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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Wednesday, February 9, 2005****Members Present**

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

ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good afternoon, colleagues, and welcome back to the continuation of the Third Session of the 15th Legislative Assembly. Also a warm welcome to our visitors in the gallery. I trust that you all enjoyed the short break during the holiday season, a well-deserved break from the rigors of public life.

I would like to offer my personal best wishes for a happy and healthy New Year for you, your loved ones and all of your constituents. I would also like to extend a very warm welcome, on behalf of all Members of this House, to our newest Member, Mr. Robert McLeod.

---Applause

Welcome, Mr. McLeod. On behalf of this House, I would also like to express my sincere condolences to all those who have lost loved ones since we were last together. As we embark on this budget session, I would like to acknowledge, on behalf of the Legislative Assembly, the tireless efforts of the government employees, officials, Ministers, Assembly staff and standing committee members in contributing to the budget development process. I know the last month-and-a-half or so has been a very busy time for all of you. I look forward to a very busy session over the next few weeks. I hope to hear some very good debates on issues that are important to all the people of the Northwest Territories and discussions that lead to positive, informed decisions. I ask only that you conduct yourselves within the rules that you have set down for this House and continue to respect the dignity of the House and all its Members.

Now it is my duty to advise the House that I have received the following message from the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories. It reads: "Dear, Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise that I recommend to the Legislative Assembly, the passage of the Appropriation Act, 2005-2006 and the Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2004-2005 during the Third Session of the 15th Legislative Assembly. Yours truly, Glenna F. Hansen, Commissioner."

Thank you, colleagues. Orders of the day, item 2, Ministers' statements. The Minister of Finance, the Honourable Mr. Roland.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**Minister's Statement 73-15(3): Notice Of Budget Address**

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will deliver the Budget

Address on Thursday, February 10, 2005. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

Minister's Statement 74-15(3): Celebrating Our Apprentices And Certified Candidates

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this week is Apprenticeship Week and on Thursday, apprentices and occupational candidates from all regions of the Northwest Territories will be given awards of excellence. These awards are given to the individuals with the highest marks in each specific working area.

Mr. Speaker, developing trades people and certifying occupations is essential to ensuring that future developments in the Northwest Territories benefit northerners first. For our people to get the most out of the diamond mines, oil and gas development, and other projects, they need to have the training to do the work. The jobs surrounding these projects require highly skilled labour, and we need to have certified northern journeypersons ready to fill them. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment is addressing this need by continuing to strengthen its commitment to the Apprenticeship Program.

Mr. Speaker, there are currently over 300 northerners registered as apprentices in the NWT. Forty percent of these apprentices are aboriginal. During the 2003-04 school year, 54 apprentices completed their apprenticeships and 49 of those were awarded the Interprovincial Red Seal certification. This means that they have qualified to work in any province or territory in Canada. Another 37 northerners have been certified in designated occupations. All those receiving certification will be an important part of our territory's future.

In the upcoming year, we are introducing a new certified occupation in environmental monitoring. Certified occupations are a formal recognition of training and evaluation in a specific field of work, determined by NWT occupational standards. Planning is also underway to increase the profile of occupational certification. Employers working in the NWT need to be made even more aware of the benefits of workers with proven skills and knowledge.

In addition, Education, Culture and Employment and Aurora College are working together to find ways to increase enrolment in trades programs and improve delivery of these programs.

Mr. Speaker, providing training in the North for as many apprentices and occupations as possible is important to

us. Towards this end, we will also work with the Apprenticeship, Trades and Occupational Certification Board to discuss new initiatives to increase trades training. The important role and contribution of employers will continue to be vital for our own ongoing and future success.

Mr. Speaker, I hope all Members will join me in the Great Hall for the annual Apprenticeship and Occupational Certification Awards of Excellence luncheon on Thursday, February 10th, to celebrate successes of apprentices and occupational candidates from across the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On Acknowledgement Of Supporters

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For my inaugural Member's statement, Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak on being a Member of this Assembly. First of all, I would like to thank my family for their support and encouragement when I have another one of my brilliant ideas.

---Laughter

Me being here would not be possible without the support of my campaign team and the constituents of Inuvik Twin Lakes. For that, I thank them.

It is important to acknowledge the support that I received from the Clerk and his staff. They have helped me to make the transition to being an MLA a little easier.

I would like to thank my colleagues in the Legislative Assembly for their support. They have done their best to reassure me that this would be painless. More importantly, I have to thank the Premier and all the MLAs for making my family feel welcome when they were here for the swearing in.

I would also like to thank Mr. Roland for his advice and sharing his experience with me. It is my intent to become a productive MLA and represent Inuvik Twin Lakes and the NWT with dignity and passion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Member's Statement On Proposed Rent Scale Increase

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (English not provided) Mr. Speaker, my Member's statement today concerns a serious issue in my riding, the reinstatement of the 1995 rent scale increase scheduled for April 1, 2005.

Mr. Speaker, I am not opposed to the rent increase; however, I am opposed to the current rent scale increase to the 90 percent mark for this year and the 100 percent mark for next year. I believe this is set too high and does

not allow people to adapt to the policy and the new financial obligations.

I propose the rent increase be phased in at the 75 percent mark this year and the 100 percent mark next year. This is more of an appropriate increase.

Mr. Speaker, I am also concerned with available housing programs tied into the rent scale policy. People have been given notice of increased rents and alternatives accessible to them. However, I believe the corporation is trying to push people into their programs and is not providing adequate and thorough information to make effective decisions. Although there is a current counselling campaign in place, it appears ineffective in communicating the necessary information to their clients. Clients are confused and scared and do require effective counselling in order to make an appropriate decision that will affect the rest of their lives.

Mr. Speaker, as it stands now, people who will be paying higher rent and are not used to it may find themselves quickly in arrears. People who have high income and who are no longer entitled to subsidized housing will have to find alternative housing. However, if they owe any arrears, they are not entitled to any Housing Corporation programs.

Mr. Speaker, I hope the Minister can understand the implications of this situation to my constituents and will consider a more phased-in approach to the rental scale increases and deliver a more effective counselling campaign. It seems ludicrous to implement a policy on such short notice expecting people to pay higher rents, purchase their homes, or pay up all of their arrears within a few months without any serious impacts to social housing clients. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Treatment Of Canine Friends

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin today also by extending a very special welcome to Mr. Robert McLeod. I must say, Mr. Speaker, I have really enjoyed watching him watch us over the last few months. He certainly has given me a new perspective to have a fresh set of eyes and many ideas he has brought to us already. Also, Mr. Speaker, I don't know if everybody knows, but today is New Year's Day under the lunar calendar. I know you have wished us a Happy New Year from the regular calendar, but I would like to extend a Happy New Year to everyone here and around the communities in this Year of the Rooster.

Speaking of roosters, Mr. Speaker, I believe one of the most important jobs we have as MLAs is to crow out loud like roosters about all the issues that are important to our constituents, especially on behalf of those who are most vulnerable and voiceless. At this point, I think we would be hard pressed to find too many who are as voiceless and powerless as our canine friends. Over the last few months, Mr. Speaker, we have really been subject to stories filled with harrowing and inhumane treatment of four-legged residents in our community. In January, Mr. Speaker, we read in The Hub about a puppy being

rescued lying on top of his dead sister puppy after they were both thrown into the dumpster and left to freeze to death in sub-arctic temperatures. Most recently, we have been hearing about the six sled dogs shot in the mouth and face; not shot in a way to euthanize them quickly and humanely, but left to die by bleeding to death or by choking in their own blood inside their broken jaws.

Mr. Speaker, I feel compelled to state this in a very descriptive and dramatic way because I believe this government has an obligation to say something about how this is not acceptable and stand by and give some teeth to the NWT Dog Act that is already in place as well as enforcing the criminal court provisions that speaks to inhumane and cruel treatment of animals. Mr. Speaker, many studies have shown that those who exercise violence against their family, spouses, and children, also show tendencies to be violent towards animals or treat them in an inhumane way. I believe it all speaks to the behaviour of those who are not able to empathize with the pain and suffering of others. In the days and weeks ahead, I will be pursuing these issues. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Seeing as we are on the first day of session, I will be a little lenient, but I heard about four topics there, Ms. Lee. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Member's Statement On Internal Audits In The Public Service

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the House today to speak about an important issue of internal audits and to assure that our system is accountable, ethical and efficient in a public service. The unit responsible for internal audits for the GNWT is the Audit Bureau. It is my understanding, Mr. Speaker, that a significant number of important positions in the Audit Bureau are currently vacant. This has been the situation for quite some time. This is a real problem, Mr. Speaker, and something should be done about this concern because it affects all NWT residents.

Mr. Speaker, this issue should be an outrage to all residents when I further explain what is going on. Audits, Mr. Speaker, are more than simply a review of financial statements. Audits are a critical tool for objective reviews of internal government operations. The Audit Bureau is responsible for undertaking critical audits to ensure the government is spending public money in the most efficient way possible. It is about spending tax money as well or better than we would spend our own hard-earned cash. Mr. Speaker, it is no secret that this government has gone through a process of financial belt tightening. It is a painful process that all of us would much rather avoid. But, Mr. Speaker, the more we increase our internal efficiencies by putting good practices and procedures in place, the less likely it will be where we will have to find ourselves in a position to avoid ugly cuts such as layoffs and whatnot.

Mr. Speaker, the job of an auditor is to ensure the proper checks and balances are in place and to keep things running efficiently. There are standards that need to be looked at. An auditor is responsible for recommendations on how to increase efficiencies with our government

money. This is all great in theory, but what is happening is for the last fiscal year, Mr. Speaker, approximately 25 percent of the Audit Bureau has not been staffed. Through some tracking records, the last five years are even worse; it is more abominable. Mr. Speaker, the capacity has been falling around 50 percent of staff in that area of government.

Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely shameful that this would be happening and nothing is being done. As elected officials, we are accountable for public money. The Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board is responsible to make sure the GNWT has the capacity to conduct audits of this type to make sure nothing is going wrong. They are critical to putting a stop to unacceptable drains on public resources. In my view, Mr. Speaker, this should be a priority of this government. Mr. Speaker, at this time, may I ask for unanimous consent to finish my statement? Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, I am not ringing the bell to say something is wrong. I am not ringing the bell to suggest something horrible is going on in our public service that we need to catch up to. What I am saying is that we need to do something before something goes wrong, before it is way too late.

We have all heard about the sponsorship scandal and the types of things that are going on at present. Mr. Speaker, last month, we learned about a case in Saskatchewan where over a million dollars of government funding intended for those most in need had been taken out of the provincial treasury and taken by a provincial employee. This has been going on for 10 years. Closer to home, there have been a number of court cases reported in the news as of late about residents embezzling school funds. This is absolutely wrong and shameful, Mr. Speaker, and we need a system that addresses this.

My point, Mr. Speaker, is that auditors do a very important function. They play a role in our government. It is important that they do this. For one, Mr. Speaker, I cannot, in good conscience, sit here as an elected, accountable official for public funds knowing that we could be doing more. The Audit Bureau in the government is a unit that is responsible for the checks and balances. It is my opinion that these balances are not being done. I am going to have questions for the Minister responsible later today, but my concern is, is the Minister asleep at the wheel? I don't want to hear about process. I don't want to hear about effort. I want to hear that he is rolling up his sleeves and finding solutions to this grave problem. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. I will remind Members that Member's statements are to be two-and-a-half minutes long. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Member's Statement On Affordable Housing In The NWT

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am going to take a note from my colleague Ms. Lee's book here, and hopefully do some loud crowing and roosting about the housing situation here in the Northwest Territories.

---Laughter

You know, since we last met here a few weeks ago, Mr. Speaker, there have been a number of signals that show that it is getting and it is going to get even more expensive to keep a roof over your head and that of your family. Mr. Speaker, thinking of buying a house, the average here in the Northwest Territories, we learned last week, for a three-bedroom unit is now \$246,000, the second highest in Canada. Mr. Speaker, a house that listed for \$200,000 four years ago now costs \$315,000 dollars. That is a 58 percent increase, Mr. Speaker, in four years.

Do you want to rent an apartment? How about a two-bedroom here in Yellowknife? That is \$1,282 dollars and that may not include utilities, Mr. Speaker. Compare this with Calgary and Edmonton where there is apparently lots of money, too. In Calgary a two-bedroom unit costs you \$806; in Edmonton, \$730. If you are working in Edmonton and you want to come north to Yellowknife to work or perhaps you are a northern student who wants to come back home, you are going to pay 70 percent more to move to Yellowknife, Mr. Speaker.

In March of 2003, I tabled a petition here with about 500 signatures from Yellowknife renters and landlords, seeking better ways of resolving disputes about rent increases and ways to better manage our landlord-tenant situation. We now learn that in Inuvik, even more residents are going to take this even further and I anticipate that their petition actually seeking rent control will be tabled here in the next few days. I look forward to that debate, Mr. Speaker.

I have been ringing the bell here continuously for our government to become more aggressive and innovative and show leadership in ways to deliver more affordable housing. We could be doing things with land development and tax breaks and cash incentives, but we continuously fail to do so. What are we going to do to reverse this trend, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

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

Member's Statement On Thanks To Parties Contributing To Hay River Constituency Issues

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Braden is ringing a bell and Ms. Lee is crowing and...

---Laughter

...I just want to stand up and sing a good song. Mr. Speaker, I want to take the first available opportunity today at the reconvening of session to thank a number of people.

Leading up to the Christmas break, we had the Minister of Justice, the Honourable Charles Dent, come to Hay River

to meet with community leaders with respect to plans for changes in justice services in Hay River.

Subsequent to that, Premier Joe Handley also came to Hay River to meet about numerous items; the most pressing ones being the impact of justice changes in Hay River.

From those meetings, a plan emerged and presentations were developed with respect to proposed changes. The work that went into these presentations was the culmination of many hours behind the scenes by the Hay River MLAs, a group of stakeholders, and affected parties in Hay River. I want to thank them for the immense amount of time that these people dedicated to pull questions and information together that ultimately affected a positive outcome. I want to thank the very capable research staff of the Legislative Assembly and the people in the Department of Justice who responded to our many questions. I want to thank the tireless efforts of my constituency assistant, Wendy Morgan, for pulling all that information together in an easily accessible format. I want to thank my colleague, Mr. Villeneuve from Tu Nedhe, for his initial visit to staff and facilities in Hay River and his subsequent attendance with our colleague, Mr. Menicoche from Nahendeh, during the week of the Dene leaders' meeting.

