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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Friday, October 21, 2005****Members Present**

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

ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good morning, Members. Welcome back to the House. Members, before we begin today, my office has been informed by one of our colleagues, Mr. Pokiak, that he has lost one of his older sisters, Ms. Annie Noksana, who passed away quietly and peacefully in Tuktoyaktuk. I would like to pass on the House's condolences to Mr. Pokiak and his family on the loss of his sister.

Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**Minister's Statement 49-15(4): Graduation Levels For 2004-2005 School Year**

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

Good morning, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, in June of this year, communities throughout the Northwest Territories honoured their high school graduates. At the time these events were taking place, members of education authorities and educators told me that this was a banner year in terms of the number of students meeting graduation requirements. Now that the official numbers are in, I can confirm that, indeed, graduation levels were higher during the 2004-2005 academic year than they have ever been.

For reporting purposes, graduates are counted as of September 30th each year. During the past year, there were 343 high school graduates in the Northwest Territories. This is an increase of more than 50 graduates over last year and, based on preliminary population figures, represents a graduation rate of 51 percent. Previously, the highest rate for graduation in the NWT was 45 percent.

It is important to note that the increase is primarily the result of more students graduating in our smaller communities. In 2004, communities outside of Yellowknife, in the regional centres of Hay River, Fort Smith and Inuvik, produced 69 graduates. That number increased to 107 in 2005. Legislators, educators and administrators can be proud that the actions that have been taken to enhance community-based education activities and to complete grade extensions are resulting in more students accessing high school programs and completing their studies.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to note that the number of aboriginal graduates from our schools has increased substantially. In 2000, 30 percent of all graduates in the NWT were aboriginal. This year, 49 percent of all graduates in the Northwest Territories were aboriginal.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the students, their families, educators and education authorities in the Northwest Territories on their successful effort. Their collective contributions have demonstrated how commitment and hard work can pay off.

I look forward to working together with our partners to build on the successes of the 2004-2005 academic year and to continue to improve and strengthen the results of the school system. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Minister's Statement 50-15(4): Update On Early Learning And Childcare Negotiations

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have heard a great deal in this Legislative Assembly, since the beginning of this session, about the need to invest in early learning and childcare programming. The Report on Pre-Budget Consultation, prepared by the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight, discussed, in some detail, the needs in our communities with respect to these programs.

When the Prime Minister addressed his caucus last May, he made special mention that Canadians across the country were eager to participate in a national childcare system built on the principles of quality, accessibility, universality and developmental. The three northern territories fully support these principles and are anxious to participate fully in a national system on that basis.

Like most Canadians, northern residents welcomed the federal government's commitment to provide funding to enhance the early learning and childcare environment. The promise of funding to achieve a national vision is exciting. It was our intention to utilize this funding to focus on increased training opportunities for childcare workers and increased eligibility for parents wanting to access day care subsidies.

This week, I attended the federal, provincial and territorial Ministers of Social Development meeting to discuss the early learning and childcare negotiations with Minister Ken Dryden. Unfortunately, our negotiations with Ottawa have been very disappointing. Despite our significant efforts to secure an adequate funding arrangement, the federal offer remains unchanged and, therefore, unacceptable to

the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut governments.

To participate fully in this program in a way that ensures we can provide a level of comparable service to our residents, the Northwest Territories needs funding based on the fiscal reality of delivering programs and services in the North. The federal offer, as put forward by Minister Dryden, based on a per capita allocation, is woefully inadequate and is based on a lack of understanding of the realities of northern life.

Mr. Speaker, the position of the Government of the Northwest Territories on this issue is consistent with the approach we have taken since the inception of this Legislative Assembly two years ago. We believe that this program should be provided on a base plus basis, similar to other federal programs.

Mr. Speaker, without a funding agreement that provides an adequate level of funding, residents of the Northwest Territories will not see the same level of improvement in early learning and childcare that will be seen in other parts of the country. Mr. Speaker, this is completely unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, the government will not accept an agreement that means our residents will not be treated the same as other Canadians. It is clear that we have gone as far as we can to resolve this issue with Minister Dryden and his officials. The next step is for Premier Handley to raise this issue with Prime Minister Martin at their next meeting. We are hopeful that the Prime Minister will take steps to resolve this issue so the children and families of the Northwest Territories will receive the same level of service as all other Canadians.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the support of, and advice from, the Members of the Legislative Assembly as we work to resolve this issue. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Minister's Statement 51-15(4): Minister Absent From The House

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise Members that the Honourable Michael Miltenberger will be absent from the House today to attend a federal/provincial/territorial Ministers of Health meeting in Toronto. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On Colville Lake School

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I tabled a letter from the Colville Lake District Education Authority on October 18, 2005, in the House. That letter outlined several concerns that the district education authority has with the adequacy of the program space, classrooms and lack of sanitary facilities in the Colville Lake school.

