given the amount of problems we have with drug use and alcohol addiction, I

really believe that we should be at the forefront, and we should have our own treatment centre and treatment program that should be used as an example around the world and the country. Nobody really knows what we have, Mr. Speaker.

This is the situation. The government is paying for maintenance and the mortgage of Somba K'e. The government is paying \$600,000 to \$800,000 a year for southern treatment. The government talks about strengthening their mental health and addiction workers. I tell you, this has been a complete disaster. The bureaucratic tape has made it so that this position has not been filled in many communities. Second of all, the clinic unit in Stanton is severely short staffed. They have talked to the administrative managers of the hospital about it. They are not recruiting. They have stopped their advertising. This is the kind of commitment the Minister has in terms of dealing with addiction. Could the Minister indicate why he is failing to even staff the division at the hospital? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The Minister of Health and Social Services, the Honourable Mr. Miltenberger.

Return To Question 343-15(3): Staffing Addictions Treatment Positions

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my job as Minister is to try to come up with some plans to, in a careful way, implement those plans after there has been proper consultation. We have done that with the mental health and addiction strategy. We responded to a fairly damning report in a state of emergency. We have committed to following the plan. We have implemented year one, year two. Year three is on the books. The Member now stands up in this House to say it has been a disaster. Let's change that. I am saying, okay, if that is what you are thinking, then let's have that discussion; an informed discussion. Let's get the statistics. Let's look at the need. Let's get past the political rhetoric, the extreme adjectives, and take a measure to look at this. We are talking about a process that is going to require time of committee to do that. I've made that commitment before, and I just restate that. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 343-15(3): Staffing Addictions Treatment Positions

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister keeps talking about let's have this debate. Well, I don't know if he is trying to have this in his dreams or not, or in his sleep. I am telling him, Mr. Speaker, the debate is right now. I am asking him very specific questions. I am not making any political rhetoric. I am telling him, Mr. Speaker, that his time for planning and his favourite words and careful measured steps to plan are over. I am telling him, I am not saying the whole strategy is a disaster, but his implementation of it, we do not have mental health and addiction workers completed because of the way that it was done, and there are vacancies at the Stanton clinic. The Salvation Army and the Tree of Peace need these professionals at the hospital to deal with this clinical

situation. They are suffering from vacancies. They are asking the Minister and the administrators to hire them, and they haven't. So why is the Minister not doing anything about that? These are very specific...

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. I heard a question there. Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 343-15(3): Staffing Addictions Treatment Positions

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member makes comments that tend to diminish the work of people in the communities that have been working for years in the field - wellness workers, addiction workers -- writing them all off as a disgrace, a waste of time, a disaster, it is not happening. Well, it is happening. Yes, there have been problems unfolding this and rolling it out and staffing all of the positions, but we have had more success than we have had failure in terms of staffing, and we are going to continue to work at it. We are going to continue to work at staffing all of the positions that are funded. If the Member is saying build us a new facility now because she stood up and said that is what she thinks should be done, I am prepared to talk about that, but there is a process, as she well knows, as the Members well know, as they have just taken us recently to severe task about how we spend money. I am prepared to look at it. If there is agreement and there is a planning process that leads to a facility, then I am prepared to engage in that discussion. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 343-15(3): Staffing Addictions Treatment Positions

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Unless the Minister is mixing me up with the Member for Tu Nedhe or the Member for Kam Lake, I have not mentioned a word about building a treatment centre. I asked very specific questions. There are at least two key positions at the clinical mental health unit at the hospital that are vacant. They have stopped advertising for those positions. They are not recruiting, and the recruiter is no longer in office. As far as I am aware, there is minimal effort to rehire those units. I am asking a very specific question about service delivery here. I think the Minister knows this; my understanding is that the Salvation Army and the Tree of Peace are doing most of the delivery for the government and the professionals there. So why is the Minister falling behind in keeping that staff intact? I am not saying anything about the building to Almighty sitting over there.

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

Further Return To Question 343-15(3): Staffing Addictions Treatment Positions

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to assure the Member that I would never ever confuse her with anybody else.

---Laughter

She doesn't have to refer to me as Almighty; Michael is fine.

---Laughter

She has raised a very specific issue from her information that she has obtained, so I will commit to follow up on the particulars of the two positions, but I would once again suggest that it is not because people don't care, we have written it off, it is a waste of time. I would suggest that efforts are being made. There is funding for those positions for a reason, because those positions are needed. As the Minister, I am going to commit that they are needed and we will take the necessary steps to staff them, if they are vacant.

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

Supplementary To Question 343-15(3): Staffing Addictions Treatment Positions

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think if we learned anything this week it is that our Members on this side are being chastised all the time for raising totally legitimate questions. Mr. Speaker, the Minister has not answered the question. I would like him to commit to seeing to do a better job to hire all of the mental health and addictions workers in the communities, because there are a lot of vacancies there and they are the key part to dealing with this community-wide and NWT-wide problem. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 343-15(3): Staffing Addictions Treatment Positions

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is a forum for debate, and, as Ministers, we often have to answer and respond to very often provocative and sometimes inflammatory comments, the way they are prefaced and the way they are laid out. We tend to do that in a measured way. The Member asked a question about the positions. I have committed in my last answer to finding out the detail. I will restate that commitment to the Member. Thank you.

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

Question 344-15(3): Development Of The Federal Strategy For The North

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We had a very interesting day yesterday led by the Premier's report from his meetings, along with our Minister of Finance in Ottawa. I would like to direct a couple of questions to the Premier with regard to the processes underway for putting together long-term strategies for the North.

We all know, Mr. Speaker, in the Throne speech of some weeks ago that the initiative was undertaken by the federal government to look at a new pan-northern strategic plan for Canada's northern regions. The Premier supplied us with some further information on this. One of the points being that was there could be a launch of this initiative with the Prime Minister by late November. That's not too far from now. I would like to ask the Premier, Mr. Speaker, what steps or opportunities are there going to be for northerners for designing a framework for this strategy? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 344-15(3): Development Of The Federal Strategy For The North

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned yesterday, we had a meeting with the Prime Minister. Following that, our officials and federal officials met. They began the process of framing out what this might look like, Mr. Speaker. I am meeting this afternoon with some of my officials to look at the work they've done and also to provide them with some advice on some of the things I would like to see in it. The officials will be meeting in Ottawa again early next week to continue to frame a bit of a framework, a communications plan, a strategy, some of the short-term deliverables that we might be considering and also a consultation strategy about how we would go about consulting with all of the parties who may be interested. The objective here, as I stated, Mr. Speaker, is to try to put together something that might be announced in late November.

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

Supplementary To Question 344-15(3): Development Of The Federal Strategy For The North

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is an ambitious target. I am glad to hear the Premier talk today, as he did yesterday, about jointly developing the strategy with aboriginal and northern residents. It seems very ambitious. I wanted to explore this a bit further because we are also included in this with our sister territories, the Yukon and Nunavut. Is there a process by which we are expected to or we want to bring together some joint agendas here as the three northern territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 344-15(3): Development Of The Federal Strategy For The North

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, yes. Last week we met with representatives from Nunavut and the Yukon, as well as with the federal officials. So there have been some discussions there. Mr. Speaker, our government will most likely be using Melody Morrison, who works in our Ottawa office, as a lead on this at the officials' level. I am not sure who the other territories will use. We also, Mr. Speaker, want to make sure we understand what we are doing here with the federal government. We also need to begin to talk with some of the other stakeholders in the North, including the aboriginal governments. We haven't gotten to that stage yet. It is an ambitious schedule. It is a short time frame, but I think we need to push on with this if we are going to have something that we can announce and something we can see quick, short-term deliverables on soon. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 344-15(3): Development Of The Federal Strategy For The North

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would certainly like to see a plan that is well designed and that everybody buys into as our goal, instead of speed on this one. I look forward to the developing plan.