After what seemed like a long wait over the holidays, I had the opportunity to meet with all the Regular Members of the Assembly, as well. I would also like to thank the UNW for their support, and for the many letters that came in from other communities and regions from across the Territories.

The results of these deliberations are now publicly known through the announcement of Minister Dent, that the planned court registries closure in Hay River has been withdrawn. These valuable services and jobs will remain south of the lake at the Hay River courthouse. For this I would like to thank all my colleagues for their support -- Premier Handley, Minister Dent and the Cabinet -- for listening and responding to our arguments.

However, Mr. Speaker, I would like to characterize this good news as round one, and I look forward to the forum this session will provide for dialogue that will reveal and probe the good news and allow for debate on other issues which will remain outstanding in our community for now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Support For The Diamond Cutting And Polishing Industry

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to bring up the topic that Members of this House will hear me speak a great deal about over the next few weeks. That topic, Mr. Speaker, is diamonds, and today specifically how they relate to our secondary industry here in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, in 1997, as a city councillor, I was honoured to be a member of the City of Yellowknife's Diamond Task Force on the development of a secondary industry here in

the Northwest Territories. That committee, with the help of the GNWT, made it possible that we could move forward with a cut and polish industry here in the Northwest Territories.

As time went on, many people became sceptical of what the GNWT was doing with loan guarantees and support to this industry, and even whether or not the industry itself was viable here in the Northwest Territories. I must add that I, too, was becoming sceptical of the GNWT's involvement. In July of last year I had the opportunity to stand in for the Minister of RWED at an International Diamond Conference in Tel Aviv, Israel. While I was at this conference I was amazed at the reception and respect the Northwest Territories received. I suppose when you are from an area of the world that produces 14 percent of the world's total production of diamonds by value, you get that respect.

The NWT and Yellowknife are on the radar of the world diamond community. Make no mistake about that. The City of Yellowknife's motto as diamond capital of North America has taken firm hold. In Israel, where they do not mine any diamonds, they have established an entire section of the city of Tel Aviv devoted to diamonds: cut/polish, jewellery, an exchange and even a museum, Mr. Speaker.

I left there with a rejuvenated spirit of what we can do in the Northwest Territories. While I was in Israel, I met with Mr. Lev Leviev who, as many know, is one of the world leaders in the cut and polish industry. He was very interested in coming to Canada to set up a factory, and, shortly after the conference, submitted a proposal to take over the Sirius factory here in Yellowknife. I was very excited at the possibility of having a company like Leviev's here in the Northwest Territories to help grow and secure our secondary industry. It is public knowledge that negotiations with the receiver and the Leviev Group broke off two weeks ago. I would like to know why. I would like to know what happened to the understandings and the agreements that this government had in place with the producers. What did we do or not do as a government to ensure successful completion of these negotiations? As a government...

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Ramsay, your time for your Member's statement is expired.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a government we have an obligation to our residents and I believe the government has an obligation on this side of the House to explain what happened, to explain what went wrong. It is, of course, costing the government a tremendous amount of money, Mr. Speaker. At the appropriate time on today's order paper I will have questions for both the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development and the Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Remembering Tsunami Disaster Victims

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to use my Member's statement today to wish all my Tu Nedhe constituents, my family, my colleagues, old and new here in the House, and the people of the Northwest Territories a safe, happy and prosperous new year.

It has been just over a year since I have been working for the residents of Tu Nedhe. I am confident in saying that the seeds of social and economic development initiatives within the Tu Nedhe constituency have been planted. I am looking forward to some of these initiatives growing and flourishing. I am confident that my constituents will realize marked improvements in their daily lives over the next three years.

That said, Mr. Speaker, there have been many events that have taken place in the world over the past year, be it territorial, national and international alike. All our lives have been touched by these life-altering events and developments, some good and some not so good, in some sort of shape and form.

One important event, Mr. Speaker, which has humbled us all was the tsunami disaster that took place a half-a-world away on December 26, 2004. This natural disaster took the lives of more than 160,000 people and directly impacted lives of millions more worldwide. This unfortunate occurrence made us more grateful for the things that we sometimes take for granted, and helps us see how lucky we are to live in this great, vast land called Canada and, more specifically, the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to use the remainder of my Member's statement to pay respect to everyone who lost family members, friends, relatives and acquaintances in this historical natural disaster, by requesting that we all stand in this House to share a moment of silence for all these victims and their families. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: The Member is requesting that all Members stand for a moment of silence.

---Moment of Silence

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, colleagues. Please be seated. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Pokiak.

Member's Statement On Remarks On The Passing Of Tuktoyaktuk Residents

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My Member's statement today will cover a number of congratulatory greetings and condolences. Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome and congratulate Mr. Robert McLeod, MLA for Inuvik Twin Lakes, for his recent by-election victory held in Inuvik. I am confident that Mr. McLeod will represent his constituents well and I look forward to working with him during the 15th Legislative Assembly.

The Members may recall in the fall of 2004 there were four individuals considered lost during a hunting trip. An extensive search was conducted, but to no avail. The families recently held memorial services for their loved ones in November and January. I would like to express my appreciation to many companies, businesses and search and rescue teams in their efforts in locating these four individuals. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families.

Mr. Speaker, the residents of Tuktoyaktuk recently lost a well-respected elder, Mr. Noah Felix, who passed away peacefully in December. I was fortunate to visit with Mr. Felix at the Stanton Territorial Hospital before I returned to Tuktoyaktuk. Again, our thoughts and prayers are with Agnes Felix and family.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, on a brighter note, I would like to take this time to congratulate two individuals in my riding of Nunakput. First, I would like to congratulate Mr. Randy Omingmak of Holman who has completed his second year apprentice in housing maintenance and to Mr. Desmond Gruben who has completed his second and third year in housing maintenance and has received his journeyman housing certificate. I was fortunate to be in Tuktoyaktuk to present the certificate to Mr. Gruben. Mr. Gruben is presently working with the Tuktoyaktuk Housing Association. Mr. Speaker, I understand the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment will be recognizing these two individuals, as well as many other individuals in the Great Hall of the Legislature on Thursday, February 10, 2005. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Joint Cabinet/AOC Committee Meeting In Sahtu

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I feel like I'm the rooster now.

---Laughter

We did have a call into the Minister of RWED and he, along with Joint Cabinet/AOC Planning Committee, came to the Sahtu. It was a wakeup call. Last week, Mr. Speaker, many people braved the minus 40 temperatures to come to a meeting of the Joint Cabinet/AOC Pipeline Committee meeting in Norman Wells. It was very appropriate that the committee met in the oil capital of the Northwest Territories, one of the communities that the pipeline will go right through their backyard. There were many good questions and discussions between the public and committee members that ran well past 9:00 p.m. In the afternoon, the committee also had a very productive meeting with town council to discuss the important pipeline planning issues.

Mr. Speaker, it is crucial for Ministers and also Regular MLAs to take time to meet face to face with community members in regions outside of Yellowknife. It provides a crucial opportunity for residents to get to meet Ministers and MLAs from other constituencies. It's also a good reality check for us to hear directly from the residents and to spend time in parts of the Territories we may not know very well, so that we can better appreciate the issues and

make better decisions for the people of the Northwest Territories.

I would like to thank Minister Bell, the committee chair and also Minister Dent and Minister McLeod and MLAs Menicoche and Villeneuve for accepting the invitation to meet in the Sahtu. The Ministers did an excellent job in answering the questions from the public and committed to follow up on some of the matters. People did appreciate the chance to air their concerns directly to them. It was a pleasure to host the committee members in the Sahtu region. I look forward to traveling to other communities that will be directly impacted by the Mackenzie gas project. Mahsi cho.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Federal Tlicho Self-Government Legislation

MR. ZOE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to welcome Mr. Robert McLeod to this side of the House. He's the newest Member here. Welcome, Mr. McLeod, and to my colleagues.

As you are aware, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of issues that have been raised in my constituency of North Slave, but the highest priority that they have on their agenda is our Tlicho legislation that is currently being discussed in Ottawa.

Mr. Speaker, a number of my constituents have been traveling to Ottawa to observe and monitor the progress of this legislation that's going through the Senate. Mr. Speaker, everybody is aware that the first priority of the Dogrib Nation is our land claims and self-government legislation. I just want to let my constituents know that the issues that are raised in my region are going to be discussed here in the House and there's a lot of good news and there are also a lot of concerns that are being raised. A number of Ministers are aware of those concerns and I will be raising them through my Member's statement and during question period. Mahsi.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Zoe. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to recognize a few people in the gallery. We have Mr. Jeske and we have Mrs. Braden up in the gallery. I'd like to recognize them. My new constituency assistant, Coady Summerfield, will be in the gallery as well. I'd also like to take time to recognize the Year of the Rooster as Ms. Lee did, I'm saving it for this time. My wife is of Chinese background and I'd like to wish everyone Happy New Year in Cantonese, which would be...(English not provided)...which basically means Happy New Year everyone. Lastly, although he's not in the gallery, he's sitting next to us, I'd like to use this time to recognize Mr.

McLeod, as well. I met him and his family earlier on and I think Mr. McLeod is a wonderful addition to our Assembly. It's nice to have this seat filled. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very fortunate to have living in Yellowknife many members of my immediate family, my mother being one of them. My dearest, Esther Braden, welcome to the Assembly.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. 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'd like to extend a welcome to Chief Peter Liske who is with us today. As well, I've got constituent Garth Wallbridge and constituent Ms. Julie McNiece and it's always good, Mr. Speaker, to see Mr. Villeneuve's parents here again. Thank you.

---Applause

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm also very pleased to recognize Chief Peter Liske, a constituent and chief of the Yellowknives Dene First Nation. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd also like to recognize two of my strongest supporters from Tu Nedhe, Mom and Dad, nice to see you here. Thank you.

---Applause

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize a former colleague, the chief from Detah, Mr. Peter Liske, and also Garth Wallbridge. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. If anyone was missed in the gallery, welcome to the Legislative Assembly. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 345-15(3): Cruel Treatment Of NWT Dogs

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's good to be back here and I think we're experiencing a flying start as a pack of roosters on this side and I really, really look forward to crowing really loudly about the issues that are important to our constituents over the coming months.

---Laughter

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice and it's with regard to parts of my Member's statement about what's been happening to our canine residents in the Territories. Mr. Speaker, I had the occasion to attend the Power-Up Young Women's Conference last Monday and I had the occasion to talk to lots of young people and they all could not understand what was being reported in the media at the time about this story, and that was that the RCMP chose not to investigate what was happening with these six dogs. Lots of people were surprised that we don't actually have very strong legislation that protects these animals in the way that they are treated. We understand that animals are an important part of our livelihood. We hunt, we support all that, but I don't think anybody supports cruelty and inhumane treatment of animals. So I'm glad to hear, Mr. Speaker, that the RCMP has restarted the investigation and I would like to know from the Minister of Justice what he can report to the House about what the RCMP has found so far. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 345-15(3): Cruel Treatment Of NWT Dogs

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am sensitive to the public concern around this issue. I have a dog as a pet and was troubled when I saw the pictures and heard the story as well, but at this point I can't add much to what's been happening with the investigation. I know that the RCMP have appealed to the public for anybody to come forward who has information on the case and they would welcome anybody providing that. The investigation is continuing, but I believe that the RCMP would welcome some assistance if anybody has any information on the case. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 345-15(3): Cruel Treatment Of NWT Dogs

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am looking forward to hearing from the Minister when the investigations are concluded. I'm not sure if this will result in someone being charged or anything like that, but just to get an update on the case. But, Mr. Speaker, I don't believe that this issue only has to do with those six dogs that were found. I had made a reference to those two puppies that were found frozen to death in a dump in Hay River. We've also had a report in Tuktoyaktuk where there were some animals frozen in the ice storm. I think really there is a role for the government to play in terms of just making aware and there's the NWT Dog Act that

speaks to how to treat dogs and the inhumane ways. So I would like to know from the Minister what if anything he has done with his Cabinet colleagues to have people more aware of this issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 345-15(3): Cruel Treatment Of NWT Dogs

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the NWT Dog Act says that no person shall punish or abuse a dog in a manner or to an extent that is cruel or unnecessary. So we have legislation in place that is intended to ensure that dogs are treated humanely. It is an issue that under this law is administered by Municipal and Community Affairs, because of their relationship with municipalities. The municipalities can pass bylaws respecting the care and control of dogs, as well. So in terms of what Cabinet has done to change our approach, the Cabinet hasn't, at this point, done anything. I think we are expecting to hear further from the RCMP. The carcasses from the incident in Yellowknife have been sent to the University of Saskatchewan to be autopsied by specialists there to determine whether or not the method of disposal was inhumane, and if so then there is the likelihood or possibility of charges if a suspect could be identified. However, we're at a very initial stage in that investigation. I think that the events that the Member spoke about in Hay River and in Tuk and Yellowknife have certainly led to a heightened awareness. It's an issue that MACA and the municipalities will have to also take some interest in making sure that municipalities follow up on their responsibility as well. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 345-15(3): Cruel Treatment Of NWT Dogs

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe municipalities have jurisdiction over this area within their own jurisdiction, but there is a little bit of a gap in situations where these situations happen outside of the municipality, which is the case with the latest six dogs that were found. Mr. Speaker, I understand that there is overlap of jurisdiction not only between these two administrators, but between the levels of government as well, but I don't think there have been strong statements from the government as a government to say that this is not acceptable. What sort of resources are there, even to the municipalities, to make sure that the legislation in the books is being enforced? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 345-15(3): Cruel Treatment Of NWT Dogs

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the government hasn't taken a formal position. I can say personally I was certainly supportive of the federal legislation that was proposed before the last election, and I personally would enjoy seeing the federal government bring that legislation back onto the table. But our government can't create a criminal offence and that is what I think is necessary in order to properly protect animals in our jurisdiction and across Canada. In terms of what we can do further, I expect that my colleague, the

Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, and myself will examine the current legislation and discuss whether there are ways that we need to take a look at modifying the legislation or bring forward proposals for change to strengthen it. At this point though we haven't had time to follow up on that concern. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 345-15(3): Cruel Treatment Of NWT Dogs

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister for what he's suggesting. Mr. Speaker, the Minister has indicated that autopsies are being done, but the final reports are not out. It is encouraging to hear that the RCMP has decided, after a few moments of hesitation, to work with the SPCA and such. Would the Minister commit to work with Minister McLeod and with these two agencies to see how we can tighten up what we have and how to improve what we have? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 345-15(3): Cruel Treatment Of NWT Dogs

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will certainly discuss with Mr. McLeod what the options might be for us to examine our legislation. Thank you.