There are 41 people, 36 students and five staff, in that building approved for an occupancy load for 40 people. One room teaches kindergarten to Grade 12. The lack of space is such that one teacher teaches in the cloakroom, just a few feet away from the honey bucket. Mr. Speaker, I would maintain that this is not conducive to a good learning environment, nor is it really healthy. In fact, it's outrageous in this day and age. It's a crying shame, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Crying shame!

MR. YAKELEYA: A crying shame that we have to put our students in this type of building.

In examining the history of an addition for the Colville Lake School, I know the project has been delayed, and reduced in scope, since 2000-2001. That's five years, Mr. Speaker. It went from a \$1.5 million addition to be concluded in 2005-2006 in the 2000-2001 Main Estimates, to a modular classroom, at the cost of \$448,000, to be delivered in 2007-2008 in this year's main estimates. In fact, Mr. Speaker, at one point in the 2003-2004 Main Estimates, the project did not even appear in the books for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment.

The capital standards state the number one priority is life, safety and health concerns. I think that a -- and I do note the word "a" -- honey bucket may qualify as a health concern in schools. Also note that the capital standards also called for separate bathrooms for each of the sexes, built to current building concerns.

Mr. Speaker, with the amount of concerns that the DEA from Colville Lake has with the current school, I am expecting to be one awesome modular classroom. Just so people understand, modular classroom is just another way of saying portable classroom. I don't believe it's possible to complete a portable classroom to meet the program requirements in Colville. A portable...

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

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

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. A portable classroom may have a lifespan of 20 years. It makes more sense to renovate and put an addition onto the existing structure. I will have questions for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Alzheimer's Society Of Alberta And The NWT

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I would like to talk about a disease that affects an estimated 280,000 Canadians and can strike adults at any age. It

affects one in 13 people over the age of 65, and there is no known cause or cure. The disease I am referring to, Mr. Speaker, is the most common form of dementia, known as Alzheimer's. This dreaded affliction is a progressive, degenerative disease that affects the brain and, eventually, all aspects of a person's life, from mental abilities, emotions and moods, to behaviour and physical abilities.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to know that there is some help and support for people in the Northwest Territories who may be affected by this disease. The Alzheimer's Society of Alberta and the Northwest Territories was created in 2002, due mainly to the efforts of Marjorie Sandercock, who is currently the chair of the Yellowknife chapter. Other members I would like to mention include: Krista McLean, Jan Stirling, Linda Henry, Barb Bromley, Esther Braden, Wendy Carter, Lib Lowing and Mabel Collinson.

One of the main aims of the Alzheimer's Society is to develop awareness of this dreaded disease. Last year, the YK chapter partnered with the city library to create an Alzheimer's Disease Research Centre at the Yellowknife Public Library. These resources, which were funded by Health Canada, are available throughout the NWT.

The Yellowknife Alzheimer's chapter has also been part of an annual fundraising event across Canada called Coffee Break. For a few hours during the day, all proceeds from coffee sales at various venues are donated to the Alzheimer's Society. This year, the group has brought in close to \$1,300 from coffee breaks at BHP, Diavik, the Gourmet Cup and at the Baker's Centre.

This coming January, the Yellowknife chapter will be promoting a stage play to heighten Alzheimer's awareness. Directed by Chris Foreman, who will also be acting along with Erica Tesar, Strangers Among Us is a play about Alzheimer's disease. It will be presented at the Baker's Centre, and I encourage everyone to go out and support this worthy group at that time by attending this event.