Mr. Speaker, it was kind of interesting as well to hear about the progress of the northern strategy, but also the creation of an expert panel which is going to be looking at equalization and territorial formula financing models. These are two very big and far-reaching processes, Mr. Speaker. Is there any potential for conflict between the northern strategy process and this one regarding financing and economics for the NWT? Could there be a potential for conflict? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 344-15(3): Development Of The Federal Strategy For The North

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I don't see any conflict between the panel that is going to be set up or panels that will be set up. That panel or panels will look at equalization, the formula, and a panel will also be looking at the territorial financing formula. Those are pretty specific guidelines for the panel. There may be some good linkages between the work that they do and what we do in the long-term strategy and one may complement the other, but I don't think they will be tripping over each other. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. A short supplementary, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary To Question 344-15(3): Development Of The Federal Strategy For The North

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Aside from assigning some people to this program or to the process of designing the strategy, I wonder if there is any anticipation or are we going to be called on to actually put dollars on the table to help us proceed. Will this cost us anything, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 344-15(3): Development Of The Federal Strategy For The North

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I wasn't really clear if Mr. Braden is referring to the panel or to the development of the strategy? Panel? Mr. Speaker, in terms of the strategy, then the only dollars we'll be putting out on this that I can foresee will be our own staff working on it and our travel or those sorts of related costs. Mr. Speaker, in saying that, I have to acknowledge that our staff in the Executive and many departments are very busy. People are feeling somewhat overloaded in a lot of cases. I want to be careful to say we will use our staff time, but if we need to speed this up and it's necessary to engage others, then we will. I don't intend to go to some big consulting contract to do this. I think we have a lot of expertise right here; it's a matter of finding the time to do it.

Mr. Speaker, as I said before, I feel that we can't delay in doing this. If it means extra resources, let's get the extra resources and get on with it quickly. This is an important exercise. We have a lot of major projects going on in the Northwest Territories and potentially happening. We need to get this strategy in place quickly and I certainly emphasize that with the Prime Minister. We are prepared

to roll up our sleeves and get on with it. It's too critical to our development. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Time for question period has expired. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to return to item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery.

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

REVERT TO ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize and at the same time thank the Hay River South Pages for the excellent job they have done serving the House and the Legislative Assembly.

---Applause

My Pages are Kevin Storoz who is a Grade 9 student at Diamond Jenness Secondary School in Hay River and Michael Morgan who is a Grade 8 student at Diamond Jenness Secondary School. Also, Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Mikey's mom, Wendy Morgan, who is in the visitor's gallery today. Wendy is celebrating five years in my office, not so important as the fact that she just celebrated 50 years in Las Vegas last week. Happy birthday, Wendy.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would just like to recognize one of the Pages from my constituency, Ms. Tessa Moss. Also, I would like to thank all the Pages for their hard work here over the last few weeks.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 7, written questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

ITEM 7: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Written Question 66-15(3): Programs And Services Available To Disabled Persons

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Social Services.

1. Please provide a list of programs and services that are offered to disabled persons in communities and larger centers and by which government department.
2. Within the health authorities of the Northwest Territories, what types of programs and services are coordinated by the authorities?

3. Where do all the disabled funding services come from to serve the disabled people in the North; federal, territorial or non-government agencies?
4. What NGO agencies are delivering programs or services in small communities?
5. Can the Minister provide a list of the various categories or disabilities in the Sahtu and the number of Sahtu people who are classified under them?

Written Question 67-15(3): Funding For An All-Weather Road In The Sahtu

My question is for the Minister of Transportation.

1. Please provide the latest updated discussion with the federal Minister regarding future funding for an all-weather road in the Sahtu.
2. In the absence of federal funding, would the Minister consider a pilot project in the Sahtu for next year, using the community construction approach?
3. What are the department plans to improve the highway roads in the Sahtu, which would show an improvement from their present conditions?

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

Written Question 68-15(3): Trends In Drug-Related Offences

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

Please provide data available regarding trends in drug-related offences, court appearances, jail terms, Legal Aid files and social services intervention, such as child apprehensions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ITEM 8: RETURNS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Return To Written Question 32-15(3): Appeal Process For Housing Program Clients

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, I have Return to Written Question 32-15(3) asked by Mr. Menicoche on October 15, 2004, to the Honourable David Krutko, Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation regarding the appeal process for housing program clients.

The Housing Corporation has separate appeal processes for public housing and homeownership. The Homeownership Program application process has internal checks and balances built in. Applications are reviewed by both district officials as well as the district director. Clients who disagree with a decision can provide additional information and request a reassessment. Throughout the process, senior officials at the corporation's headquarters in Yellowknife are available to offer assistance.

Public housing tenants have the option of appealing to the local housing organization board of directors if they have issues with decisions that affect their tenancy. Boards

usually meet on a monthly basis and the meetings are open to tenants and members of the public.

Public housing tenants also have the option of appealing issues to the rental officer. The rental officer is a function of the Department of Justice, and is readily accessible to both tenants and landlords. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to opening address. Item 10, petitions. Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Minister of RWED, Mr. Bell.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 88-15(3): Community Futures Program 2003-2004 Annual Report

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled Opportunities for Prosperity, Community Futures Program 2003-04 Annual Report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Item 13, tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

ITEM 14: NOTICES OF MOTION

Motion 23-15(3): Establishment Of Addictions Treatment Centres

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, November 1, 2004, I will move the following motion:

Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, that the government establish a centre in the NWT dedicated to treating addictions to drugs other than alcohol;

And further that the government establish an addictions treatment centre specifically for youth;

And furthermore that the government reopen residential treatment centres in Yellowknife and Inuvik.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time, I will seek unanimous consent to deal with this motion today.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Item 14, notices of motion. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Motion 24-15(3): Extended Adjournment Of The House To February 9, 2005

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, November 1, 2004, I will move the following motion:

I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Great Slave, that notwithstanding Rule 4, that when this House adjourns on Friday, October 29, 2004, it shall be adjourned until Wednesday, February 9, 2005;

And further, that any time prior to February 9, 2005, if the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly, that

the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as it has been duly adjourned to that time.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time, I will seek unanimous consent to deal with this motion today.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motion for first reading of bills.

At this time, Members, the Chair shall call a short break before we go onto the next item on the order paper.

---SHORT RECESS

MR. SPEAKER: I will call the House back to order. Orders of the day, item 16, motions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to deal with the treatment centre motion I gave notice of earlier today.

MR. SPEAKER: the Member is seeking unanimous consent to deal with the motion he gave notice of earlier today. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Please proceed with your motion, Mr. Yakeleya.