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

Question 346-15(3): Strategy Workshop On Pipeline Development

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with the ongoing exploration and the pipeline preparation work, we are seeing more and more joint ventures between northern and southern businesses. Many people in my region are concerned that our people are not receiving meaningful participation benefits in these joint ventures. Because of this concern, there is no regional strategy in place to look at the type of guidelines these joint ventures are all about and sometimes we don't know what a genuine Sahtu business is and sometimes we're even competing against ourselves. So my question today is for the Minister of RWED. Will the Government of the Northwest Territories consider funding a regional workshop or business conference for the Sahtu to discuss this experience to date and the possibility of developing a strategic work plan for joint ventures and other business opportunities? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 346-15(3): Strategy Workshop On Pipeline Development

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'd like to thank the Member for the question. The Member knows and I thank him for his interest, but the Member will remember the meeting that we had in my office with some conference organizers who were proposing to do and put on just the type of conference that the Member is speaking of. That was back, I believe, Mr. Speaker, last

October. We did have some discussion about what their plans were. I thought it was a very worthwhile initiative and agreed to help them in planning the conference and had provided them some funds to do so. We are waiting on an update to understand better where they are proposing to go and when the time frame would be. I would certainly offer my support and participation in such a conference, especially after having come back just recently from Norman Wells and understanding exactly how important this will be to the region. I think the Member is right; we do have to make every effort to ensure that meaningful, tangible benefits stay in the North and do accrue from these business opportunities that are coming the region's way. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 346-15(3): Strategy Workshop On Pipeline Development

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Minister, for the reminder. I want to ask the Minister of RWED, in light of the support you have given our region in terms of allocating your resources in the region of RWED to assist with this planning, I know the dates have been moved around. I want to ask if the Minister would commit to his department sitting down with our planners and look at some dates that we could actually have a conference. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 346-15(3): Strategy Workshop On Pipeline Development

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Absolutely. It would be my pleasure to do so. I expect that our Sahtu regional staff are in current discussions with the planners of the conference. I know that we have a Sahtu regional petroleum advisor who was working on this initiative, as well. I will certainly ask them for an update. If there is anything I can do personally to lend my support, I am more than happy to do that. Thank you.

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

Question 347-15(3): Land For Affordable Housing Alternatives

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question this afternoon is directed to the Honourable Michael McLeod in his capacity as Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. It relates to the whole issue of being able to provide affordable housing, Mr. Speaker. One of the biggest barriers, the first barrier that communities and developers experience is the lack of access to affordable land for building and development. I wanted to see if the Minister could advise the Assembly what ways he has looked at to make land more affordable and available to community governments. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 347-15(3): Land For Affordable Housing Alternatives

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we had a number of discussions over the last while with the City of Yellowknife. We have also had a number of discussions as recently as this week with the Yellowknives Dene on the issue of land. Land issues are a big issue in the city of Yellowknife. Affordability is one issue and availability is another. There are, right now, discussions with the aboriginal governments on a process of making land available. We have signed an agreement with the Yellowknives Dene to be able to identify some lands that we could identify in terms of making available in the future. There have also been meetings set up with the Yellowknives and the city to talk about issues that are preventing some of the land acquisition. I have not seen a document yet, but we understand the city is coming forward with a land acquisition request that we will be reviewing very shortly as soon as we see it. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 347-15(3): Land For Affordable Housing Alternatives

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the information there. I guess I would like to ask the Minister for some more clarification with regard to the status or the position of the Yellowknives Dene or other aboriginal organizations in terms of how land is disposed of or delegated. What is the role there? How does this process work? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 347-15(3): Land For Affordable Housing Alternatives

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, right now there are two ways to make land available. First of all, it would be through an application through the city, which would then come to us. Under our Interim Measures Agreement with the Yellowknives or the Akaitcho, we would then go through a consultation period of 60 days and have feedback from the aboriginal governments in the area. There is also a mechanism that allows the aboriginal governments to come forward with a request that they would bring to the negotiating table for the requested land through their land claims discussions. Those are the two mechanisms that we have in front of us. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 347-15(3): Land For Affordable Housing Alternatives

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is useful information. I guess I would like to return to my original theme though, which is how are we making land available that is affordable to build on? We are discussing here a bit of the process of making land available at least around Yellowknife, but I would like to look at what steps we are doing on a territorial basis, Mr. Speaker, to make land for housing more affordable and available in our communities. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 347-15(3): Land For Affordable Housing Alternatives

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the biggest cost for land and the biggest cost driver for land in Yellowknife is the availability of services, the construction of roads, sewer services, power and water. Right now our focus has been on trying to look at the issue of availability of lands at the city level. We are reviewing the plans that have been put forward by the City of Yellowknife. We are also looking and talking with the Yellowknives Dene in terms of what they plan and what they have plans for their future land requirements. There are also departments that are coming forward with development plans that require land. We are trying to put all of those together. We are not doing anything in terms of looking for land subsidies at this point. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 347-15(3): Land For Affordable Housing Alternatives

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is to that last point that I would really like to focus on. This is where I am continuously crowing for our government, Mr. Speaker, to be more aggressive and innovative. Could the Minister tell us, the recent announcements about federal infrastructure money coming into the North, is this potentially going to be something that can help us deliver more affordable land in our communities? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 347-15(3): Land For Affordable Housing Alternatives

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are a number of different initiatives that we have been working on in the last while as a government. We have signed an agreement under the Municipal Rural Infrastructure Funding Program that has \$15 million committed to the Northwest Territories which can be used towards development of a number of different infrastructures in the communities. We are also looking at a gas tax agreement that we are hoping to sign in the near future, something this spring. That is also geared towards infrastructure. As part of those infrastructure criteria, lands and bridges, water and waste water and all of those are allowable. Those things certainly can be considered. There is also the Northern Strategy funding that the Premier is heading up that has yet to be determined. There are mechanisms that I believe that we can look at the land issue and ways to lower the cost, especially in Yellowknife.

Of course, we have made a commitment to discuss these issues with the NWT Association of Communities. So we will be starting as early as this weekend, having some discussions on Friday as to where we want to see this money committed. There are a number of different areas that we would like to see. There are a number of areas that some of the smaller communities want to focus on. There are areas that larger centres want to focus on. So there is a lot of work yet to be done and a lot of decisions yet to be made. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 348-15(3): Vacancy Rates In The Audit Bureau

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My Member's statement today was about the importance of internal audits and the lack thereof in the sense of human resource capital to do those important jobs. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board tell me exactly how many positions are currently vacant in the Audit Bureau and the average vacancy rates for the past five years? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 348-15(3): Vacancy Rates In The Audit Bureau

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this year we have approximately four positions vacant in the Audit Bureau. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 348-15(3): Vacancy Rates In The Audit Bureau

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister didn't mention or he left out, probably accidentally, of course, the rate that we have absent for the last five years. How many employees have not been in that position for five years? What is the constant rate of absence in that section? What does the Minister plan to do to staff these positions in the Audit Bureau immediately? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 348-15(3): Vacancy Rates In The Audit Bureau

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me correct my initial response. We have three positions vacant in the year right now, in 2004-05. It has averaged from three to five, so we are about in the area of four percent average over five years' vacancy rate. Not four percent, but four positions average over the five-year period. We continue to try to attract people to those positions. It has been very difficult. I think if we were to survey those in the private sector, we would find that they are having just as much difficulty in getting that type of professional to come north or to take up that side of the ledger, so to speak, Mr. Speaker. We are continuing to recruit and offering our positions out there, so if there are people listening and have the qualifications, please send in your resumes. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 348-15(3): Vacancy Rates In The Audit Bureau

MR. HAWKINS: Apparently that public service announcement has been brought to you by the Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board. Mr. Speaker, I have the rates here back to the year 2000. So for the 2000-01 budget, we had six absences. In 2001-02, there were four absences. In 2003-04, we had five absences. The Minister was correct; we had three absences for this past 2004-05 year. Mr. Speaker, I can understand that there is probably little latitude and movement about offering people more pay and whatnot to attract people. I appreciate his little plug there to look for recruitment, but I want to emphasize that I understand equal pay issues will play a role in this, but, Mr. Speaker, we have 25 percent of that area not being staffed. We have one budget year where we are missing six people. That is almost 50 percent of the audit function missing. Mr. Speaker, do we have to wait for something tragic to happen before we start addressing this issue? Will the Minister address this by hiring consultants to conduct these operational value-for-money audits before something goes wrong? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 348-15(3): Vacancy Rates In The Audit Bureau

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member referenced 2000-01; so looking at the year we are in now, I think we have done significantly better in attracting people to those positions. Where required, and if it is of urgent nature that we have to deal with. We will look outside of our systems, but, again, we have to remind ourselves that we are in a fiscal situation. We have to be careful with how we spend our money, and we are doing the best with what we have available to us. From time to time, if required, we will look at hiring outside of the government service. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 348-15(3): Vacancy Rates In The Audit Bureau

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Minister Roland, for your good answer. Mr. Speaker, the Minister talked about the fiscal nature. Typically, in the budget, we staff these positions at 100 percent even though we know there are absences in those positions. So the fiscal nature doesn't apply to this because we resource that area to the fullest of the budget potential of those staffing positions. Twenty-five percent of that job is not being done. That is of urgent nature. So I am not sure what he refers to when he says if it is of an urgent nature, something could be done. They don't just check for missing money, but they check on accounting processes, they make sure things are going out in a proper ethical way. So I can't just stand here in good conscience as an elected official watching public funds not being monitored, watching public funds not being put through the normal process of checks and balances. I would like to see the Minister roll up his sleeves right now and say we are going to solve this problem, we are going to make this problem go away. Roll up your sleeves, Mr. Speaker, and get this man into the job he is here to do. I know he can. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Hawkins, I didn't hear a question there. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

Question 349-15(3): Agreements For Supply Of Rough Diamonds

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to pick up where I left off with my statement. That is to talk about the secondary diamond industry here in the Northwest Territories and the fact that, to date, on the Sirius deal, this government has lost \$3 million. That is all I can talk about today with the government, is the fact that we have lost \$3 million, but I just want to say that it is going to end up costing the government substantially more than that, Mr. Speaker.

As a preamble, what I understand is that we have a socioeconomic agreement with BHP. Whether the 10 percent allotment of rough diamonds is contained in that socioeconomic agreement, I don't think it is. What we do have, Mr. Speaker, is a written agreement from BHP to supply 10 percent of rough to northern manufacturers. We also have an understanding from Rio to supply rough to northern manufacturers. What I would like to ask, Mr. Speaker, if the Leviev Group, who went through the receiver, submitted a proposal to purchase the Sirius plant as a going concern and met all of the GNWT's due diligence work on whether or not they could be deemed a northern manufacturer and, as such, were deemed a northern manufacturer by the Government of the Northwest Territories, why did they subsequently fail in the negotiations with both producers to get a supply of rough diamonds, Mr. Speaker? The concern I have is whether these agreements we have with our producers actually hold any water, and what involvement did the government have in trying to see these negotiations through to completion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

Return To Question 349-15(3): Agreements For Supply Of Rough Diamonds

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member is correct that at this point we have booked a loss for the Sirius operations of \$3 million, and we entered into a process and had a court-appointed receiver put in place and followed through a process of trying to have the Sirius operation go as what we would call a going concern, meaning that it is a fully operational business, feeling that would be the best value we receive for that. We did enter in that process. The "receiver" entered into the process. It went out for bids to receive those. We looked at those proposals. We, as a government, made a decision to go with what we felt at the time was the best package that we received. We went about doing our work and felt that we were satisfied with our work. We are prepared to offer the Leviev Group a northern manufacturer status, conditional on them getting a supply of rough agreement with the mining operation. The reason that we are not pursuing this avenue any more is that they were not able to come to an agreement. I don't have any details of how far it went. Just knowing that our concern as a government was to make sure we tried to get a sale in as timely a manner as possible, it is unfortunate that we are not able to do that and had to go to the next option in working with our receiver once again on what options are available to us. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 349-15(3): Agreements For Supply Of Rough Diamonds

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister for his response, but I would just like to know, when the negotiations for a sales agreement between the Leviev Group and the producers goes sideways, for a government that has sank millions and millions of dollars, time and effort into a secondary industry here in the Northwest Territories, cannot stand up and do something about it, I don't understand why we didn't step in five months ago, six months ago and demand of the producers that they come to an agreement with Leviev. We have lost millions of dollars. I would like to know what the Minister plans to do to mitigate those losses. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 349-15(3): Agreements For Supply Of Rough Diamonds

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the first thing is for us is to see if there is a possibility of getting another deal through our receiver to take care of the Sirius operation, that facility, and see if we can keep it as a going concern. Secondly, as I stated publicly, as a government, we are going to have to review what options we have to try to strengthen our position with the dealings we have with the mining companies. In some cases, we may have better agreements in place. But for this specific one, unfortunately, from the FMBS side, our involvement through the receiver trying to encourage a deal and trying to find out where things are was very limited, as we entered into a very formal process through the courts. So that limits what we can do. I am aware that the Minister of RWED, through his shop, was also monitoring what was going on. It is something that we, as a government, are going to have to look at if we are going to truly encourage the secondary industry from not only a mining operation, but any development of non-renewable resources in the Northwest Territories.

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

Supplementary To Question 349-15(3): Agreements For Supply Of Rough Diamonds

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to again thank the Minister for his response. I would like to know if it's in the government's future to support this industry and if it is, why are they saying today maybe we will bring in some stronger measures to deal with the producers after we've lost millions of dollars? I would like to know why today it's a concern, when unfortunately in the '90s I know there was a former Finance Minister who stood up in the House in 1997 and said they would bring in a tax to choke a mule before BHP went into production. Maybe the government in the 1990s didn't go far enough, Mr. Speaker. We've already lost millions and millions of dollars and I would like to suggest that the Finance Minister and this government take a firm stance, so that we don't lose any more money and that we can support the secondary industry that we have spent a tremendous amount of money on in the Northwest Territories, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to ask the Minister of RWED a question, Mr. Speaker. What is currently stopping this government from going back to the producers and saying we have this agreement with BHP for 10 percent and we have an understanding with Rio for 10 percent? I don't know if it's quite 10 percent, but to supply rough. We set up a diamond agency, secretariat, or whatever, and we get the 10 percent. Then we set up an exchange here in the Northwest Territories. What's stopping the government from doing something like that, from going back to the producers and supporting the secondary industry? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 349-15(3): Agreements For Supply Of Rough Diamonds

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't believe there is anything stopping us from doing that. We can begin the discussions in that area. My understanding in looking at the matter is there were some initial discussions in that area for the Government of the Northwest Territories to receive 10 percent and then look at some sort of operation to go out from there. That wasn't acceptable at the time to the parties involved. For us now, we have to go back to the drawing board to look at what options are viable to us here in the Northwest Territories and what it would mean for us to support that. It is a difficult thing.