On a much larger scale of support, Mr. Speaker, I encourage this government to continue to move forward with its plans to build a dementia facility next to the Aven Centre. This is a much needed facility in the Northwest Territories that will specifically cater to those affected by Alzheimer's disease and other dementia. Currently, these people are housed in the hospital or other facilities that do not meet their needs. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The dementia centre is a much needed facility not only for the people with these diseases, but for the caregivers who, over time, can face burnout from the constant care and vigilance that is often required. I would like to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your time today.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Calculation Of Workers' Compensation Benefits

MR. BRADEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, Mr. Speaker. The issue of unresolved workers' compensation claims of injured workers has been the subject of many of my statements and questions. For some injured workers, Mr. Speaker, through our process, it has become a never-ending treadmill of appeals and systemic process. For a number of these workers, when they think they are getting ahead, wouldn't you know it, but along comes some rule changes.

Mr. Speaker, just to explain briefly, if a worker is injured on the job, they expect to receive a disability pension, or allowance, depending on their injury, for the time that they are not able to work. In order to determine the amount of this compensation, the WCB takes into account their finances for a year, and a calculation is done on whatever their earnings or remuneration were.

Now in the NWT, Mr. Speaker, and Nunavut, we have a lot of seasonal jobs, like firefighting, mineral exploration, fishing and trapping, and they are the only sorts of income for some people. As I said, a lot of them are very seasonal by nature.

I am advised that Newfoundland and Nova Scotia do include employment insurance earnings in the remuneration calculations in the case of workers who may get injured on seasonal jobs.

Mr. Speaker, there have been a number of cases before the WCB Appeals Tribunal on the issue of whether or not to include employment insurance earnings. In fact, this tribunal has ruled in favour of some workers, with regard to the inclusion of EI. Once again, when workers think they are going to receive fairness and justice, guess what? Those rules get changed.

The WCB Governance Council, in September of this year, revised a policy redefining remuneration that specifically excluded employment insurance from the calculation for these workers. In addition to that, they backdated it, Mr. Speaker, all the way back to 1977. Mr. Speaker, this action flies in the face of tribunal decisions and, indeed, in the face of the high number of seasonal workers in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories, and it's time that this policy was revisited. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Day Care Service In Lutselk'e

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about the day care arrangements that the residents and the children of Lutselk'e are faced with every day. This issue has been brought forward by other Members, and also is an important topic in the pre-budget consultation report that was tabled in the House earlier this week.

Mr. Speaker, I will again talk about, and remind the Members opposite about, the unsafe, unhealthy and unstable conditions these kids and staff are dealing with every day. Unsafe conditions exist in the large community

hall that these kids are brought into every day, and at times there is still heavy equipment left out from the previous night's meetings. There are many hiding places small children can find interesting, and there are many other distractions the staff have to be wary of just for the safety of the children. It's unhealthy because, at times, the hall is not cleaned from the previous night's late meetings, leaving this task to the day care staff. It's unhealthy because of the detection of radon underneath the building several years ago that has still never been addressed. It's an unstable environment the day care has to be concerned about during the day.

The community may have unscheduled meetings that require the use of the hall that day, leaving the day care with no options but to close the doors for the day, disrupting the work schedules of these working parents who are trying to earn a living in a small community.

Mr. Speaker, I want these concerns not to be taken lightly by this government. It is not only an important concern of Lutselk'e, but in many other northern communities that are struggling to make day care service a reality. In Lutselk'e in particular, Mr. Speaker, there are empty housing units that have not been occupied for at least a year and may be empty for another year or two. I hope that this government, the Housing and Education Ministers in particular, can put their heads together and hammer out some temporary arrangements to allow the use of an empty housing unit to be converted and utilized as a day care facility. It would eliminate many of these unsafe, unhealthy, and unstable concerns, and put parents' minds at ease, even if for a few months, while, at the same time, a long-term arrangement can be developed and implemented to the satisfaction of the Lutselk'e residents. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Adult Literacy

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I speak about the importance of literacy. Literacy is helping people understand and use information. Somewhere, with functional literacy, people should be able to understand and reply to letters, complete forms, and apply for jobs and have the skills necessary to function effectively in a society.

During the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight's pre-budget consultation, the NWT Literacy Council made an excellent presentation to the committee. Some of the statistics on literacy were shocking, Mr. Speaker. Thirty-three percent of NWT adults have less than a Grade 12 education, Mr. Speaker. The situation is even worse for aboriginal people in the North. Fifty-five percent of aboriginal adults have less than a Grade 12 education, Mr. Speaker.