ITEM 16: MOTIONS

Motion 23-15(3): Establishment Of Addictions Treatment Centres, Carried

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS addictions to drugs and alcohol continue to devastate many Northwest Territories individuals and families;

AND WHEREAS the use of crack cocaine, heroin and other drugs has increased substantially in Northwest Territories communities in recent years;

AND WHEREAS the numbers of youth addicted to alcohol and drugs is increasing;

AND WHEREAS having the support of family and friends makes the difference between success and failure for many people struggling to overcome addictions;

AND WHEREAS many individuals are forced to seek treatment in southern facilities away from their support networks due to the lack of treatment centres in the Northwest Territories;

AND WHEREAS the residential treatment programs in Inuvik and Yellowknife were discontinued in 1997 and 1999 respectively;

AND WHEREAS the only remaining residential treatment centre in the Northwest Territories is Nats'ejee K'eh on the Hay River Dene Reserve;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, that the government establish a centre in the NWT dedicated to treating addictions to drugs other than alcohol;

AND FURTHER that the government establish an addictions treatment centre specifically for youth;

AND FURTHERMORE the government re-open residential treatment centres in Yellowknife and Inuvik. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. A motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this motion is one I fully support. It's been an issue I have supported. Earlier today, the Honourable David Krutko made reference to the challenges of our young people and it's something I support 100 percent.

Mr. Speaker, since the time of the cavemen who stomped on the bridge and started howling at the moon, we have, as a society, wrestled with the effects of alcohol in our communities and as a whole.

We, as legislators and leaders, need to be educated on the devastating effects of alcohol abuse and the costs we pay either as a government, communities, families or personally with regard to the effects of alcohol and drugs.

Mr. Speaker, we are dealing with drugs such as crack cocaine, heroine and other drugs that are on the market in the communities. I would like to take a proactive approach in establishing a foundation where people can go to get their lives straightened out and be the person they are meant to be.

Mr. Speaker, it's hard to see our young people deal with troubling times who deal with alcohol and that's the best method they know in coping with life. Can we provide them with something better, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, we need to support our families who are dealing with addictions such as drugs and alcohol. There are major dollars spent in the Northwest Territories in sending clients down to treatment centres. I guess I question the government in terms of why they closed down these treatment centres in light of the potential of resource development happening in the Northwest Territories.

Now we are told that Nats'ejee K'eh will be reprofiled and readjusted to fit the current issues in the North. I wait to see that report.

Mr. Speaker, getting a drug centre with specific programs and services that only deals with drugs will help because one day our youth will be sitting in our chairs where we are sitting. It's something we have to do for our youth today and this is the reason why I support this motion, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

---Applause

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I, too, support the motion that's before us today. I can't speak about the drug situation and the need for addiction treatment in Inuvik, but certainly I am supportive of that happening and I know the people of Inuvik would be in

support of that happening. I am more in touch with what is happening here in Yellowknife, being a Yellowknife Member.

Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to mention the fact that -- and Mr. Yakeleya referred to it as well -- when you start adding up what it costs to send people south, what it's costing the Government of the Northwest Territories to send the people to the South, the impact it's having on Stanton Territorial Hospital in terms of dealing with those who have addictions at the hospital and it's taking away from valuable resources that should be dedicated to medical-type things, I don't really understand why the treatment centre in Yellowknife closed to begin with in 1999. I understand it had some difficulties in the running of it or there were some underlying issues there, Mr. Speaker, but I am not sure why it happened the way it did.

As a government, we have to understand that there certainly will be a price to putting up a new treatment centre in Yellowknife. But if it doesn't cost us now, it's going to cost us later in terms of cost to corrections, justice, health care. If you start tallying up those costs, Mr. Speaker, the cost of getting a dedicated treatment facility here certainly will outweigh that.

I also don't understand why it is -- and the Minister has spoken to it before -- about putting money into bricks and mortar. We have a facility on the Detah road, the Somba K'e Lodge, and I don't understand why we can't use that as a treatment facility. That is something I just can't understand.

This is in reference to this motion and it goes back to addictions, but last week when I started talking about addictions, I was out in the community at a restaurant. A young fellow about the age of 16 was working behind the counter and he said, Mr. Ramsay, you are saying some good things in the Legislative Assembly. I want you to keep that up. He said my parents have been married for 19 years and they are breaking up right now because my father is addicted to cocaine. That really stuck with me, Mr. Speaker. The young fellow said there isn't really anything here for my father. This is a run-of-the-mill, middle-class family living in Yellowknife. The impact that they are feeling as a result of an addiction to cocaine is really something that stuck with me then and will stay with me, Mr. Speaker.

Dealing with other constituents that are addicted to crack cocaine, there is really no place for them to turn here in Yellowknife. Having to go south, you have to be close to the support network, your friends, your family, to try to give you that encouragement to seek help and to get help.

I don't know if other Members are aware of this, but right now in Yellowknife, there are more meetings for Narcotics Anonymous, Crack Busters, there are meetings seven nights a week to deal with just drug addictions. There are more meetings to deal with drug addictions than there are for alcohol. It never used to be the case, Mr. Speaker. Drugs are becoming much more prevalent in the city of Yellowknife. With the economic activity that's happening north of the city, the proposed pipeline, there is going to be more disposable income here in the Northwest Territories and I really do support this motion.

I think it's high time that the government look at re-establishing treatment centres. We can't use band-aid solutions any longer, Mr. Speaker. We have to get some

dedicated facilities to deal with what's out there today and what's going to be out there tomorrow. There are many folks out there who are suffering and who are falling through the cracks.

I am in full support of this motion, Mr. Speaker, as I am sure the rest of my colleagues will be as well. Thank you.

---Applause

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am going to speak in favour of the motion. There are some aspects of it that I would like to lend some ideas or some observations to.

First, as Mr. Ramsay has said, I think most of us have encountered some kind of contact, direct or indirect, with the situation that's going on on the streets. I can relate at least to Yellowknife. In fact, just the other night, I was at an evening event at one of the highrise office buildings in downtown Yellowknife. As I left the building at about 8:30 or so, around the corner were four young people smoking up something and the bit of conversation I was able to catch, it looked like they were coaching or training one of their friends in how to use this particular drug. It's there. This was not in some alley snuck behind a building in an old construction site. This was very much in the glare of the streetlights and the parking lamps around this building.

In Yellowknife, Mr. Speaker, we've also seen a really disturbing trend, this phenomenon called the house party where somewhere along the line, someone's parents or family are out of town. Word gets around that there is a party in this house and, within minutes, thanks to the technology of cell phones, there can be over 100 people at this house. Mr. Speaker, this is not just a loud, noisy neighbourhood party, but what can we do to trash this house, to destroy it as quickly as we can. There is something remarkably disturbing and foreign to what we've come to know as peaceful communities.

Those are a couple of experiences that I know of late, Mr. Speaker, to the motion where it talks about establishing treatment centres. The Minister, Mr. Miltenberger, in response to some questioning over the last couple of days, has referred to the addictions and the Mental Health and Addictions Strategy that is in place. One of the fundamentals of this strategy is that we need to find solutions and approaches at the community level, in the environments in which the drug and alcohol culture exists and in which it is growing. As we have all talked about and worried about, the tendency that we seem to have here in the North when somebody comes forward for treatment is to ship them outside. Go to a southern institution for a dry-out program, a detox program or whatever. Then people come back into the community, probably more or less into the same environment that they came out of, where the influences of their friends, of crime, of life on the street are. How are they going to really be able to recover if this is the environment? We need to change things at the community and the street level, and this is where the motion -- and I entirely respect where my colleagues are going -- but the idea that we have to keep building facilities and keep putting up institutions, I hope that's not fully the intent here.