When we look at the situations of having to come forward already for a \$3 million loss for that operation and the Member is correct, at some point when we close the deal we will have to look at the numbers at that point and come forward to this House with potential further losses. The important thing now is to sit down and evaluate where we are, where we intend to go and look at the implications of that direction and the avenues we choose. The operation has been going. We have had the agreements. We've heard concerns from both sides. It is now time to sit down and re-evaluate where the weaknesses and strengths are and decide from there where we are going to go. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 349-15(3): Agreements For Supply Of Rough Diamonds

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I see it, this is our territory, it's our future and it's our economy. There are many good reasons why we should revisit this, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Finance Minister, does he believe the secondary diamond industry here in the Northwest Territories is indeed our industry or is it the producers' industry and we are going to continue to let them call the shots? Let's take the industry back, Mr. Speaker, and let's revisit that, as the Finance Minister had stated. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 349-15(3): Agreements For Supply Of Rough Diamonds

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is what we are going to do now, go back and review our situation, how things have unfolded to this date and look

at what we need to do to strengthen our position. It is timely that we do a review of these agreements, but we have to do this in a comprehensive way to make sure the avenue we choose, the road we go down is something that will be supported by this Assembly. We do have to look at what's left for the future. We know the non-renewable resource industry, at some time an operation will close down because it has used all the material there. So as a government, we are going to have to look to not only this government, but our future generations, our children in the Northwest Territories and see what's going to be left for them. So we are going to have to take all of that and look at if what was entered into was a success or a failure. We do have three operations continuing in the Northwest Territories, but, yes, it has been an expensive way to go to try to encourage secondary industry in the North and we've had a lot of doubters out there. Let's just say it's not over yet and we have to re-evaluate where we are going to go with this. Thank you.

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

Question 350-15(3): Status Of Housing For Hay River Seniors

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation. Mr. Speaker, as a government, we concern ourselves with the issue of affordable housing in our communities and this is particularly relevant when it comes to affordable housing for seniors. Mr. Speaker, over the course of the past several years, there has been affordable social housing units built in communities for seniors. Hay River had about a \$1.8 million budget on the books for awhile and the government very kindly accommodated the Seniors' Society in allowing them to explore various options for how best to deliver seniors housing in Hay River. So this money did stay on the books. Finally it was decided that the government would let a contract and would proceed to construct units of appropriate size and model for seniors in Hay River. The construction began on a number of units. Suddenly, they were boarded up and they have been left in that way for some time now. For the benefit of people in Hay River who may be wondering what is happening there, I was wondering if the Minister, Mr. Krutko, could share with the House and with the public the status of those housing units under construction in Hay River. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 350-15(3): Status Of Housing For Hay River Seniors

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I don't have an update on that matter, but I will sit down with the Member and give her a briefing on it, at the time I receive it. I do not have an update on the question that has been asked, so I will take that as notice.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The Minister has taken that question as notice. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

Question 351-15(3): Proposed Social Housing Rent Scale Increase

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement I spoke about the reinstatement of the rent scale increases and who it affects, Mr. Speaker. It affects the non-government workers in my riding who work hard and pay their bills on time and who are comfortable with the current rent scale because it hasn't been changed since 1995, Mr. Speaker. Now this 30 percent increase from the 60 percent level to the 90 percent level means at least a \$300 increase to their current expenditures, Mr. Speaker. I would like to know from the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Speaker, what is the implementation plan for these affected tenants of the Housing Corporation?

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

Return To Question 351-15(3): Proposed Social Housing Rent Scale Increase

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the question with regard to rent increases, this is a project that has been implemented for a number of years that was a phase-in approach. They were looking at implementing it in 1995. They were supposed to phase it in over a four-year period, so it doesn't have a big impact on the tenants who are in social housing. It was a system that was supposed to make it fairer and easier for those tenants to realize this is what the increase was. What happened was in 1997 the phase-in was put on hold and now we are bringing it back to conclude the last two years of the phase-in. We have phase one, phase two, and in two years we are looking at completing that. The idea was instead of giving a total 100 percent increase in year one was to spread that out over four years, so you will see a 30 percent increase in the first year, another 30 percent increase in the second year, then a 30 percent increase in the third year and a 10 percent increase for the last phase-in in the fourth year.

The whole idea was to have a system in place to allow tenants to be aware that social housing is there to assist social clients and also to make people aware that we do have other objectives out there. The Member states that people are going to be impacted. A large number of these tenants will not see any increase. Sixty-four percent of the tenants will not see an increase. The other 15 percent, which takes it up to 75 percent, will see a \$100 increase. The idea is to have a fair system. This is social housing for social clients. We need to ensure those other people who will be in the higher brackets get into homeownership programs to ensure that they are able to maintain their units for programs to help people get into homeownership. If you are paying that high a rent, it's important that we look at that.

This is just the conclusion of a program, which stopped two years ago and we are now trying to implement the conclusion of the four-year phase-in. It's not 30 percent in one shot, it has been phased in over four years. We are only implementing the third year of a four-year phase. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 351-15(3): Proposed Social Housing Rent Scale Increase

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't think I am against the implementation plan, Mr. Speaker. I am in favour that we will have to charge our tenants at the 100 percent mark, but I believe that we can graduate this plan because it's been so long and going immediately to the 90 percent mark is far beyond what even four or five tenants can handle in Fort Simpson, Mr. Speaker.

Even so, we are forcing our tenants' hands. I don't think they have a choice where they can go, Mr. Speaker. They don't have anyplace else to go as an alternative. I would like the Minister to recognize that and at least commit to minimizing the increase, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister look at minimizing this increase and eventually get to the 100 percent by next year, Mr. Speaker?

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

Further Return To Question 351-15(3): Proposed Social Housing Rent Scale Increase

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, like I mentioned earlier, the whole idea of the phase-in over four years is so it would not burden the tenant with seeing a major increase in one year. They've phased in the rent increase over the first two years and now we are trying to conclude that. To be fair to everyone out there, we are trying to ensure that those tenants, some 34 tenants, who will be seeing a major increase at the high end, but we also have to realize we have one of the lowest tenant rates in the country. In most jurisdictions, it's 25 to 30 percent of your income. In the North, we are going to be increasing it from 11 percent to 14 percent. If you start looking at other jurisdictions across the country, we do have a fair rate system for social housing, not like other jurisdictions across the country. They look at 30 percent of your gross income.

So this system is to ensure that we phase it in over the next two years, but also ensure that you don't get the whole 30 percent or 40 percent increase in one shot. We are trying to spread it out over two years.

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

Supplementary To Question 351-15(3): Proposed Social Housing Rent Scale Increase

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am in agreement with the Minister, but it's in terms of percentages. I am proposing to the Minister today let's phase it up from 60 percent to 75 percent of the rent scale and then we both agree at the same time, as well, Mr. Speaker, that it's 100 percent for the second year. It's just the first year of how we are getting there. I am proposing it to be at 75 percent because what we are having here is we are going to create a sector of people who aren't in arrears and getting them into arrears and further complicating their opportunity to get a house when it's their turn, or to apply for other housing programs. I would like to know how the Minister will be addressing this concern of our current tenants getting into further arrears. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 351-15(3): Proposed Social Housing Rent Scale Increase

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as all Members know, notices have been given with regard to the increases. Under the Landlord and Tenants Act, we do have to give three months' notice. The notice period has gone out and we are looking at implementing it April 1st. So it is based on the phase-in program. We are trying to conclude a four-year phase-in. We have two years left to go and we are in year three. So notices have been given, based on the rent scale implementation that has been put in place since 1995. So we are trying to conclude something that's been there for 10 years. It's something that I can look at, but in order to change it now we would have to put out notices to change the whole increase all over again. Because of that complication, I don't think we can pull it back at this time, but we can look at it with regard to how we deal with it.

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

Supplementary To Question 351-15(3): Proposed Social Housing Rent Scale Increase

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It seems ludicrous that the government won't be flexible on this at all. There will be a surprise if the client were to say you aren't going to increase it to 90 percent on the scale, but reduce it to 75 because a notice did go out. I think the government can be flexible and they can say yes, you got the notice but, on second thought, we are just going to do the 75 percent for this year because we are still doing 100 percent for 2006-07, Mr. Speaker. I think this is short notice and expecting people to pay higher rents, purchase their homes and/or pay off all their arrears within a few months will have a serious impact on them. I would still like to know what the Minister's plan is for implementing this and taking care of our clients and try to get them to be homeowners, Mr. Speaker. I don't think this is the way to do it, by impacting their household budgets with a 30 percent increase to rent charges. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 351-15(3): Proposed Social Housing Rent Scale Increase

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are working with those clients. Like I mentioned, there are roughly 34 clients we are dealing with who are going to be seeing the bulk of this increase which will have an affect on them. We are working with them through our local housing authorities and also through our program officers and counselling these clients to make them aware how the increase will affect them and how they deal with their arrears. There is a way that you can pay off your arrears over a period of time or do a biweekly pay down of your arrears. We are working with clients to try to ensure the impact is as easy as possible. We have gone forward with the implementation of the rent scale rates at this time and notices have been given and we are continuing on that process.

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

Question 352-15(3): Arctic College Palmistry Course

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I notice with interest an advertisement in the paper. I will direct my question to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. There is a course offering at Aurora College for people to learn how to read palms. It's called Palmistry. Mr. Speaker, we have a lot of demands on our education dollars and the needs of northerners in terms of education. I am not sure exactly what is involved in this course. It outlines the course in the paper. It talked about reading the lines on your hands to figure out how long you are going to live and what your future holds. Mr. Speaker, I would like to know if Mr. Dent's department, as overseen by the boards and Aurora College, if there is any territorial government money...I think taxpayers should know if our taxpayers' dollars, our budget dollars, are going into supporting a course for people to learn how to read palms. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 352-15(3): Arctic College Palmistry Course

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, there would not be any government money into the provision of that course. The majority of courses that are offered by the college are third-party funded and that's paid for by application fees or by the students signing up for them. In other cases it's provided for by funds that are provided by First Nations or by employers. So a good portion of the programming that is offered through the colleges is third-party funded. This one, I suspect, is entirely funded by the fees that would be paid by the students who signed up for the course.

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

Supplementary To 352-15(3): Arctic College Palmistry Course

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I did notice that there was a fee attached to taking this course. I would just like the Minister's assurance that if there are not enough participants who sign up and this is not a break even, that this government or the budget of Aurora College is not administratively or financially subsidizing this program in any way. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 352-15(3): Arctic College Palmistry Course

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, no, there would not be government resources that would go into this. This sort of programming is available across the Northwest Territories. Any person who has an idea for a course can come and pitch the campus director and request use of space when it's not otherwise being used for college purposes. Then they have to pay for the course and the space themselves. The cost would have to be recovered from fees. The college

would not be putting any money into courses like this that are offered outside of the regular programming.

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

Supplementary To Question 352-15(3): Arctic College Palmistry Course

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So this is the utilization then of these resources in terms of our infrastructure. Is there any criteria applied to people applying in terms of what the course material contains? Is there any criteria an applicant has to meet in order to offer these courses through the Aurora College? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 352-15(3): Arctic College Palmistry Course

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not sure of the exact criteria. I would expect that the college would require people to be conducting courses that are within the law, that would not be personally offensive to others and the standard sort of requirements that you would expect for use of public space. Anybody is entitled to go to the campus director and propose a course and say here is what I propose to offer, here is how I propose to do it and if the space would otherwise not be used for something else, it can be made available if there is enough public interest to see such a course proceed.

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

Supplementary To Question 352-15(3): Arctic College Palmistry Course

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I remember some time ago getting into quite a debate in this House with Mr. Dent with respect to religious education in schools in Hay River. I would just like to confirm with the Minister then that this is a public institution and so if a faith-based organization or a religious organization, a church, for example, wanted to offer a course through Aurora College, I trust that that would not contravene the policy as he's laid it out here. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 352-15(3): Arctic College Palmistry Course

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not sure whether or not that would. I would have to check with the college. I will take that question as notice.

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

Question 353-15(3): Interim Measures Agreement For Land Development

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to follow through with the Honourable Michael McLeod on

some land issue questions as the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. In our discussion earlier in question period, Mr. Speaker, the Minister mentioned the Interim Measures Agreement as the protocol that we have regarding our government's management of Commissioner's land and the interests of municipalities or others and aboriginal governments. In the city of Yellowknife, we went through last year quite an interesting exercise, thankfully one that had a good outcome, with the Con Camp area and the disposition of that land, and the Interim Measures Agreement, Mr. Speaker, factored very heavily into that whole situation.