Another important measure for literacy is Grade 9 education. Again, aboriginal adults are far worse than non-aboriginal counterparts. Over 25 percent of aboriginal adults have less than a Grade 9 education. In smaller communities, this approach is 30 percent, Mr. Speaker. In Yellowknife, this is less than five percent.

Mr. Speaker, the needs are, clearly, strongest in the smaller communities, yet the Aurora College program is highly focused on three major campuses. That will be Yellowknife, Inuvik and Fort Smith. What is needed in the NWT is a concerted effort to set up adult education programming in small communities.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest that Aurora College needs to go beyond the current ABE programming. We need to prepare the people of the North for pre-trades certification programs, and also management diploma programs. Every five years, Aurora College prepares a corporate plan that identifies the priorities for the next five years. That is currently underway, Mr. Speaker. It is great to see. But now they can hear the people, the public, and what the communities want the program to deliver.

Mr. Speaker, my suggestion is that Aurora College should get to our communities to identify the needs, and to set out short and long-term goals and objectives, based on the community priorities. People in the communities know what they need and what they want. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Policing Our Small Communities

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today I will be addressing community policing concerns raised by my constituents and the residents all throughout the North. Several years ago, particularly in the 14th Assembly, the small non-tax based communities met with the special committee members to discuss this issue. All remote communities indicated that safety of residents and community policing was the highest priority. There was a case where a victim was so injured that he could not even walk to get help. Even this did not get the police to their community. That was pointed out in the final report by that committee.

Today, Mr. Speaker, these same problems still exist. The community of Nahanni Butte has lodged complaints of two incidents over the course of this summer, where the police were called and did not arrive for some 48 hours later.

Mr. Speaker, in all cases in small communities, police are never called frivolously. They were called because safety of residents and people were threatened. I recognize the enormous demands placed on our policing services in the North, and the safety of our residents is our government's number one job. I do not believe that, when assessing any emergency policing situation in our small communities, remoteness should be a factor. I do not believe, Mr. Speaker, that cost of travel should be a factor. At the very least, attention must be given as soon as possible. Our constituents must trust that we will always receive this type of attention, and that we will always be there for them, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi cho.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Fiscal Responsibility

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today my Member's statement is about fiscal responsibility and how it relates to the repayment of corporate income tax overpayment.

As all Members of this House know, we are well aware of how this Assembly has the unfortunate task or, I should say, the burden ahead of us in the next year to repay the federal government close to \$300 million for its corporate overpayment tax that dates back to 2002.

This can no longer be pushed back or ignored by this government. When the last government realized -- that is the 14th Assembly -- over four years ago that it received an overpayment of corporate income tax of over \$300 million, they had some tough choices ahead of them. But they decided to spend it, Mr. Speaker. They knew that spending it wouldn't fall on their government. It would fall on the government that followed them to pay it back.

Mr. Speaker, decisions like that, treating it like an interest-free loan, was not responsible. Mr. Speaker, the government of that day, the 14th Assembly, spent like it was footloose and fancy free, spending with no regard to who has to cover the payment. I am not sure that they were hoping that; either they were thinking or hedging their bets on the fact that they would get a resource revenue agreement or whatnot, but, unfortunately, it is time to pay. If they were hoping that pennies would fall from heaven, and their bacon would be covered, well, unfortunately, it is our bacon that has to pay the piper.

Mr. Speaker, that is not fair of the last Assembly to put that burden on this government. We now have to be smart and a lot wiser with our fiscal policies. I compliment Minister Roland on his fiscal work that he has done, but we need to go one step further. Waiting for a grant from Canada, as they often talk about our resource revenue sharing agreement, is like having them dangle a carrot in front of us. It is there, but it just seems to always be out of reach.

Frankly, Mr. Speaker, I am tired of waiting for that resource revenue agreement, but we have this burden in front of us. Mr. Speaker, we need a sound fiscal policy that says when we realize we have an overpayment of some sort, we clearly set it aside and not put that burden on the next government to figure out how they should pay for it. The government of the day with the overpayment looks like the heroes, and the government that has to pay looks like zeros.