In fact the Somba K'e Healing Centre was put up with that specific direction and hope that it would indeed be a healing facility. It has fallen on tough times for a number of reasons that we don't need to go into and I don't even know if I understand all of them. But there is a multimillion dollar facility that is closed and, from my understanding, has deteriorated to the point it might not even be useful to anybody anymore. This has been a story of building facilities in many parts of the North. We can build them, we can spend lots of money, it's easy to go and cut a ribbon, but to run these places and really make them effective is where we seem to have our problems.

I guess if we are looking for the alternatives, it's in the start and seemingly mushrooming response to organizations like Crack Busters here in Yellowknife, an initiative between community partners, including the Tree of Peace and the Salvation Army. This is something that I think really should be leading us to where we want to go. These are programs that started, if you will, at the street level with direct contact with the people involved, and the response to their initiatives seems to be remarkable. So this is where I really fundamentally believe the answers lie, at the community and the street level, and what can we do to initiate programs that will take hold in those environments, beyond what we might be able to do with creating new facilities.

Mr. Speaker, at the very least we should be acknowledging that our ability to cope has not kept pace with the very rapid transition in the economy up here. I think when we look back a decade or so and we saw the first indication that yes, there will be diamond mines, yes, they will have an enormous impact on our economy, I don't think we could have anticipated the enormity of the social consequence of what that new wealth is bringing us; of what the wealth in the neighbouring province of Alberta, for instance, that has been a super-heated economy as well, and it's no secret when that kind of thing happens, you are going to get these kinds of impacts.

Perhaps one thing that we should be considering is joining up with our counterparts in Alberta. It seems that we understand that the highway is one of the main supply routes for drugs. What can we do with the hundreds of kilometres in northern Alberta that is part of this traffic as well? Maybe there is part of our answer, as well.

Mr. Speaker, if there is one final thing that I have come to understand in my experience here with the Social Programs committee and talking to professionals and experts, it is that the range and the complexity of addictions is extraordinary. Alcoholism in itself is very diverse, the consequences can be extraordinarily diverse, but now with so much different chemical and drug material going around, the addictions are not simply a one-stop-shop kind of thing.

We probably in the North will always be challenged, extremely challenged, in being able to provide rehabilitation and detox services on a regional basis, on a youth or an age basis, as the motion suggests. These are all extraordinarily expensive and hard-to-design and hard-to-maintain programs. But the spirit of the motion is that we have got to realize that we haven't kept up with the consequences and with the realities that are out there. We need to speed up our efforts to deliver programs that really are going to help, especially as my colleague, Mr. Ramsay, pointed out, when somebody is asking for help and we cannot put anything at their disposal. That is

probably where we are failing most dramatically, is when people want help and we are not able to give it. That is where we should start. Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a year ago during the election campaign, I heard loudly and clearly in the city of Yellowknife, not just my riding of Yellowknife Centre, but in the city of Yellowknife as a whole, about the need for a treatment centre. The people were screaming for it, Mr. Speaker. People were asking for it. MLAs have been asking about it for a long time. So this motion, I think, speaks to the intent of what folks have been asking for.

What better job than to serve our people of the Northwest Territories? Well, our people are asking us to serve them by doing their bidding. Mr. Speaker, we are asking for what they are asking for. We are asking for a treatment centre. So let's listen to the people, let's do what they are asking for. Supporting this motion is the only choice I think we have.

Mr. Speaker, jail or tolerance is not a way of dealing with this solution. By allowing people to destroy their lives, by turning a blind eye, is not a way of dealing with this situation. I don't think that's fair, I don't think it's fair for this Assembly to ignore that. Yes, we do offer programs, and I have spoken to the Minister of this problem. Yes, we do offer some programs and even in the city of Yellowknife, some in Hay River and other places, but we also send people down south.

We have a treatment centre rotting out on the road just outside of Yellowknife, so we need to take drastic action and we need to start dealing with these things. This impacts all of our communities, Mr. Speaker, big and small. It doesn't really matter; we should be thinking of people as people, we shouldn't be thinking about centres, we shouldn't even be talking about size of communities, we should be talking about the personal problem of this. The fact is I think we could be taking a better charge.

Mr. Speaker, if I may, speaking, of course, directly to the motion, I can tell you that recently a father had told me about the lack of a treatment centre in Yellowknife and in the Northwest Territories to treat his son. He paid out of his own pocket to send his son to Toronto. He didn't feel that he had time to go through the lengthy process to get his son into a treatment program who knows where and how, and he felt that the services weren't offered here to meet his son's needs locally. His son had an alcohol and drug addiction and it was serious.

The father has paid between \$15,000 and \$20,000 to send his son to Toronto. He paid it out of his own pocket, as I've said. He had been recently asked to go down for family day in support of his son because the centre said he was doing great. Well, let me first say he didn't go through the normal process, so the process says they can't support this family in any way. But let me put it this way; he wouldn't be still in Toronto and having good success if he didn't have a problem. They wouldn't keep him in the centre in Toronto if he shouldn't have been there, so from the words of the father in this particular case, his son's doing great, and he wanted to strike while

the iron was hot. Because when his son wanted to be treated, why would a father wait?

Mr. Speaker, I say again, let's start by giving people what they have asked for. Nobody is complaining about having too many treatment centres, people are asking for a treatment centre. So let's give them, again, what they want. We can meet our stakeholder needs and I think we would do that through that process.

Mr. Speaker, when I worked at the Yellowknife Correctional Centre many years ago, as a guard there, without a statistical backing, I can tell you from my experience at that centre that 75 percent of those people were there due to some reason that was connected to drugs and alcohol. People were killing people because they were drunk or drugged or trying to get drugs or alcohol, people were doing nasty things to other people. These are terrible crimes. We need ways to deal with these folks before they end up taking drastic steps. We don't need to wait until then.

Mr. Speaker, if the government needs to verify this, they can go to their own records. They could go to the courts and see how many people are here on crimes related to drugs and alcohol. It wouldn't take long to find out that most of the people that are in the correction centre are there because of things like drugs and alcohol.

Do we need to sell you this problem? Well, I would like to say today, no, we don't. I think we know what their problem is and we need to take action on this problem. Would I endorse a special committee on this? Goodness, no. I think that's another waste of time. We know what the problem is. We need to support this motion to establish centres here in the Northwest Territories to take care of our people locally. I spoke to the Tree of Peace; they said in their experience that people treated locally come out at a much higher success rate than people sent south to Edmonton or wherever.

Mr. Speaker, alcohol and drugs is a legacy of abuse that I no longer want to allow to continue in the Northwest Territories. It's time that we put that in the history books and we talk about a clean future for all of us. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in favour of this motion, just in particular to the aspect for treating addictions specifically for youth, Mr. Speaker. I have teenage daughters and it frightens me to think that there is no current system, should there be a need, and I'm sure that there is a need by many other parents in Yellowknife and throughout our Northwest Territories, Mr. Speaker.