I wanted to ask, Mr. Speaker, at present are there any land applications by the City of Yellowknife that are before us and that are now engaged in that IMA consultation process? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 353-15(3): Interim Measures Agreement For Land Development

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, Mr. Speaker, there is an application before us and has been before us for awhile now by the city for some land in the Kam Lake area that has gone through the Interim Measures Agreement process. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 353-15(3): Interim Measures Agreement For Land Development

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In terms of the protocol and exercising this Interim Measures Agreement, is it working out to everyone's satisfaction? Are we able to see through this clear management of the handing over of land to communities? Is this agreement working the way it should? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 353-15(3): Interim Measures Agreement For Land Development

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the Interim Measures Agreement will only work if everyone agrees to make their best effort to deal with the issues and follow the criteria that's set out. We have a number of issues that have come forward in the city of Yellowknife. We have met with the Yellowknives on a number of occasions. The Akaitcho Tribal Council has also been consulted and we have talked to them. We are trying to work out a process. We have a signed agreement with the Yellowknives Dene to start looking at areas that we could consider opening up. Last week we met with the City of Yellowknife. The Yellowknives were also there. We have reviewed all the different development plans that are being considered, the city, the Yellowknives, Dene, the Department of Transportation and the government initiatives. We are trying to work out a collective process that everyone would be satisfied with. There is consultation and hopefully that's going to be something we have in the next little while. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 353-15(3): Interim Measures Agreement For Land Development

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly the Minister is right; these are agreements based on goodwill and intention on everyone to move them forward, but things happen and interest can change from time to time. Right now, Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that if someone wanted to build a house or develop something, there is no publicly owned land that you could purchase in the city of Yellowknife. Our situation is that dire and we are extremely dependent on this process to get land available for the growth the city faces. Does this agreement prescribe clear, well-defined time frames by which decisions will be made and a process will be moving along? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 353-15(3): Interim Measures Agreement For Land Development

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, these comments about lands available for public lands is not something I can answer at this point. I believe all the lands have been made available for private developers in the city of Yellowknife. The system we have in place allows for the consultation of all the groups involved. How long the system will be in place will depend on the negotiations that are happening with the aboriginal governments. I don't have a time frame as to how long that will be. Right now, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs is obligated to follow the Interim Measures Agreement as it's laid out and has been agreed to by this government and the Akaitcho and that's what we are doing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The time for question period has expired, although I will allow Mr. Braden his final supplementary.

Supplementary To Question 353-15(3): Interim Measures Agreement For Land Development

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess I would like to underscore for the Minister and get his response, if he cares to, on the issue of the lack of land, as I am told no publicly available land. How can developers make decisions? We are quickly coming up to the spring and summer construction season. If we don't know whether or not we can get land in a certain time frame, how can these decisions be made? This is the crunch that the City of Yellowknife and developers are facing in Yellowknife right now, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 353-15(3): Interim Measures Agreement For Land Development

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is an issue. We have talked about it. It's certainly a concern with our department, the City of Yellowknife and the residents of this community. At our last meeting, we were informed by the mayor of Yellowknife that there is a plan for land acquisition being brought forward. It has received second reading. We have not received that at this point and that's an issue that we will deal with when it comes forward. We are working with the aboriginal groups, the aboriginal governments, to put together a

system that will allow us to move lands and allow us to deal with land applications. We need to have the Akaitcho onside. We need to have the city onside and we are looking at some resolutions to this whole issue of availability of lands in Yellowknife. So it's something that's ongoing. We are working with it. We have agreed to have a series of meetings. The Yellowknives and city have agreed to meet on their own. We are also meeting and talking to them and are trying to rectify this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The time for oral questions has expired. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 8: RETURNS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, I am in receipt of returns to written questions 31-15(3), 35-15(3), 39-15(3), 40-15(3), 41-15(3), 42-15(3), 43-15(3), 44-15(3), 45-15(3), 46-15(3), 47-15(3), 48-15(3), 49-15(3), 50-15(3), 51-15(3), 52-15(3), 53-15(3), 54-15(3), 55-15(3), 56-15(3), 57-15(3), 58-15(3), 59-15(3), 60-15(3), 61-15(3), 62-15(3), 63-15(3), 64-15(3), 65-15(3), 66-15(3), 67-15(3) and 68-15(3). Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Return To Written Question 31-15(3): Costs Related To The Taltson And Bear River Hydro Projects

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Hawkins on October 3, 2004, regarding costs related to the Taltson and Bear River Hydro projects.

Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table a detailed list of related expenditures that have been invested in these projects by the Government of the Northwest Territories up to October 31, 2004. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Yakeleya on October 15, 2004, regarding the incarceration of Sahtu residents.

On October 18, 2004, there were 17 residents from the Sahtu in the custody of the Department of Justice corrections services. Fourteen of these are territorial offenders and three are federal offenders. All 17 are currently serving their sentences in the Northwest Territories.

The corrections service offers more than 40 programs for offenders in the Northwest Territories based on three general categories: programs for adults, programs for youth, and wilderness camp programs. These programs include, but are not limited to, education, substance abuse, reasoning and rehabilitation, sharing circles, traditional healing and elders program, chaplaincy, and anger management.

The Department of Justice currently has contracts for two adult wilderness camps located near the communities of Fort Smith and Hay River. The department also has contracts for alternative open custody youth home/camps in Tulita and Fort Good Hope. The department is open to considering other camp locations; however, the existing camp contracts meet the current demand.

The corrections service works with offenders, their families and communities to develop reintegration plans for both adult and youth to ensure the safe and successful return to their community. This process may include ensuring an offender has a place to reside, assisting them to meet their employment or education needs, and establishing support or counselling services in the community. The Temporary Release Program allows adult offenders to be released under certain conditions to begin the reintegration back into their community. Under the Youth Criminal Justice Act, youth serve the last third of their sentence under supervision in the community.

Finally, I am proud to say that all programs and services provided by the corrections service are either developed or delivered with the understanding and consideration that many offenders in custody are aboriginal. Each correctional facility has some form of traditional or cultural programming that includes having elders on contract or on staff to support offenders. The department has also used an Aboriginal Advisory Committee in the development of new correctional facilities to ensure that aboriginal beliefs are integrated into the design and function of the building.

Return To Written Question 39-15(3): Budget For Legal Aid Office

I have a return to written question asked by Ms. Lee on October 18, 2004, regarding the budget for the family law legal aid office.

In 2004-05 the budget for the new Family Law Legal Aid Clinic is \$266,000 based on less than a full year's operation. In 2004-05, of the \$266,000 budgeted for the clinic, \$177,000 was budgeted for compensation and benefits, and \$89,000 was budgeted for operations and maintenance.

It is expected that the total lease payment for the new clinic over the life of the five-year lease is \$197,000.

The Financial Management Board approved a special warrant of up to \$115,000 for leasehold improvements. The final cost of these leasehold improvements was \$39,393.

Return To Written Question 40-15(3): Costs And Uptake Of Alcohol And Drug Programs In The Sahtu

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Yakeleya on October 18, 2004, regarding the cost and uptake of alcohol and drug programs in the Sahtu.

1. What is the average cost to have a client participate in an alcohol and drug treatment program in Hay River, NT?

The Nats'ejee K'eh Treatment Centre receives its operating budget of \$1.5 million -- 2003-04 -- from the Department of Health and Social Services. It does not charge a fee for services to NWT residents. The Nats'ejee K'eh Treatment Centre charges \$130 per day for clients from Nunavut.

In 2003-04, 136 NWT clients attended the treatment programs at Nats'ejee K'eh Treatment Centre. Therefore, the average cost per client was \$11,029. If all spaces are used, 240 clients would be treated at an average cost of \$6,250.

2. How many clients in the past year, 2003-04, have participated and completed the alcohol and drug treatment program in the North?

During 2003-04, the Nats'ejee K'eh Treatment Centre provided services to 161 clients, of which 136 were from the NWT and 25 were from Nunavut.

3. How many clients were referred to southern treatment programs in 2003-04?

In 2003-04, 101 NWT clients -- adults, children and youth -- were referred to southern residential addiction treatment programs. Of these, 64 were adults, ages 19 and up; and 37 were children and youth, ages 12 to 18.

4. What are the costs for southern treatment programs?

In 2003-04, it cost \$595,115 for individuals to attend southern treatment programs. This amount includes \$138,356 for medical travel.

5. What are the costs of a mobile treatment program in the NWT?

The department discontinued mobile treatment programs in 2002 because of the poor evaluation results determined by Chalmers and Associates, which are documented in A State of Emergency - A Report on Addictions Services in the NWT, May 2002. The 2000-01 budget for mobile treatment programs was \$490,000.

6. How many family treatment programs are there in the NWT that deal with alcohol and drug treatment programs specifically?

At present, there are no family treatment programs in the NWT that have a mandate specific to addictions as a primary diagnosis. There are several programs whose mandate is "family" which address addiction issues, as many social and mental health issues stem from substance abuse. The YWCA's Women and Children's Healing and Recovery Program focuses on families that have been exposed to violence and particularly on women who are suffering from trauma and addiction issues. Also, the Nats'ejee K'eh Treatment Centre also provides a 14-day treatment program for couples.

7. How many children between the ages of 14 and 24 received alcohol and drug treatment in the Sahtu?

Six children/youth, ages 12 to 18, attended addictions treatment in southern facilities; 16 adults, ages 19 and up, attended treatment programs at the Nats'ejee K'eh Treatment Centre; and 11 adults, ages 19 and up, participated in addiction treatment programs outside of the NWT. The adults were referred to programs in the South because the Nats'ejee K'eh treatment team assessed the complexity of their cases to be beyond their expertise.

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

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to a written question asked by Mr. Yakeleya on Tuesday, October 29, 2004, regarding winter roads in the Sahtu.

1. Given the period the winter roads are in operation and the increase in oil and gas activities, what types of tracking methods are used by the department to keep track of numbers of vehicles?

Since the increased demand and higher prices for natural gas in the early 1990s stimulated the exploration for natural gas in the Sahtu, the Department of Transportation has attempted to record the seasonal traffic volumes on the Sahtu winter roads.

In the 2005 season, the department has adopted a different configuration of electronic traffic counting equipment with the expectation of determining more accurate results. In addition, the department met with the oil and gas exploration companies on October 1, 2004, to obtain pre-season estimates of the traffic they anticipate their operations might generate in 2004. The department will arrange post-season discussions with the industry in March 2005 to gauge the accuracy of their traffic forecasts.

2. How many accidents were reported within the Sahtu winter road system last year?

In the 2004 season, there were nine reported traffic accidents on the Sahtu winter road system outside of municipalities. More serious than simple property damage, two of the nine accidents resulted in personal injuries. There were no fatalities. Four of the nine accidents were caused by the driver's loss of control of a single vehicle.

3. How of what steps have the department implemented in the Sahtu for safety measures?

It is in the nature of seasonal winter roads that are reconstructed annually that the department and its contractors improve the road incrementally every year as it is constructed for the new season.

In the 2000-01 fiscal year, the department began a two-thirds/one-third cost-sharing program with DIAND to build seven permanent bridges over stream crossings along the Mackenzie Valley winter road system. Beginning in 2003-04, the original two-year Winter Road Bridges Program with DIAND was renewed and then substantially enhanced with the addition of a 50/50 cost sharing contribution from the Canadian strategic infrastructure fund to install 22 more permanent bridges as well as making grade improvements along the alignment. Over the six-year period from 2003-04 to 2008-09, the department has scheduled expenditures of \$46.8 million for improvements to the Sahtu winter road system.

In the 2004 season, the department assigned transport officers for spot check patrols along the Sahtu winter road system to make sure that oil and gas industry truck traffic was operating safely and in compliance with trucking regulations. The department will increase the number of these patrols in the 2005 season.

4. What are the policies to handle emergency responses for travellers within the Sahtu region?

In the Northwest Territories, the responsibility for handling highway traffic emergencies resets in the first instance with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police as set out in its policing contract with the GNWT Department of Justice. The staff of the Department of Transportation and its contractors regularly inspect and patrol the length of the Sahtu winter road system. However, these routine inspections are principally for the purpose of highway maintenance and not for the purpose of delivering aid to travellers in distress.

Although the department's staff and its contracts have and will do everything in their power to assist travellers in an emergency situation, motorists should not travel the winter roads under a mistaken understanding that the Department of Transportation monitors or patrols the winter roads for emergencies or that it is specially equipped or trained to provide an emergency response. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Hawkins on October 19, 2004, regarding organizations receiving year-to-year funding.

Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table two reports listing the organizations currently receiving year-to-year or multi-year funding from the Government of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Villeneuve on October 19, 2004, regarding school funding policies.

1. What portion of funding to divisional education authorities is allocated to assist families who reside outside the education district but have children registered in DEA schools?

No specified amount of funding by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment to DEAs is allocated for this purpose. Where a student lives outside of the boundary of a DEA but registers in a school and attends that school, then the DEA is given funding for that student at the same level as a student who lives within the DEA boundary.

For a student who registers but decides on home schooling, the DEA is funded as if the student was a half-time student. DEAs do not allocate funding to families. The funds must be used to educate the children who have registered in the district's schools. In the case of home schooling, the DEA will provide support by paying for pre-approved programs and materials and, where possible, by providing other supports.

2. Is the funding at the sole discretion of each DEA?

In determining how funding is spent, DEAs are required to follow rules and procedures set out in a number of documents, including the Education Act, the Financial Administration Act, departmental directives, collective agreements, the human resource manual, their own policies and, where agreed to, the policies set by their divisional education council.

3. What options, besides the home schooling option, would families have to address this problem?

The only options other than home schooling involve commuting to school, either on a daily basis or by making arrangements for the student to board close to the school that they are attending.

4. What direction is the Department of Education intending to take to eliminate this old problem?

This issue is not unique to the Northwest Territories. The department continues to support home schooling as an option and is taking steps to improve the delivery of on-line courses at the high school level. Parents who choose to live outside of education authority boundaries may consider both of these options.

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

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Hawkins on October 19, 2004, regarding Deton'Cho Corporation Funding.

Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table the document listing the contributions, subsidies and grants that have been provided to the Deton'Cho Corporation, its subsidiaries and/or affiliated companies, related companies and companies they have invested in, over the past five years. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Return To Written Question 45-15(3): Youth Treatment Programs

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mrs. Groenewegen on October 20, 2004, regarding youth treatment programs.

1. How many NWT youth are in treatment?

For the purpose of this question, treatment is defined as residential programs sponsored by the Department of Health and Social Services that focus on addictions and behavioural problems or provide ongoing support services to youth with severe developmental delays and medical conditions.

Of the 46 NWT children and youth under the age of majority receiving such services on September 30, 2004, 12 were in facilities in the NWT and 34 were in facilities outside the NWT. Of the 34 in facilities outside the NWT, 18 have severe developmental delays and medical conditions.

2. How many spaces in total are available in the NWT for treatment of youth?

There are 16 beds available in the NWT for treatment of children and youth.

3. How many NWT youth are waiting for placement in treatment?

On September 30, 2004, one child was awaiting placement in an NWT residential program for behavioural problems.

4. What programs specifically targeted at youth, apart from residential treatment, are currently in place?

The health and social services authorities implement programs or provide contribution funding to non-government organizations to develop and provide programs specifically targeted at youth. Funding may also be made available, through support service agreements, to provide children and youth with opportunities to participate in community social or recreation programs, such as Guides, Scouts and sports teams.