So, Mr. Speaker, in closing, I will have awe-inspiring questions for the Finance Minister. I know he will be really receptive to the points I make. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Student Financial Assistance Program

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to speak on the administration of the Student Financial Assistance program. Although I believe

that the SFA in the NWT is one of, if not the best in Canada, there are still some problems with the administration of the program. Inuvik, Hay River, Norman Wells and Fort Smith are some of the larger regional centres in the NWT outside of Yellowknife, yet there are no offices in these communities that have decision-making authority. Everything has to go through an office in Yellowknife that is far removed from the regions.

Mr. Speaker, just to give you an example of what I am speaking about, I have a constituent who went to school in Fort Smith, and he was transferring to Edmonton. He had verbal approval to bring his truck and his belongings down, and they would pay his way home. He gets down to Edmonton, and he gets told that they are not going to pay his way home, because it wasn't where he was going to school. It cost \$128 less to go from Edmonton to Inuvik than it would from Fort Smith to Inuvik.

I just think, Mr. Speaker, if we had regional staff who had a chance to know their clients, and they were empowered to make decisions in these kinds of cases, we might get more sensible results. Even the student financial assistance board, Mr. Speaker, has no members from outside of Yellowknife. Is Yellowknife the only community in the NWT with the college? Mr. Speaker, I am not here to knock Yellowknife, but too many decisions made for the rest of the NWT are done here, and they should be at the regions. We should have regional offices that have the authority to make decisions that are affecting these students.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time, I will have questions for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Recognition Of Inuvik Pages

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, I won't be following on my colleague's statement about student financial assistance.

---Laughter

Instead, with it being Friday and knowing that the Pages that have been serving us here in this House for the last week are from Inuvik, I thought I would just recognize their efforts and the time they have spent with us. I have heard from many Members how they liked the service they provided, and how polite they are. That shows you that the students from Inuvik are representing their community well here. I would like to recognize the six Pages we have here. Both Mr. McLeod and I joined our efforts together to make sure we had a full complement. They are: Hayley Rodgers; Alyssa Ross; Kaylin Horassi; Angie Donley; Jessica Wilson; and Laska Edwards. I would also like to thank Mr. McLeod's CA, Meeka Kisoun, for supporting them and making sure they met all their school work while they were down here, as well as kept them safe while they are away from their parents. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Tribute To Hay River

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I wanted to talk about one of my favourite subjects: Hay River.

---Laughter

In a couple of weeks, I will be coming up to 31 years in Hay River. Over those years, I have been involved in many aspects of life in Hay River, so I can say, with some authority, that Hay River is a great place to live, to work, and to raise a family. There are so many things to be involved in. If volunteering is your thing, there are a host of opportunities to join the large community-minded people in Hay River. If you are a sports enthusiast, we have it all from a beautiful golf course with real greens in the summer, to our well-groomed cross-country ski trails in the winter, to hockey for all ages, to just about every other kind of organized sport that you can think of. If you are a nature lover, we have beautiful walking trails close to the picturesque Hay River, or walks along the miles of sandy shoreline of Great Slave Lake.

The cost of housing and living is probably the lowest in the Northwest Territories. We have lots of developed and serviced land for sale. We have great transportation connections -- centrally located on the South Slave highway system -- and affordable options for air travel, whether you are going north or south.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on and on. I could tell the good people of the Northwest Territories about things like our new aquatic centre, our diversified economy, our Arctic College programs, just the good people who live in Hay River. But, Mr. Speaker, I would encourage anyone who hasn't visited Hay River lately, to do so. Instead of driving right by in Enterprise, just turn left and come down. We will be hospitable and we will show you around. Check it out! It is a great community to visit. It is a great community to call home. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Strengths And Weaknesses Of Consensus Government

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in this House, we take pride in having a consensus style of government where the Members on both sides are supposed to work together to achieve things for the benefit of all our people. When it works, Mr. Speaker, it is really the best form of government, in terms of giving the strongest voice to the smallest constituency of the Territories. But when it doesn't work, Mr. Speaker, it functions like nothing but a majority dictatorship, where the government knows it has the numbers, and they plough through with their agenda without listening to any input from the Members on this side or the concerned public out there. People are feeling like this is what is happening lately, whether it is the issue of the day care

closing, or the nonchalant and no-big-deal attitude about moving money and projects on a political whim.