Throughout the last two-and-a-half weeks here we have been talking about development and some of the impacts coming from it and, of course, there were a lot of negative impacts that comes from it, and a lot of it will be just as the Members were speaking about today, of the drugs and alcohol. There is going to be an increase of supply just because there is a lot more money, and a lot of it does dwindle down to our children, Mr. Speaker. I have known some people that even in restricted communities will bring in alcohol and drugs, thinking they're only for themselves.

I don't know if they know it or not, but it does make its way down to our youth and to our children in the communities, Mr. Speaker. Just by it being there, they learn how to use it from the adults that are there. So I believe we are going to have to provide the facilities to help them unlearn it.

As also has been said, Mr. Speaker, it's a northern problem and I believe that there should be a northern solution to it. That is why I am in favour of creating our own facility in the North and keeping it in the North, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. To the motion. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to also express my support for this motion, not just due to the fact the intent of the motion is to get an addictions treatment centre in the NWT, Mr. Speaker, but also, as I had stated in my Member's statement, that this is something that has become quite personal now as people who are close to me are being affected by this drug and the addiction that it carries along with it.

I know, Mr. Speaker, that the problem is predominant in our larger urban centres in the NWT, in Yellowknife, Hay River and Inuvik and such, but we also must consider the smaller communities, Mr. Speaker, because I know that these problems related to the lack of support programs and services available are trickling into the smaller communities around the larger centres, where mobility and accessibility are two of these, this type of heavy drug is getting a lot easier for people that have money in their pockets, now that we have development with mining and oil and gas and stuff. Just the fact that we should have something here in the NWT just makes it easier for people to go, it alleviates a lot of apprehension to being sent south, is what a lot of people refer to when going to seek some kind of treatment for their addiction. Just the words "being sent south" have a lot of connotations to it in the way that people will always consider you a lower form in our society because you are being sent south. Therefore, people have a lot of anxiety towards even going to seek support if it entails going to a southern institution. Having it anywhere up in the NWT, we have all our support networks at hand. Places like Stanton and the Tree of Peace and Salvation Army and others, the meetings that Mr. Ramsay was alluding to, that are being held every day, they would be really accessible to anybody around here if they were to be treated locally, and besides the reduction in the government costs, I'm sure, and keeping our dollars in the NWT, has always been a priority of this government.

Just to talk about the facilities that are currently available, we know that they are understaffed and overworked and underfunded and whatnot, and the whole process has become quite overwhelming for the people that are in that field of work. Mr. Speaker, I think once we have established the fact that yes, we will get something that is going to be a standalone facility and something that is going to be dealing strictly with this, what I like to refer to as an epidemic, but it could get a lot worse than that I'm sure. We do need some kind of a medical management unit that just strictly deals with this drug, crack cocaine addiction.

Therefore, I am totally supportive of the residential treatment programs, like here in Yellowknife. I can't

mention the Somba K'e centre any more than it has already been mentioned; I am sure the Minister has gotten the point. I hope that all the Members of Cabinet are supportive of this motion and that they hope to see some resolve in making what the people are demanding: immediate government action. I just don't know why this government wouldn't take what is basically the majority of the public demand, to have something local, into consideration. Again, I just want to establish that I am totally in support of this motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. To the motion. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, am rising today to support the motion. I think it's important, Mr. Speaker, that it needed to be considered; I'm glad it's in there.

As you know, there is a lot of seismic and exploration activity going on right now in Inuvik and the Beaufort-Delta, so with that comes drugs and alcohol. So it's important that the government open up a centre in Inuvik. With the coming of the pipeline now, down the road a lot of drugs will follow with it. I know of some cases in my community of Tuktoyaktuk, there are signs of drugs in there, so we have to find ways to tackle this problem.

A lot of my colleagues already said a lot of things about the treatment centre, and I just wanted to rise to say that I am totally in full support of the motion. Thank you.

---Applause

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, obviously I rise to speak in favour of this motion. Mr. Speaker, I guess I should preface it by saying that it seems to be that the Members on the other side are feeling a little bit under attack and maybe it appears as though we're not saying they're doing anything good at all. So let me say if I'm pointing out anything that they're falling short on, it's not to say that we're saying that they're not doing anything good at all. They're otherwise perfect, I'm sure.

---Applause

Except for the issue I'm dealing with at the time. So, yes, I am willing to give them all the credit. But with respect to the addictions issue, Mr. Speaker, I really believe that the silence by this government with this issue is quite deafening. It is really out there and I've raised this question and raised this issue many times in the House and I could go back to Hansard and give you examples of at least 10 cases or as many times as I've asked the questions, the Minister of Health and Social Services will say we have a plan and we have to take careful, measured steps. We have to be strategic about this. The Minister has been studying and writing up a plan for two years in the last Assembly and at least a year here. I really don't think he has the luxury of doing it for another three years in terms of a plan.

Mr. Speaker, let me tell you about what the community is doing. Obviously everybody knows the urgency of this. There is a group called Yellowknife Coalition for

Community Wellness that was set up three years ago or so. It is completely volunteer based. Within that they have what is called the COPS program. This is a community group in Yellowknife who has had enough with the violence and vandalism that is going on on the streets and people just wanted to pull up their boots and say they wanted to do something about it. They were able to find all of the equipment they need from the businesses and they patrol our streets at night. I was just talking to one of the organizers and they get no money from the government whatsoever. Not one cent. Now I would say that is one area this government could do something about.

The second thing, Mr. Speaker, I was walking my dogs in my riding of Range Lake. I live across from the school. In the summertime when I walk there I can smell drugs coming out of the backyard of the school. I can see the kids running from there. That has been an issue. I can tell you what the school boards are doing. Just the other day this car stopped by me and said he has been hired as a security...Maybe I shouldn't say this to everybody, but anyway. There is a security that school boards have hired out of their own money to hire a security and his job is to watch all the schools in the city from 8:00 at night until 8:00 in the morning. I believe it's a cost-sharing measure between the two school boards. Now, that is the money the school boards are paying, money that could have gone to the kids in the classrooms, because the communities are feeling they had to do something about it. I don't think this government is going to come with a special warrant to look after that, Mr. Speaker.

I'm telling you, this is all coming from the increased level of drug problems that we have. I was completely shocked two years ago when I went to one of the launching meetings for the Yellowknife Coalition of Community Wellness and I got talking to two women that I grew up with. I used to party with them in my younger years.

---Laughter

Mr. Speaker, I was shocked to learn that they have spent the last 10 years dealing with their girls who got addicted to cocaine. I had no idea that this was going on in my own town. To tell me about how devastating it is to have their kids hooked up on cocaine, who are willing to do anything to get their next fix, who are willing to sell their mother, literally, to get their habit...I'm sorry, but they were engaged in prostitution. All the things that they would not otherwise do and they had to send their kids down south and pay out of their own pocket because they could not get the service they need for young kids in Yellowknife.

Mr. Speaker, I don't mind giving credit to the government where credit is due and one of the things that the government has done lately is that concentration on drinking and driving area. We have almost zero tolerance against drinking and driving, but that is one very narrow area of addiction that we are dealing with. It's even a very narrow area of alcohol addiction. There are a lot of other addictions for us to deal with, Mr. Speaker. I have to concentrate here.