In Hay River, public health nurses in the Community Health Program provide programming that specifically

targets youth from grades 7 to 12 including public health education, FASD education, smoking cessation, pregnancy, diabetes education/prevention and fun/food/fitness summer activities. Mental health and addiction workers deliver individual counselling for youth, parent-teen conflict resolution sessions, leadership skills, anti-bullying programs, Waking Opportunities Within -- the youth career orientation fair -- and team building through the youth forum, which is sponsored by the Eagle Friendship Centre and the Hay River Authority. Education sessions on the prevention of drug abuse and the effects of drug use/abuse are offered at the schools and in the community through partnership arrangements between mental health and addictions, the Department of Justice, the Addictions and Youth Centre, and the Nats'ejee K'eh Treatment Centre.

5. Would the Minister and his department support the establishment of additional treatment programming for youth in existing infrastructure in the NWT?

Children and youth services are one of the priorities of the multi-year mental health and addictions services initiative. Current challenges will include identifying resources within existing funds to implement and staff new programs.

Return To Written Question 46-15(3): Costs Related To Wrongful Dismissal Suits

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Ramsay on October 20, 2004, regarding the costs related to wrongful dismissal suits.

First, I must emphasize that the decision to dismiss an employee is a serious one, taken only after careful consideration and as a result of the progressive discipline or performance management process. Employees at the North Slave Correctional Centre are part of the bargaining unit represented by the Union of Northern Workers. The Collective Agreement between the Government of the Northwest Territories and the UNW provides that employees who have been dismissed may have the merits of that decision reviewed by an arbitrator. This is known as the grievance arbitration process. As part of this, it has been a long-standing practice of the GNWT and the UNW to review dismissal and other grievances which are referred to arbitration, before they are heard by an arbitrator to determine whether a compromise can be reached between the parties. It is open to the parties to enter into settlement agreements at any time before an arbitrator has reached a final decision and it is not unusual for arbitrators to assist the parties in reaching agreements through mediation.

Settlement agreements are not considered an admission of fault by either the employee or the employer. Rather, they are compromises made by the parties without a legally binding determination on whether a dismissal is justified or wrongful. They are entered into in consideration of a number of factors, including, but not limited to, the costs of the arbitration, which are borne equally between the UNW and the government.

Mr. Speaker, where settlement agreements are reached without an arbitration hearing or decision, they typically include confidentiality provisions that are binding on all of the parties and that must be honoured scrupulously, both in letter and in spirit. In those cases that proceed to a formal hearing and a decision is made by the arbitrator, the results become public. However, in many cases the

amount of the compensation, if any, awarded to an employee is frequently left to the parties to determine and is not included as part of the decision. The compensation information is typically not public, either because the parties have each agreed to keep it private or because of the provisions of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, or both.

The Financial Management Board Secretariat is able to track those matters referred to arbitration back to 1992. Since that time, nine matters alleging wrongful dismissal have been referred to arbitration by the UNW on behalf of employees working at what is now North Slave Correctional Centre. In none of these cases was a determination made by an arbitrator that the employee was wrongfully terminated by the GNWT. In five of these cases, the UNW withdrew the grievances without wage compensation for the affected employee, and there were no hearings. In two others, the parties reached agreements that included compensation for wages in lieu of notice without the necessity of a hearing on the discharges themselves.

The two remaining cases went to a hearing on the issue of whether discharge was appropriate in the circumstances. In one case, the arbitrator upheld the discharge and dismissed the grievance. In the other, the parties adjourned the hearing prior to its completion, and ultimately entered into confidential Minutes of Settlement dealing with, among other things, compensation for the employee.

In light of the fact that so few dismissal grievances arising out of YCC/NSCC have gone to arbitration or resulted in a formal and public decision on compensation for a particular employee, there is a significant risk that disclosure of the total amount of money paid out to settle dismissal grievances at YCC/NSCC would result in a breach of the confidentiality provisions of the settlement agreements. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I am unable to provide further information on this matter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Return To Written Question 47-15(3): Housing For Health Care Professionals

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to a written question asked by Mr. Yakeleya on October 21, 2004, regarding housing for health care professionals.

1. What is the number of health care professionals, per community, currently in need of affordable accommodations?

As the Government of the Northwest Territories does not track employee housing needs, on the basis of affordability or any other criteria, it is not possible to provide this information.

Generally, it is assumed that all employees need affordable accommodation and to offset the higher cost of living in the NWT, all GNWT employees are provided with a northern allowance, the value of which is based on the community in which they are employed. The allowance ranges in value from \$1,862 in Yellowknife to \$14,279 in Sachs Harbour. In addition, nurses employed in one, two or three nurse community health centres -- nursing stations -- receive an annual special allowance of \$9,000, \$6,000 or \$4,500 respectively.

2. What is the number of social workers and health care professionals, per community, who have not accepted work in small communities because of the lack of affordable housing?

As the Government of the Northwest Territories does not document information on why individuals decline employment offers, it is not possible for the department to provide the number of social workers and health care professionals who have declined employment offers because of a lack of affordable housing.

The health and social services authorities advise that their records indicate that of the 282 employment offers made during the period January 1 to October 25, 2004, only four offers were rejected due to housing issues.

3. What is the number of health care professionals that currently rent government-owned units and what is the rate(s) of rent that they pay?

The health and social services authorities advise that during the period January 1 to October 25, 2004, a number of health care professionals resided in either government-owned or leased units, as follows:

- a) The Deh Cho Health and Social Services Authority advises that accommodation was made available to two nurses and one other health care professional, at a rate of \$1,000 per month.
- b) The Dogrib Community Services Board advises that accommodation was made available to eight nurses and eight other health care professionals, at the rates of \$450 and \$650 per month respectively for one-bedroom and two-bedroom nursing units; and \$750 and \$850 respectively for other one-bedroom and two-bedroom units.
- c) The Fort Smith Health and Social Services Authority advises that accommodation was provided to one physician at the rate of \$1,200 per month, including utilities.
- d) The Hay River Health and Social Services Authority advises that furnished accommodations are rented or leased for use by locum physicians as per the terms and conditions of the standardized locum physician contract.
- e) The Inuvik Regional Health and Social Services Authority advises that six nurses and three other health care professionals were provided with accommodation at the health centres, at a rate of \$1,000 per month.
- f) The Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority advises that rental accommodation was made available to two nurses and one other health care professional at the rate of \$415.58 per month in Lutselk'e and \$938.46 per month in Fort Resolution.
- g) The Stanton Territorial Health Authority advises that accommodation was made available to seven locum physicians as per the terms and conditions of the standardized locum physician contract, and to two other health care professionals at rental rates of \$1,149, \$1,380 or \$1,400 per month.

It is apparent, with the variety of rates being charged by the authorities, that a system-wide review is needed. This

will be raised with board chairs at the February Joint Leadership Council meeting.

4. What other jurisdictions in Canada provide housing for nurses and other health care professionals in remote communities?

The department will survey the other two territories, northern Alberta and one other jurisdiction, such as Labrador, to determine what housing support, if any, these jurisdictions provide to their nurses and other health care professionals.

Return To Written Question 48-15(3): Policies On Escorts For Medical Travel

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to a written question asked by Mr. Pokiak on October 22, 2004, regarding escorts for medical travel.

1. The number of patients from Nunakput who were denied escorts and why.

The medical travel policy identified two types of escorts, medical and non-medical. Medical escorts are health care professionals who need to provide professional care to the patient while traveling. A non-medical escort is an adult who is authorized to accompany a patient who is unable to travel without some assistance or who is authorized to stay for part or all of the medical treatment. The department pays for the travel expenses of these escorts. Provided they cover their travel expenses, family members are also always able to accompany a patient who is traveling to receive medical care and treatment.

2. Who makes the final decisions for patients requiring escorts?

The referring health professional or physician makes the recommendations regarding the need for escorts and non-medical escorts. The medical travel officers at the Stanton Territorial Hospital, and the Inuvik and Fort Smith health and social services authorities ensure that recommendations and requests for non-medical escorts meet the criteria outlined in the medical travel policy. Medical travel officers may ask the health professional making the referral to review the circumstances relating to the need for an escort or non-medical escort. Appeals of their decisions can be made to the territorial services division of the Department of Health and Social Services.

Beginning in the new year, Stanton's medical director will be involved in reviewing all medical travel referrals.

3. Information on the policy for travel of patients who require escorts.

The medical travel policy outlines the criteria for both medical and non-medical escorts. The policy is a public document which can be accessed on the Government of the Northwest Territories web site, at www.gov.nt.ca/publications/policies.

4. How does the department keep the families informed when their loved ones are traveling for medical reasons?

In general, a patient's medical condition is very personal and private. Most patients manage their own communications with their family members. Unless the patient is a dependent, health care professionals do not

normally discuss the patient's condition with family members. There are times, such as when a patient is not able to make decisions about their treatment, that other arrangements are needed. In these situations, health care professionals will take steps to ensure communications are maintained with the family.

When a patient has been receiving medical care and treatment at a regional, territorial or southern health centre, the health professionals will, as part of case management or discharge planning, communicate with the patient, the family and local health care providers to ensure that the patient is able to continue accessing required services and care. These discussions may be undertaken by telephone or by video conferencing in communities that are equipped with televideo or telemedicine units. When necessary, arrangements can also be made to have official language service providers available to participate in the teleconferencing.

Return To Written Question 49-15(3): Statistics At the North Slave Correctional Centre

I have a return to written question asked by Ms. Lee on October 25, 2004, regarding statistics at the North Slave Correctional Centre.

Between August 2001 and October 2004 there were 34 incidents of inmate/staff confrontation and assault recorded in the corrections offender management system.

On October 25, 2004, at the North Slave Correctional Centre, there were a total of eight employees off on sick leave, one employee was off on special leave that was scheduled to return on November 5, 2004, and seven employees were on transfer assignments.

Of those employees on sick leave, three were scheduled to return on November 4, 2004, one to return on October 27, 2004, one to return on November 9, 2004, and one to return on November 29, 2004.

There were 91 funded positions at the Yellowknife Correctional Centre and there continue to be 91 funded positions at the North Slave Correctional Centre. At the time of Ms. Lee's question, vacancies were being filled; however, there are now 91 full-time staff members.

The issue of staff complement required for the North Slave Correctional Centre, and the use of casuals, overtime and hiring practices was examined in the report Government of the Northwest Territories Department of Justice Corrections Service Human Resource Plan and Review - Final Report and Recommendations. The department prepared an action plan to implement these recommendations, and during this session I will provide an update and table a status report on the department's response.

Return To Written Question 50-15(3): Supervisory Policy

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Ms. Lee on October 25, 2004, regarding supervisory policy.

The GNWT's policy on supervisory reporting relationships is contained in the GNWT Code of Conduct. The code outlines the responsibilities of employees and managers with respect to potential conflict of interest situations and

assists in the prevention of these situations. It also provides some guidance when conflicts do arise and outlines what steps employees should take to ensure they do not place themselves in a situation that can be perceived as a conflict of interest.

The GNWT Code of Conduct was implemented in February 2001 and has proven to be an extremely useful document in that it ensures that both employees and the public are aware of the high standards of conduct expected of public service employees.

Specifically, section 79 of the code relates to dealing with family, friends and relatives, and states:

An employee shall not supervise a member of their immediate family, unless there are extenuating circumstances and the deputy minister approves an exemption from this section of the code.

The GNWT must balance the provisions of the Code of Conduct, which do not allow direct reporting relationships between relatives and the provisions of the Northwest Territories Human Rights Act that do not allow employers to discriminate based on family status.

An employer refusing to employ or to continue to employ an individual solely due to his/her relationship with a family member may constitute discrimination on the basis of family status under human rights legislation and within the meaning of the Human Rights Act. While impartial hiring policies are reasonably necessary for public employers, total bans are not.

In reviewing the GNWT Code of Conduct and human rights legislation, employees and/or prospective employees who are directly related are not denied all employment or even a particular type of employment, they may, however, be denied a position where one employee supervises a member of their immediate family. Only under extenuating circumstances and with the deputy minister's approval will exceptions be considered.

Given this, the GNWT will continue to exercise sound judgment when placing employees who are directly related into supervisor/subordinate roles. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Return To Written Question 51-15(3): Fuel Spill At Jackfish Lake Power Plant

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Ms. Lee on October 25, 2004, regarding the fuel spill at Jackfish Lake power plant.

Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table a report on the fuel spill and information requested on the staff complement, overtime hours and employee morale at the Jackfish Lake power plant. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Return To Written Question 52-15(3): Hunting Practices And Charges

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Villeneuve on October 25, 2004, regarding hunting practices and charges. I am pleased to provide the following responses.

1. How many infractions have taken place since the Akaitcho incident in 2002 involving a DIAND official?

The department has investigated 66 incidents of wastage in the Northwest Territories since 2002. The incidents of wastage occurred in the following administrative regions: eight in the North Slave, 23 in the South Slave, three in the Deh Cho, eight in the Sahtu, and 24 in Inuvik.

2. Of all the infractions, how many have resulted in official charges being laid or fines imposed?

The Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development has laid charges for 13 incidents of wastage in the Northwest Territories since the Akaitcho incident in 2002. RWED was successful in obtaining convictions for all 13 incidents. There were no convictions or warnings given in the Sahtu region.

The convictions of wastage occurred in the following administrative regions: three convictions and one warning in the North Slave, eight convictions in the South Slave, one conviction in the Deh Cho, and one conviction in Inuvik.

3. What changes in the new Wildlife Act will help to alleviate or deter this type of practice in the Northwest Territories?

The introduction and passage of a proposed new Wildlife Act is still pending. During public consultation, people indicated that they would like wastage defined better and that penalties for wastage should be higher.

Under the new Wildlife Act, wastage could be more specifically defined. In addition, fines could be increased to act as more of a deterrent. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Return To Written Question 53-15(3): Statistics About Smoking

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to a written question asked by Mr. Yakeleya on October 25, 2004, regarding statistics about smoking.

1. The number of people in the Sahtu region who acknowledge they smoke.

According to the 1999 NWT labour force survey, an estimated 1,050 of the Sahtu region's approximately 2,000 residents 15 years of age and older smoke cigarettes. The rate of smoking among residents 15 years of age and older was 55 percent.

2. A breakdown of smokers by age, gender and youth.

It is estimated that 1,050, or 55 percent, of Sahtu residents are smokers. Of these, an estimated

- a) 570, or 55 percent, are males and 480, or 45 percent, are females;
- b) 130, or 62 percent, are ages 15 to 19;
- c) 290, or 63 percent, are ages 20 to 29;
- d) 510, or 59 percent, are ages 30 to 49; and
- e) 130, or 33 percent, are age 50 and up.

3. The cost of cigarettes in the Sahtu communities.

As of November 1, 2004, the cost of a package of cigarettes in the Sahtu communities ranges in price from \$13.91 to \$15.84, GST included.

4. What are the actual health costs to the NWT associated with smoking?

It is difficult to estimate health costs associated with smoking as complex studies are required to determine the proportion of smoking-attributable diseases actually caused by smoking. Smoking-attributable costs include hospital visits, physician costs, drug/pharmaceutical costs, worker absenteeism, future earnings lost due to premature death, et cetera. In terms of an individual's health, costs can include poor prenatal growth, premature birth, cardiovascular disease, cancer, respiratory disease, gastrointestinal effects, dental effects -- teeth and gums -- decreased bone density, premature aging of skin and poor physical fitness. Children exposed to environmental tobacco smoke are at greater risk of lower respiratory infections including bronchitis, croup and pneumonia, as well as sore throats and ear infections.

The NWT's 2001 report, Smoke Alarm, states that:

"...the estimated net cost to society of tobacco use in the NWT is approximately \$10 million annually. Societal costs for health care, residential care, fire damage, absenteeism from work and lost productivity due to premature death associated with smoking are estimated to be \$31 million annually. These costs are offset by approximately \$21 million in tobacco tax revenue annually."

5. In the Sahtu region, who works with the department on smoking education programs?

Community health representatives -- CHRs -- have a key role in health promotion at the community level. Under the direction of the health and social services authority, CHRs initiate tobacco reduction activities and promote territorial tobacco education programs, such as the Don't be a Butthead - Be Smoke Free campaign.

Other individuals, such as health care professionals, community wellness workers, teachers or Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program coordinators are also involved in tobacco education in many communities.

In October 2004, all NWT schools were provided with tobacco curriculum units and resource materials, suitable for grade levels 3 to 4, 5 to 6 and 8 to 9. The materials are flexible and can be used for various grade levels, depending on school or community needs.

6. Can the department provide us with the types of financial support to combat smoking in the NWT?

An individual's employer health benefits program may cover smoking cessation aids or nicotine replacement products, such as nicotine gum, the nicotine patch and prescription medications, such as Zyban, provided that the individual has either a prescription from their physician or has received prior approval from their health benefits provider.

Return To Written Question 54-14(3): Market Housing Initiative

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Ms. Lee on October 26, 2004, regarding the market housing initiative.

The budget for phase one of the market housing initiative is \$2,815,626. As of October 26, 2004, \$2,546,931 of this budget has been spent or committed.

The GNWT's business incentive policy was waived only for the supply of mobile homes. The contract for the supply of mobile homes is valued at \$1.345 million. In addition, a sole source contract was awarded to NTCL Ltd. of Hay River for transportation valued at \$158,589. All other contracted services related to the market housing initiative were subject to the business incentive policy, these included lumber, millwork, mechanical, fuel and sewage tanks, tank stands, gravel pad construction, and site installed features. The total value of work contracted under the business incentive policy is \$1,022,792.

The following companies have received contracts under the market housing initiative:

Southern contractors: Winalta Inc., \$1,345 million.

Northern contractors: NTCL, \$158,589; Hay River Home Building Centre, \$45,348; Igloo Building Supplies, \$21,793; J&R Mechanical, \$15,206; Paul Bros Welding, \$26,252; Canzeal/Fibreglass North, \$170,175; Arctic Circle Enterprises Ltd, \$72,323; Beaver Enterprises Ltd., \$42,076; Cherdon Enterprises Ltd., \$12,646; Digaa Enterprises Ltd., \$12,129; Norm's Fuel Ltd., \$37,500; John Bjornson Construction, \$48,900; Lutsel K'e Dene Band, \$96,000; Tomahawk Construction, \$46,000; Arctic Sunwest Charters, \$2,513; W.M. Black Consulting, \$59,950; Red Dog Mountain Services, \$50,085; No Nonsense Services, \$42,786. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Ms. Lee on October 26, 2004, regarding power generated at the Jackfish and Bluefish plants.

Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table a list indicating the amount of power being used at the Jackfish and Bluefish plants, and highlighting the significant increases or decreases in each plant over the last three years. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Braden on October 26, 2004, regarding the market housing initiative results.

Twenty-two units were delivered for phase one of the market housing initiative in seven communities: Fort Good Hope, Tulita, Fort Providence, Fort Resolution, Norman wells, Fort Liard and Lutselk'e.

As of January 31, 2005, eight of the 22 units were occupied. Tenants include divisional education council employees, GNWT employees, health and social services board employees, and community residents.

To identify potential clients and their needs, the Housing Corporation completed a market rental housing assessment in all non-market-based communities. For the assessment, responses were solicited from health and social services boards, education boards, local housing organizations, departments, development corporations and private companies. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Yakeleya on October 26, 2004, regarding benefits from oil and gas exploration. I am pleased to provide the following response.

There are two types of benefits that could be attributed to oil and gas programs during exploration, development and extraction of the resource: direct and indirect benefits.

Direct Benefits

Direct benefits are in the form of financial revenues that accrue to federal, territorial and aboriginal governments such as royalties and taxes.

Total estimated direct financial benefit from the GNWT from oil and gas programs between 1999 and 2003 range between \$20 million and \$27 million. Total estimated direct financial benefit to the GNWT for 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003 were \$20 million, \$27 million, \$23 million, \$24 million and \$20 million, respectively.

The federal government is responsible for management of subsurface petroleum rights and, as such, accrues the royalties from oil and gas development. The estimated royalties accrued to the federal government oil and gas development in the NWT and Nunavut for 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003 were \$7.1 million, \$13.4 million, \$24.7 million, \$24.2 million and \$24.5 million, respectively.

However, there are currently no producing oil and gas fields in Nunavut, so all of these royalties can be assumed to be generated from NWT oil and gas operations. With regard to royalties that are generated from Sahtu operations, because there are a limited number of operations, it would be possible to identify information on a specific operation. Therefore, the federal government does not disclose this information as it would contravene federal legislation to ensure privacy.

Aboriginal governments in the NWT, as per their land claim settlement agreement, receive a certain portion of the royalties received by the federal government from resource development in the NWT. For instance, the Sahtu receives 7.5 percent on the first \$2 million of resources royalties and 1.5 percent of resource royalties in excess of the \$2 million.

Indirect Benefits

The most tangible indirect benefits that the NWT and its residents accrue are the employment, training and business opportunities created by oil and gas development during exploration, development and extraction of the resource.

For instance, in the 2004-05 winter season, oil and gas companies budgeted about \$100 million to spend on oil and gas projects in the Sahtu region. Active companies included Apache Canada Ltd., PetroCanada Inc., Devlan Resources Ltd., Northrock Resources Ltd. and Colt/KBR Engineering Corporation. About 530 individuals were employed. It can be assumed that a portion of the budget was spent in the NWT and some of those employed are NWT residents and aboriginal people.

Further, 62 individuals from the Sahtu region, out of 109 in all of the NWT, received training relevant to employment

in the oil and gas sector during the period April to December 2004.

In summary, oil and gas exploration programs provide jobs and contribute some financial benefits to the GNWT. As well, these programs create opportunities for new oil and gas field discoveries. Such discoveries will benefit future generations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Return To Written Question 58-15(3): GNWT Campus Direct Appointments

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mrs. Groenewegen on October 27, 2004, regarding direct appointments in the Government of the Northwest Territories.

After careful consideration, I am inclined to think that disclosing the name of every individual ever appointed to the public service without competition may constitute an unreasonable invasion of personal privacy as defined by the NWT's Access to Information and Protect of Privacy Act.

However, I am able to advise that of the 111 individuals appointed to the public service in 2004, all were residents of the NWT, 79 were affirmative action candidates and a significant majority were recent graduates from post-secondary programs, for example, nursing and social work programs.

Finally, I would also advise that the number of individuals direct appointed to the public service in any given year is publicly reported, without reference to names or positions, through the public service annual reports. The annual reports from 1995 to 2003 are available through the Financial Management Board Secretariat's web site at www.gov.nt.ca/FMBS/documents/documents.html and the 2004 Public Service Annual Report will be completed and released in the spring of 2005. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Return To Written Question 59-15(3): Thebacha Campus Direct Appointments

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mrs. Groenewegen on October 27, 2004, regarding Thebacha Campus direct appointments.

One direct appointment has been made since April 1, 2002, to a position at the Thebacha Campus of Aurora College, Fort Smith. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Return To Written Question 60-15(3): Long-Term Plans For Housing Corporation

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Menicoche on October 27, 2004, regarding long-term plans.

The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation uses data from the NWT community survey to determine need in all regions and communities. Conducted every four years, these surveys help the corporation allocate funding to seniors and elders through programs such as the Independent Housing Program, IHP, Senior Citizens Home Repair Program -- SCHR -- and the Seniors/Disabled Preventative Maintenance Initiative -- SDPMI.

One of the main goals of the Housing Corporation is to keep elders in their own homes for as long as possible.

The corporation provides new homeownership units to elders through IHP and ensures that existing units meet the needs of seniors through our home repair and maintenance programs. The corporation will continue to use data from the 2004 NWT community survey and consult with community leaders to monitor and respond to the housing needs of seniors. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Return To Written Question 61-15(3): Compensation And Rehabilitation Programs For Chronic Pain

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Ms. Sandy Lee on October 27, 2004, regarding compensation and rehabilitation benefits.

In light of the emergent issues from the Supreme Court of Canada decision *Nova Scotia WCB v. Martin* and their possible ramifications, a comprehensive and nation-wide review of the "best practices" related to the management of claims involving pain disorders were conducted by the WCB's policy unit. The review confirmed that the WCB's current practices with respect to claimants with pain disorders was already aligned with the principles of the *Martin* decision and resulted in the development of new policy 03.10, entitled "Pain Disorders," which outlines how the WCB will accept, treat and compensate claims for pain disorders. As a part of the policy development process, the WCB consulted with the workers' advisor, and all of his suggestions were considered. This policy was approved by the WCB Governance Council and came into effect on September 16, 2004.

All workers who sustain an injury or suffer an occupational disease from a workplace accident or occupational exposure are eligible for the same level and degree of benefits; including workers who suffer from chronic pain. These benefits include, but are not limited to:

- Non-monetary benefits: which include medical treatment, physical and occupational therapy, medical aids and equipment, and vocational rehabilitation programs and services. Where the pain from a workplace injury is a barrier to participation in programs, or in return to work, workers may be eligible for pain management services and programs.
- Temporary compensation benefits: which include total temporary disability payments, wage replacement, and/or total partial disability payments, vocational exploration benefits, vocational rehabilitation benefits while participating in rehabilitation programs and job search benefits.
- Permanent disability benefits: eligibility for these benefits is based on objective and measurable medical evidence of permanent impairment. Where there is a measurable permanent physical impairment, the degree of impairment is rated in accordance with the NWT & Nunavut Permanent Impairment Rating Guide. Based on the rating provided, a lifetime pension is calculated and paid to the worker.

The Governance Council, in approving policy 3.10, Pain Disorders, in September 2004, made the decisions that the WCB of the NWT & Nunavut would not award a permanent impairment rating where a worker had no measurable physical impairment and pain was the only symptom of

disability. This decision was based on consultation and interjurisdictional review and reflects that pain does not provide objective measurable evidence on which to base a permanent impairment rating.

All claims are dealt with on a case-by-case basis, with the eligibility of benefits based on the individual's particular case. Workers with pain disorders associated with a workplace injury have their entitlement to benefits determined through the same processes as other injured workers. All injured workers, whether suffering from a pain disorder or not, are assessed and entitled based on the medical evidence/diagnosis as it pertains to his or her specific case.

There are no different considerations from an adjudication standpoint apart from the fact that chronic pain cannot be given a permanent impairment rating as previously indicated.

The WCB of the NWT and Nunavut remains committed to helping those workers who suffer from chronic pain to cope with this condition through the provision of other programs and services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Return To Written Question 62-15(3): Housing Repair And Construction Funding

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Yakeleya on October 27, 2004, regarding housing repair and construction funding.

There are currently nine log units in the Sahtu in need of major repair. Materials to repair all of these units will be delivered either during the winter road season or via barge in the summer. Repairs on four log houses were completed during the 2003-04 construction season. Construction of three new log houses will be completed in Deline by March 31, 2005.

The specific amount spent in the construction of a stick-built three-bedroom home varies depending on the community in which the home is being constructed. The cost of construction depends largely on the cost of land in each community. Construction of a three-bedroom stick-built home ranges from \$140,600 in Kakisa to a high of \$260,000 in Inuvik. In the Sahtu, the cost ranges from \$200,966 to \$217,501.

The business incentive policy is applied for the supply of materials for all new housing construction undertaken by the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. Over the past 12 years, the corporation has spent over \$18 million on northern manufactured materials and supplies in the construction of new housing units. These supplies include water, doors, windows, trusses and kitchen cabinets, among others. Since the creation of two territories in 1999, the corporation has spent an average of \$704,000 annually on northern manufactured goods for NWT housing projects.

The Housing Corporation has increased its lobbying efforts with regard to securing new federal funding. During a recent meeting of federal, provincial and territorial Housing Ministers, recognition was given to the unique needs of the North and the inadequacy of per capita funding for the NWT. Motion 21-15(3), carried by the Legislative Assembly during the October 2004 session, calls on the corporation to "work with other NWT stakeholders to develop a convincing proposal to take to

the federal government for additional investments in the NWT public housing." Preliminary work has already begun on this front and will continue over the course of the year.

The Housing Corporation offers the following programs to eligible clients:

- Expanded Downpayment Assistance Program
- Independent Housing Program
- Senior Citizen Home Repair Program
- Northern Territorial Rental Purchase Program
- Sale of Housing Material Packages
- Elders on the Land Initiative
- Seniors and/or Disabled Preventative Maintenance Initiative
- Pile Repair Initiative
- Loan Guarantee Program
- Refinancing of NWTHC Mortgage Portfolio
- Mortgage Assistance Program
- Home Adaptations for Seniors Independence
- Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program
- Emergency Repair Program
- Shelter Enhancement - Renovation
- Rent Supplement Program
- Public Housing Program
- Supported Lease Program
- Sale of Public Housing Initiative

In addition, a publication outlining Housing Corporation programs is available at every local housing organization. These details are also available on the NWTHC web site at <http://www.nwthc.gov.nt.ca>. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Return To Question 63-15(3): Rent Scale Policies And Harmonization

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Villeneuve on October 27, 2004, regarding rent scale policies.