---Laughter

Sorry, Mr. Speaker. I should also say that the Minister of Health and Social Services has done a good job in promoting almost zero tolerance against smoking addiction. We all now know that smoking is bad for us and there's a very aggressive campaign going on to keep the

kids from starting smoking because we know how hard that is. But let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, I don't think there is anything more difficult to quit once they've started -- from the information that I'm getting -- than crack cocaine. I think we all understand young people are up to trying new things. In our day we had our own stuff that was not as harmful as crack cocaine. The worst thing about crack cocaine is that there is no real second chance. It's really important that we make sure the kids don't start in the first place. It's really important to know that this crack cocaine is not just in downtown Yellowknife, but that it's in the suburbs and in the living room of all the houses. It's not discriminatory in any way. It's not just in Yellowknife. It's in Hay River, it's in Inuvik, it's in Norman Wells and it's even in smaller communities like Deline or Fort Providence.

I tell you, if we let this stuff spread without any kind of aggressive campaign, we are going to pay for it. It's going to cost us a lot. Our schools are going to be filled with kids that are being abandoned by their parents who are using drugs, or teenagers who are leaving school because they're hooked on drugs. I think it will do us a lot more good to do something now than to have everybody get hooked on it and pay a lot harsher price for it years down the road.

Mr. Speaker, I mentioned earlier in my Member's statement some of the things that we are already paying for. I don't want the Minister and the government to get the idea that we are asking for a \$10 million alcohol and drug treatment centre or something like that. I am willing to suggest that we could do better with what we are doing already. I've already indicated that the Somba K'e Centre, the government is paying bills to maintain that building. We're paying a mortgage for that building. We can't just wash our hands of it. I cannot tell you how many meetings we have had between the jurisdiction of Health and Social Services, Housing Corporation and whatever arms of the government that have been involved in just dealing with who owns it. I mean, it's just ridiculous and we're spending hundreds of thousands of dollars just to keep that building standing when we could really be putting our heads together to see what we can do about that.

I have mentioned earlier, Mr. Speaker, that government is already spending hundreds of thousands of dollars in sending people down south for treatment. I understand some of them have to go down south. But for all the problems we have and we are a small population and if we get 10,000 of our people or even 5,000 or even 2,000 people addicted to cocaine it could destroy our community. Honestly, I don't think that is being alarmist. We are a very small community and drugs are going into regular people everywhere. If you're going to accuse me of, I don't mind crying wolf or being an alarmist or embellishing. I'd be happy to do that. I think really the time has come and there's no time to plan for five, 10, 15, 20 years.

I just want to say, Mr. Speaker, I think we could turn this into an opportunity. Honestly, we should spend as much time talking about how we deal with our addiction problems as much as we're dealing with how much money we can get out of the federal government. What good is getting all the money and power from Ottawa if our kids are not able to go to school, they are not being fed, and the men are abusing women? We just read in a newspaper article last week that courts are being filled with men who are abusing women because of alcohol addiction. The paper said that, Mr. Speaker. This man

punched his wife outside of a house because she wanted to go home. She didn't want to stay at the party and he punched her four times. That article said almost all of the charges that are being brought forward are because of abuse of alcohol. Alcohol used and abused, drugs used and abused, and gambling used and abused in our communities are killing our people and they are a bundle of slow motion, silent killers. I just want to be really serious about that.

I know this is in the papers and is getting highlighted, but I tell you, I have been raising this issue, and there are many Members in this House who have been raising this for many, many years; at least for five years. None of this is new; it's that things are speeding up. Crack cocaine is not giving us the time to plan and talk about it like marijuana did or even hashish did. It's not the kind of drug where you can do it when you're young and you get over it and then you move on and become a fully functioning citizen. Crack cocaine is not forgiving and we have to stop it. The government has to put in extra money for RCMP. There are lots of things happening, but I'm telling you this is an opportunity for the NWT to set an example for all of Canada. We could be the kind of place where people from down south will send their people up here because we have such a great program, we're on the ball, and we're dealing with it. I'm not even asking for the government to set it up in Yellowknife; they could do it in Inuvik, Hay River, Norman Wells, Deline. There are buildings all around the communities that are sitting empty. I am just asking for the government and the Minister to make a public statement, make an admission that they are totally aware of this problem and that this is totally on the top of their agenda and they're going to have a plan of action.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, I mentioned earlier about the shortage of mental health and addictions workers. The Minister has said on many occasions that he's doing something about it. He has a plan and I have already pointed out that we are really not paying attention in that area as much as government should be required to do if it is committed to delivering the program that they have set out to do. Mr. Speaker, crack cocaine is not only a drug problem, it's not only a social problem, but it is a clinical problem. It needs clinical people who are qualified to deal with chemical addiction. They need people who can write the prescriptions so they are managed clinically by physicians who are qualified to do that. As I stand here, I am told that the recruitment and retention person who is in charge of recruiting and filling positions at the hospital, her contract was not renewed and we are falling behind in this area. I was saying that to indicate that as much as the Minister likes to say, I'm willing to give him credit in that he works hard and is doing a lot of good in a lot of areas. I'm not saying he's not perfect. He's almost perfect...

---Applause

...but in this area, honest to God, Mr. Speaker -- and I think everybody said this really, really well -- we are really running out of time and it's about time that we got on top of it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. To the motion. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak to the motion today, as well. Mr. Speaker, I'm going to take a slightly different approach to this. I think everything we are talking about here today in this debate has to do with treating the symptoms of a much larger issue. I don't stand or sit in judgment of anybody who finds themselves addicted to drugs of any kind. Mr. Speaker, when we talk about treatment and we talk about wholeness and we talk about wellness of our people, we as a government take some great amount of pride in always avoiding the subject of spirituality. We always want to talk about anything about our people. We'll talk about their employability, their education, we'll even debate their sexuality and what rights they should have in relation to that.

But you know one thing that we really, really don't ever want to talk about is spirituality. I think, if I could be so bold as to say, northern people are very spiritual people. I think that when it comes right down to it, when you're talking about the wellness of our people, it comes down to one person who is willing to put something into their bodies that is obviously, as we know, very destructive and they make a choice to do that. That leads me to wonder what kind of pain, what kind of grief, what kind of reality they are trying to detach themselves from. What is it that they think about themselves and what is it that they think about their circumstances in life that would make them do something to destroy themselves? I have to tell you, it's unnatural. Again, I don't say this in any condescending way, but I would not personally knowingly want to do something that would be destructive to my wellbeing or to my life and yet people are doing that in masses.

If this was an issue of public safety, we fine people for not wearing seatbelts. We charge people if they let somebody smoke on the premises of a workplace, in a trailer on a work site. I mean, as a government we have all these answers to everything and yet we don't have the answers to the needs of our people. Far before they ever get addicted to drugs and alcohol and end up in a treatment centre they make a choice. They make a choice to partake in this kind of a thing which we know the outcome of is extremely destructive; not only for them, but on their families and on our communities and our society here in the North.

I would like to, I guess today, in light of this motion and in light of the problem which does seem to be growing in magnitude, and seemingly our inability as a government to respond to these people with compassion, I would like to encourage our government to take another look at why we -- and I say spirituality in the broadest context, I'm not saying it in a prescriptive manner, but everybody needs to be at peace with themselves and how they find that is their own choice as well. Mr. Speaker, I think we need to spend more time talking to people who have found their way out of addictions, who have found solutions, who have found answers. We need to listen to that. I don't think we should discard it when it relates to people who find spiritual wholeness, however they find that; whether it's through going to Alcoholics Anonymous and relating it as to what they might call a higher power or whatever. I think the people in the North have been exposed to numerous and a succession of very hurtful and harmful things and for whatever reason our statistics prove that we are more susceptible as northerners to these kinds of activities which are so destructive.