It is the policy of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation to assess rent on a sliding scale based on total household income.

There are no plans to return to the harmonization initiative.

The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation is committed to implementing the 1995 rent scale. On April 1, 2005, the 90 percent level of the rent scale increase will be implemented with the 100 percent level being implemented in 2006. Continuing with the implementation of the rent scale removes inequities and ensures those with greatest need receive the most help. The Housing Corporation's community partners, the local housing organizations, regularly meet with public housing tenants to explain policies and to address their housing needs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Hawkins on October 28, 2004, regarding federal funding to the Government of the Northwest Territories.

Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table a report summarizing the funding provided to the Government of

the Northwest Territories by the federal government for the fiscal years 1994-95 to 2003-04. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Yakeleya on October 28, 2004, regarding chipsealing in the Sahtu region.

According to the current schedule for community main street chipseal work, the communities of Tulita and Fort Good Hope are scheduled for chipseal projects in the Sahtu region. Assessment and design work is anticipated to begin in Tulita in 2007-08. Assessment, design and crushing and stockpiling of gravel rock took place in Fort Good Hope in 2003-04, and was followed by upgrades and drainage work in 2004-05. Further upgrade and drainage work is anticipated in Fort Good Hope in 2006-07, with final upgrading and chipseal work to occur in 2007-08.

The chipseal schedule is updated annually by the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs in consultation with the Department of Transportation and the current schedule is subject to approval by the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Yakeleya had also requested information on the alternate methods of paving roads and controlling dust. Currently, communities use many forms of dust control, including calcium chloride, Road Saver Plus -- N-dust or N1 -- water, and DL-10, an asphalt emulsion.

The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs and the Department of Transportation are currently researching options for providing dust control in the non-tax-based communities. A contract has been awarded to EBA Engineering Consultants Limited, to assist in this work by completing a dust control technology study. A final report is anticipated in late February 2004, at which time the two departments will prepare recommendations for further consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Yakeleya on October 29, 2004, regarding programs and services for persons with disabilities.

1. Provide a list of programs and services that are offered to the disabled people in communities and larger cities and by which government department.

Persons with disabilities have the access to the same health and social service programs, services and benefits that other NWT residents are able to access. In addition, depending on the severity of their disability and the nature of their individual needs, they can also access home care, long-term care, supported living, respite, extended health care benefits and rehabilitation services.

Persons with disabilities also have equal access to all other government programs and services. Some programs, such as income support, inclusive schooling, housing and employability programs and services have components specifically designed to address the needs of persons with disabilities. Children with disabilities and

their families have access to early intervention services through the early childhood development initiative and learning supports through the Department of Education, Culture and Employment.

2. Within the health authorities of the NWT, what type of programs and services are coordinated by the authorities?

Health and social services authorities coordinate provision of home care, long-term care, supported living, respite care and rehabilitation services at the community and regional levels.

3. Where does all the disabled funding services come from to serve the disabled people in the North, federal, territorial or non-government agencies?

The federal and territorial governments and non-government organizations such as the NWT Council for Persons with Disabilities, provide funding for services for persons with disabilities. Local non-government organizations also undertake fund raising activities in their home communities.

4. What NGO agencies are delivering programs or services in small communities?

Non-government organizations, at the territorial and community levels, provide programs and services or assistance to persons with disabilities in the Dogrib region; the NWT Council for Persons with Disabilities has the North Slave Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities. The community of Hay River is looking at developing an Association for Community Living. The community of Fort Smith has a Society for Persons with Disabilities.

At the territorial level, the NWT Council for Persons with Disabilities provides a toll-free 1-800 information line and a web site that persons with disabilities and their families can access, and a parking placard program for all persons with disabilities.

5. Can the Minister provide a list of the various categories of disabilities in the Sahtu and the number of Sahtu people who are classified under them?

In 1999-2000, a needs assessment of persons with disabilities was undertaken by a multi-sector partnership. The purpose was to determine the nature and distribution of disabilities within the NWT. The final report, Living with Disability...Living with Dignity: Needs Assessment of Persons Living with Disabilities in the NWT, was released in October 2000. The report provided information on five disabilities: physical; sensory - hearing, vision, speech and balance; cognitive; intellectual and learning; as well as some information on psychiatric disability.

In the Sahtu region, 33 people with disabilities completed the personal questionnaires that were part of the assessment. The report also indicates that there is a perceived high level of special needs among school-age children in the Sahtu region, but the extent to which these needs can be attributed to disability is not known as there is a lack of disclosure and trust around disability issues and most people with disabilities who require services must seek them outside the region.

The final report, Living with Disability...Living with Dignity can be accessed on the Government of the Northwest Territories web site, www.gov.nt.ca, the Department of Health and Social Services web site, www.hlthss.gov.nt.ca or it can be made available on request. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to a written question asked by Mr. Yakeleya on October 29, 2004, regarding funding for an all-weather road in the Sahtu.

1. Please provide the latest updated discussion with the federal Minister regarding future funding for an all-weather road in the Sahtu.

I met with the Honourable Jean Lapierre, Minister of Transport, on Wednesday, November 10, 2004, and we confirmed the federal government's commitment of funding from the Canadian strategic infrastructure fund -- CSIF -- for improving the Sahtu winter road system over the period of six fiscal years from 2003-04 to 2008-09. At the same time, I reminded him of the federal government's continuing financial responsibility for the construction of new roads in the Northwest Territories and inquired of him about other potential sources of new funding.

The territorial Department of Transportation is engaged with the federal Department of Transport in identifying both the immediate and long-term impacts of the Mackenzie gas project on our transportation system and particularly on the Mackenzie Valley winter roads.

The upgrading of the seasonal winter road system in the Sahtu to an all-weather highway remains a primary goal of the department's highway strategy for the Northwest Territories.

2. In the absence of federal funding, would the Minister consider a pilot project in the Sahtu for the next year using the community construction approach?

The Department of Transportation considered the community construction approach in its 2000 highway strategy, Investing in Roads. As no specific funding was available for this, the department has concentrated instead on improving the Sahtu winter road system. This approach has won federal support and contributions for installing permanent bridges and \$1 million a year over five years for grade improvements on the winter road right-of-way. The department will organize the grade improvement projects to take advantage of local contractors in the contract awards.

3. What are the department plans to improve the highway roads in the Sahtu, which would show an improvement from their present conditions?

By the end of the fiscal year 2008-09, with the cost-sharing contributions from both DIAND and CSIF, the Department of Transportation plans to spend a total of \$52.7 million on improvements to the Sahtu winter road system including substantial expenditures on grade improvements and better highway signage.

In addition to these programmed capital improvements, the department expects that its annual winter road construction expenditures plus opportunities to cooperate

jointly with the private sector oil and gas and pipeline companies will result in still more enhancements to the Sahtu winter road system.

The work planned for the Sahtu winter roads over the next five years will put them in far better condition than they are today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

I have a return to a written question asked by Mr. Braden on October 29, 2004, regarding trends in drug-related offences.

The RCMP have reported the following number of total drug incidents, under the Controlled Drug and Substances Act, in the Northwest Territories over the past five years: in 1999, the number of incidents was 301; in 2000, the number of incidents was 262; in 2001, the number of incidents was 242; in 2002, the number of incidents was 375; and in 2003, the number of incidents was 355.

The department's files show the following number of people admitted to correctional facilities with drug offences as the most serious offence: in 2001, 28 people were admitted to correctional facilities; in 2002, the number of people was 14; in 2003, 11 were admitted; and in 2004, the number of people was nine. Please note that these numbers do not show people who were admitted to correctional facilities for drug offences as well as for more serious offences.

The department's files show the following number of legal aid applicants for whom the major charge was under the Controlled Drug and Substances Act: in 1999, the number of legal aid applicants was 56; in 2000, the number was 50; in 2001, there were 30 applicants; in 2002, there were 35 applicants; in 2003, the number of legal aid applicants was 47; and in 2004, the number of legal aid applicants was 37. The higher numbers in 1999 and 2000 reflect the fact that the office was still taking applicants from Nunavut clients at that time.

The Annual Report of the Director of Child and Family Services 2001-02, released by the Department of Health and Social Services in December 2004, indicates that of the top 10 primary reasons for referral of children during 2001 and 2002, the major reasons were alcohol and drug problems on the part of the parents, adult/family violence, a children's disruptive behaviour and alleged physical abuse.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. 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. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

ITEM 12: REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON THE REVIEW OF BILLS

Bill 15: Tlicho Community Services Agency Act

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to report that the Standing Committee on Social Programs has reviewed Bill 15, Tlicho Community Services Agency Act, and wishes to report that Bill 15 is ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole.

Bill 18: An Act To Amend The Territorial Court Act

Mr. Speaker, I wish to also report that the Standing Committee on Social Programs has reviewed Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Territorial Court Act, and wishes to report that Bill 18 is now ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Bill 16: Northwest Territories Business Development And Investment Corporation Act

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to report that the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development has reviewed Bill 16, Northwest Territories Business Development and Investment Corporation Act, and wishes to report that Bill 16 is ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole, as amended and reprinted. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS**Tabled Document 89-15(3): Costs Related To Taltson And Bear River Hydro Projects**

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a number of documents for tabling. Mr. Speaker, further to my Return to Written Question 31-15(3), I wish to table the following document entitled Costs Related to Taltson and Bear River Hydro Projects. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Tabled Document 90-15(3): Fuel Spill At Jackfish Lake Power Plant**Tabled Document 91-15(3): EMD Plant Day Tank Fill System Overfill Incident Investigation - October 26, 2004**

Mr. Speaker, as well, further to my Return to Written Question 51-15(3), I wish to table the following documents entitled Fuel Spill at Jackfish Lake Power Plant and EMD Plant Day Tank Fill System Overfill Incident Investigation, October 26, 2004. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Tabled Document 92-15(3): Power Generated At Jackfish And Bluefish Plants

Mr. Speaker, further to my Return to Written Question 55-15(3), I wish to table the following document entitled Power Generated at Jackfish and Bluefish Plants. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Tabled Document 93-15(3): Government Of The Northwest Territories Summary Of Federal Funding 1994-95 To 2003-04

Mr. Speaker, further to my Return to Written Question 64-15(3), I wish to table the following document entitled Government of the Northwest Territories Summary of Federal Funding 1994-95 to 2003-04. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

Tabled Document 94-15(3): GNWT Summary Of Current Annual Funding Arrangements**Tabled Document 95-15(3): GNWT Summary Of Multi-Year Funding Arrangements**

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a few documents to table. Mr. Speaker, further to Return to Written Question 42-15(3), I wish to table the following documents entitled GNWT Summary of Current Annual Funding Arrangements and GNWT Summary of Multi-Year Funding Arrangements. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Tabled Document 96-15(3): Deton'Cho Corporation, Subsidiaries And Affiliated Companies

Further to my Return to Written Question 44-15(3), I wish to table the following document entitled Deton'Cho Corporation, Subsidiaries and Affiliated Companies. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Item 13, tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

ITEM 14: NOTICES OF MOTION**Motion 25-15(3): Appointment Of Chief Electoral Officer**

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Friday, February 11, 2005, I will move the following motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, that this Legislative Assembly, by virtue of section 3 of the Elections Act, recommends to the Commissioner the appointment of Glen McLean as Chief Electoral Officer for the Northwest Territories; and further, that this appointment shall be in effect until June 30, 2008.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Item 14, notices of motion. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

Motion 26-15(3): Appointments To Standing Committees And The Board Of Management

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Friday, February 11, 2005, I will move the following motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Range Lake, that the following appointments be rescinded:

- a) Mr. Robert Hawkins, Member for Yellowknife Centre, to the Standing Committee on Social Programs;
- b) Mr. Robert Villeneuve, Member for Tu Nedhe, to the Board of Management as an alternate; and,
- c) Mr. Norman Yakeleya, Member for Sahtu, to the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development as an alternate.

And further that the following appointments be effected:

- a) Mr. Robert Hawkins, Member for Yellowknife Centre, to the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development;
- b) Mr. Robert McLeod, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, to the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight, to the Standing Committee on Social Programs, and to the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development as an alternate; and
- c) Mr. Norman Yakeleya, Member for Sahtu, to the Board of Management as an alternate.

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Item 14, notices of motion. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to seek unanimous consent to return to tabling of documents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 13, tabling of documents. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Hawkins.

REVERT TO ITEM 13: TABELING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 97-15(3): GNWT Audit Bureau Positions And Vacancies

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to table in this House the positions filled and vacant in the Audit Bureau for the past five years, that demonstrates the seriousness of the issue I brought up earlier today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Item 13, tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion for first reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

ITEM 15: NOTICES OF MOTION FOR FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 19: Appropriation Act, 2005-2006

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Friday, February 11, 2005, I will move that Bill 19, Appropriation Act, 2005-2006, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Item 15, notices of motion for first reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

Bill 20: Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2004-2005

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Friday, February 11, 2005, I will move that Bill 20, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2004-2005, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Bill 21: An Act To Amend The Public Service Act

Mr. Speaker, I have another notice of motion. I give notice that on Friday, February 11, 2005, I will move that

Bill 21, An Act to Amend the Public Service Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Item 15, notices of motion for first reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

Bill 22: An Act To Amend The Education Act, No. 2

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Friday, February 11, 2005, I will move that Bill 22, An Act to Amend the Education Act, No. 2, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Item 15, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters. Item 20, report of Committee of the Whole. Item 21, third reading of bills. Item 22, Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, orders of the day for Thursday, February 10th, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Budget Address
3. Ministers' Statements
4. Members' Statements
5. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
6. Returns to Oral Questions
7. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
8. Oral Questions
9. Written Questions
10. Returns to Written Questions
11. Replies to Opening Address
12. Replies to Budget Address
13. Petitions
14. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
15. Tabling of Documents
16. Notices of Motion
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. Motions
19. First Reading of Bills
20. Second Reading of Bills
21. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
22. Report of Committee of the Whole

23. Third Reading of Bills

24. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Thursday, February 10, 2005, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURMENT

The House adjourned at 3:22 p.m.