I would just challenge our government and encourage our government, when we talk about treatment let's talk about a whole person. Let's not just talk about their medical condition and detoxifying. Let's get over this barrier and this hurdle. We have to talk about the issues of how they feel about themselves when they're alone in the quietness of their own selves. How do they feel about themselves? What makes them want to destroy themselves? Mr. Speaker, I think that has to do with people's spiritual wellbeing and with that I will be supporting the motion. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. To the motion. I'll allow Mr. Yakeleya some closing comments on the motion.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, fellow colleagues. In terms of supporting the motion that I put forward, Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is that in today's reality there are drugs coming into our communities. It's being shipped up either by the boats or the transportation trucks over the winter roads to our communities in the south here coming through various forms. Mr. Speaker, I know the power of addiction. I just took up a challenge by the honourable Member, Mr. Miltenberger, on Monday. I and the Member for Nahendeh gave up smoking. It's very powerful. I'm a former smoker and it took me a long time to say I'm going to give it up. Finally, I did it.

---Applause

I can tell you, the power of addiction just wants to take it over. I have sympathy for people who are dealing with cocaine and crack and heroine and people dealing with other drugs in their lives. You know, we were born to have a good life. Having addictions in our life did something for us at that time and now I'm finding I don't need it in my life anymore. There's something else. Mrs. Groenewegen hit it on the button about spirituality

It's very personal and I don't want to get too much into it. However, that's part of the process of dealing with the addiction and I believe that many of our young people are dealing with that. So, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the youth program, also, and that we want to give our youth a chance. Give them a chance; let's invest in them like we are investing into big issues of pipeline and airports and facilities such as the hospitals. Let's invest in our children. Let's put some real dollars on the table for our children.

---Applause

Take those dollars and put them to use. When we do that, I believe that the dividends are going to pay greatly amongst ourselves. One day, I say again, those youth are going to be sitting in our chairs and they are going to be running our government. So I think that's a good way to go.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to say to the government to reconsider looking at the reopening of the facilities in Yellowknife and Inuvik and look at the impacts of the development that's going to come down the valley and give some hope to the people in our communities that need to look at some of their issues in their life.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make a closing comment that I heard on TV where someone said let's treat the souls and not the drugs. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

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

---Carried

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 16, motions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to deal with the motion I gave earlier today.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to deal with the motion he gave notice of earlier today. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Yakeleya, you may deal with your motion.

Motion 24-15(3): Extended Adjournment Of The House To February 9, 2005, Carried

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Great Slave, that notwithstanding Rule 4, that when this House adjourns on Friday, October 29, 2004, it shall be adjourned until Wednesday, February 9, 2005;

AND FURTHER, that any time prior to February 9, 2005, if the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Executive Council and the Members of the Legislative Assembly, that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as it has been duly adjourned to that time.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. A motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to speak against the motion that will have us adjourn until February. This session was scheduled to go until November 4th and I speak in favour of that because I would like to see all MLAs continue the opportunity to hold the government's feet to the fire on asking questions. I find, in my opinion, as an MLA it's very difficult to get the government to move with those stone legs, those lead feet I was talking about earlier today, without pressing them hard with questions in the public and we're missing that public opportunity. So I'll be voting against this motion to adjourn until February. I think we are missing four valuable days to hold their feet and demand answers and demand quality responses for our people of the Northwest Territories. So I won't be voting in favour as I did the last time. I did not vote against unanimous consent in respect for all my Members

who do feel it's time to adjourn, but that's how I feel. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

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

---Carried

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 16, motions. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

Motion 22-15(3): Issuance Of Special Warrants, Carried

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight has adopted as its vision "a strong, effective consensus government that has the confidence of the people of the NWT;"

AND WHEREAS the Government of the Northwest Territories strategic plan identifies enhancing the fiscal responsibility, effectiveness and credibility of governments through openness and transparency as a core value;

AND WHEREAS the Financial Administration Act requires that all Members of the Legislative Assembly be given 14 days' notice in advance of the Financial Management Board recommending guarantees or indemnities having maximum liabilities exceeding \$500,000;

AND WHEREAS the Financial Administration Act allows the Financial Management Board to recommend to the Commissioner special warrants without any prior notice to Members of the Legislative Assembly;

AND WHEREAS to date for fiscal year 2004-2005 the government has submitted nearly \$25 million in special warrants;

AND WHEREAS Regular Members have raised concerns with the government's broad powers to authorize expenditures through special warrants and the lack of opportunity for Members to debate the merits of the expenditures until after the fact;

AND WHEREAS there are few circumstances where expenditures are so urgently required that they could not be delayed long enough to provide notice to Members of the Legislative Assembly;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable member for Nahendeh, that the government bring forward amendments to the Financial Administration Act at the next sitting of this Assembly that would place a cap on special warrants, and that would require that all Members be given reasonable advance notice of special warrants prior to their issuance.

---Applause

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when we all ran for office a lot of the catch phrases that we heard of accountability, transparency, responsibility, Mr. Speaker, are part of the crux of this motion that's before us today. It goes back to the expenditure of \$3.4 million of public funds that, as Regular Members, we never had a chance to debate that publicly, and to me that's not right. How we correct that right is probably a motion like the one that's before us today. We did have some briefings -- to the government's credit they did brief us -- but I'd like to say there was never an opportunity for these dollars to be debated publicly. They are completely outside the budgetary process, and for a government to spend that type of money without that kind of debate taking place in public I think is irresponsible, Mr. Speaker.

Hopefully this motion that is before us today will lend some credibility to the process, we'll get some responsibility into the process and I'm looking forward to my colleagues and their comments on this motion and I think it's a step in the right direction. We have to ensure that we have the public's confidence in us to govern and when we do something that happened very recently with this expenditure of \$3.4 million, those are the kinds of things, Mr. Speaker, that erode that public confidence in us. As stewards of the public purse, I'd like to say that I do support this motion and I look forward to hearing from my colleagues on it. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to speak briefly in regard to the motion. I will honestly say that I believe the motion will help start a process where we will fix the FAA; that's the Financial Administration Act. I believe that our present government, although a minority government and also known as a consensus government, does act and govern like a majority government, although the numbers are quite the opposite, maybe Ottawa can take lessons from how our government as a minority government governs as if it is a majority government.

Mr. Speaker, this motion will say that they need to consult more. Mr. Speaker, earlier I had asked informally to someone on the government side about having a mini session in August so we could have further consultation and more public process on these types of issues, such as special warrants and supplementary appropriations, because we need to get them out in the public eye. We need to have them debated sooner. It's been almost five months since the end of our June session, so we haven't seen bills asking for money for that period. So they just kind of show up on our desk just before session here in August, long after most of money has been spent. We need to include a process. This motion starts to fix that problem in the process and I agree with the process. Long after this money is spent, we have very little to say other than try to say no. If we say no it creates ripples and I don't think that's appropriate. So this motion will amend, in my mind, or I should say start amending the Financial Administration Act, which is truly the number one process that needs to be corrected. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak very briefly in support of this motion. Mr. Speaker, I support this because I believe this is one more step and a more formal step to reiterate the concerns that the Members of this House have about the way the rules about special warrants are set out as they exist now, Mr. Speaker. Also, I must tell you I was quite -- what's the right word, because I don't want to be overdramatic -- I was quite surprised yesterday by the statements made by the Minister of Finance in response to the debates we had. I'm reading the responses from the Minister of Finance, as well as Mr. Dent, who appeared before us. I don't get the feeling that the Ministers on that side really understand the deep concerns we have on this side of the House.

Mr. Speaker, we debated the supplementary bill for three or four days. I thought the concerns that were raised were very legitimate, not politically motivated. I don't understand what that means. It certainly was not a personal attack on the credibility of the Minister of Finance, which is what he indicated in yesterday's debate and it's written in the Hansard. Mr. Speaker, I take it though as valid what the Minister of Finance said, which is that all the money that he brought forward under the supplementaries is within the rules and guidelines. There is nothing that he is doing outside of the rules. I accept that and if that is the case, then there is something wrong with the rules. This is what the motion is trying to indicate.

A government, as the rules exist now, could actually bring supplementary appropriations for half of the money. They could bring it for half-a-billion dollars if they wanted, if such an emergency was to happen. All we could do on this side of the House is to just rubber stamp it. We can't really do anything about it. We can't debate the merits of it. We could just go on and on and on and in the end they know that the money is committed, the money is spent and they are following the rules. Too bad, so sad. Mr. Speaker, in consensus government I don't think that is acceptable.

I understand that under the system we have, the Members on this side have a lot more say and a lot more input than any other jurisdiction. But as long as we have this system and as long as we're operating under a consensus system of government and as long as we're supposed to have a real and qualitative input into this process, I believe it is essential and crucial that changes be made to the Financial Administration Act as is indicated in this motion to say that there has to be some kind of cap. They cannot bring in multimillion, multiyear capital projects, for example, without going through us. The rules, as they exist now, Mr. Speaker, say that the government cannot move money over \$500,000 without talking to the Legislature. Well, they could do special warrants of multimillions without ever talking to us.

I support this motion in its merit and I think it sends a very strong indication that the Members on this side have awakened to what's going on and they're not going to take it anymore and they expect changes next time around. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. Mr. Ramsay, I'll allow you closing comments on your motion.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to thank my colleagues for their support of this motion. I know the Finance Minister yesterday did make reference to us, and I didn't want him to take it personally that we were questioning how this money was spent or why it was spent. We understand the government has a role to play and that's to run the government. They're going to need to spend money, Mr. Speaker, but we'd just like to know about it. We'd like to know how it's happening and I think that's the crux of this motion. I thank my colleagues for their support here today on ensuring that we do have some knowledge of what is happening, especially when the government is spending, in this case, over \$3 million. It's important that we, as Regular Members, know what's happening. If we do get questions from the public we know how to answer them. I could go on and on, but I won't, Mr. Speaker. Thank you and thanks to my colleagues.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. To the motion. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is 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. Item 20, report of Committee of the Whole. Item 21, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, will you please ascertain whether the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, the Honourable Glenna Hansen, is prepared to enter the Chamber to assent to bills?

Assent To Bills

COMMISSIONER (Hon. Glenna Hansen): Please be seated. Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly, as Commissioner of the Northwest Territories I am pleased to assent to the following bills: Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Legal Profession Act; Bill 8, Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2004; Bill 9, Write-off of Debts and Assets Act, 2004-2005; Bill 10, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2004-2005; Bill 12, An Act to Amend the Education Act; Bill 13, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2004-2005; and, Bill 14, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2003-2004.

During the summer I was pleased to travel with Premier Handley to the Tlicho gathering in Gameti. It was very empowering to see the people of the Tlicho carry on the traditional use of their land and to see women and children participating in traditional activities. Thank you for hosting such an inspirational gathering.

This year is the 25th anniversary of the Dempster Highway, connecting the people of the Beaufort-Delta to their neighbours in the Yukon. This road has provided access for visitors to this beautiful region of the Northwest Territories and has allowed for some of the necessities of life to be brought into our Beaufort-Delta communities. The Dempster Highway is an integral part of our lives in this region, and I was delighted to celebrate the 25th anniversary with the Members of this House and the communities this summer.

Two strong northern women who have made a positive difference to the people of the Northwest Territories have been recognized with national awards. I am talking about our Member of Parliament, the Honourable Ethel Blondin-Andrew, and Ms. Nellie Cournoyea, president of the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation. Ms. Blondin-Andrew was the recipient of the Circle of Honour Esquao Award in May this year. Just this week, Ms. Cournoyea was named Canadian Energy Person of the Year by the Energy Council of Canada. My congratulations to you both.

As we look around this Chamber and see the colourful poppy wreath, let us take a moment to reflect on the sacrifices our defence personnel continue to make to ensure the world is a safer place, not only for Canadians but for all citizens of the world. Without their selflessness and heroism, we would not be able to be here undertaking our work in the name of democracy and freedom, and we thank them most deeply.

I also want to acknowledge all of our frontline workers who find themselves in challenging situations in the course of their duties. I would particularly like to remember Yellowknife Parole Officer Louise Pargeter who tragically was killed in the course of her work, and I send my deepest condolences to her family.

I would also like to remember Frank Steen, his son Paul, and Ronald Rufus and his son Kyle who left their home on a hunting trip this summer and have not returned. I send my thoughts and prayers to the families of the four lost hunters, and to the whole community of Tuktoyaktuk.

In closing, as this is the last time we will be together in the Assembly prior to Christmas, and even though it may seem a little early, I am pleased to be the first to wish Members, their families and constituents the very best for a joyous Christmas season and a healthy and happy New Year. May God bless and keep you safe in your travels. Mahsi.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Orders of the day for Wednesday, February 9, 2005, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees

12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motion
15. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
17. First Reading of Bills
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. As we adjourn for an extended period, I would like to note that this does not mean that we are all on vacation.

---Laughter

Ministers, Members and committees and your Speaker of this House still have a very busy schedule ahead in the next few weeks prior to the holiday season. I wish you Godspeed in your travels and good judgment in your deliberations as you go about this work.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Her Honour the Commissioner for the reception she held last Wednesday on the occasion of the opening of her new office, and for her kind words here today.

As well, congratulations are extended to our former Clerk, Mr. David Hamilton, on his recent appointment as a member of the National Energy Board. Mr. Hamilton has resigned as the Northwest Territories Chief Electoral Officer. I am pleased to announce that Mr. Glen McLean will perform the duties of Chief Electoral Officer for the upcoming Inuvik Twin Lakes by-election.

I would also like to acknowledge our Pages and their contribution during this sitting. These students from Range Lake North School and St. Joseph School in Yellowknife, and Diamond Jenness School in Hay River, carry out a very important role in the operation of this Assembly and we greatly appreciate their efforts.

---Applause

Lastly, I want to convey to each and every one of you, your families and your constituents, a heartfelt wish for a safe and joyous holiday season. I would like to remind Members that it is very easy to get all wrapped up in our very busy jobs, but that it is very important to take some leisurely time to spend with friends and family and I encourage you to do that.

I would ask Members that we always be mindful of those less fortunate than ourselves. God bless you all until we meet again in the New Year. This House stands adjourned until Wednesday, February 9, 2005, at 1:30 p.m.

---Applause

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