Mr. Speaker, in the whole debate about Novel housing, the Minister of Housing has the audacity to get up and say, that we have no home building capacity. No one in the North could do the job. He doesn't even care enough to take a few minutes to meet with local builders with proposals.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest the Minister and Cabinet get themselves a little bit of modesty and humbleness, and start listening to the people they are supposed to serve. Mr. Speaker, since the Novel housing issues were raised in this House, I have received at least three calls from people in the North who say they can do the job. There is a business in Hay River, for example, who is actually building trailers and exporting to northern Alberta. He submitted a proposal to the Housing Minister and the Premier last year and has not heard a thing; not even a thank you note.

Mr. Speaker, I urge this government to start acting like a responsible and a responsive government, not an arrogant dictatorship of majority. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

AN HON MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the Members can see, we have a lot of people in the gallery today. We have about 60 students from William MacDonald.

---Applause

I cannot name all of them, but I know they are all very special. They are a Grade 7 social studies class, Mrs. Gale Martin's class, and someone well known in this House, Mr. Radcliffe's Grade 7 class. Mr. Speaker, I would also like to recognize Pat, my foster doll Pat from Tuk, who is sitting there with Cathy Olson. Also in the gallery, although I can't see her, is Lynda Sorensen, who is well known in the Assembly, a former Member from Yellowknife. She is visiting her family in the city. I think she is in the gallery. I would like to welcome everybody to the gallery. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize some visitors from the Alzheimer's Society of Alberta and the Northwest Territories: Linda Henry; Mabel Collinson; Lib Lowing; and Esther Braden. Welcome. Thank you.

---Applause

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

MR. BRADEN: I, too, would like to welcome all the youth who are here today. It is great to see people, that generation, paying attention to what is going on in here. I would very much like to welcome the folks from the other spectrum of the generation...

---Laughter

...our seniors. It is just a great pleasure to welcome my mother, Esther Braden.

---Applause

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize a long-term community resident and leader, and now a resident of Weledeh, Ruth Spence.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to introduce someone in our gallery from Inuvik, Ms. Meeka Kisoun, with her baby.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. If we missed anybody in the gallery today, welcome to the Legislative Assembly. It is always nice to see a full gallery. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 208-15(4): Liard River Ferry Services

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to welcome all the students to the House proceedings today. My question is for the Minister of Transportation. As of yesterday, the ferry operations ceased in Fort Simpson. I would like to ask what the department is going to be doing about continuing the ferry service in Fort Simpson. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 208-15(4): Liard River Ferry Services

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday we indicated to the House that the ferry was going to be shut down yesterday evening. That did happen. The contractor did park the ferry at 6:00 p.m. yesterday, so the service was discontinued. Operations are now suspended until further notice. We are considering the actions of the contractor to be a breach of contract and have notified the contractor, or are in the process of notifying the contractor, that it is so. We will

look at ways to continue the service sometime early next week. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 208-15(4): Liard River Ferry Services

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad to hear that the department is looking at some type of plan to resume service, but next week may even be too late, Mr. Speaker. I have been receiving phone calls from some families, that their propane tanks are at 10 percent. The way propane works, Mr. Speaker, is that at the 10 percent level, the tank is empty. There's a truck waiting on the other side. Can the Minister look at resuming services as soon as possible? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 208-15(4): Liard River Ferry Services

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, Mr. Speaker, we have spent a lot of time looking at the different ways we can have the service back in operation, and the time frames around it. Early next week, Monday or Tuesday, is probably the earliest we're going to be able to get the service back in operation, if we can get it back in operation. That's all I can commit to at this point, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 208-15(4): Liard River Ferry Services

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As well, I have been receiving numerous enquiries about the ferry being actually shut right down. As the Minister is aware, we have freezing temperatures, and a big concern is that our ferry, our piece of equipment, will freeze up and be irreparably damaged, that it won't be running next week. I would just like to know what the department is doing about saving our piece of equipment from freeze-up. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 208-15(4): Liard River Ferry Services

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that is our concern, also. We had some of our people, our staff, go onto the boat last night, and we are taking the steps to ensure that this vessel is safe. It is an asset that is owned by the government, and we will do everything in our power to make sure that it's safe and the security is there. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Final supplementary, Mr. Menicoche. Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Question 209-15(4): Colville Lake School Expansion

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my statement, I talked about the Colville Lake school and the situation that is happening there now. Mr. Speaker, last year Colville Lake historically graduated one student from that school, and they are expecting to graduate another student this year. Over the next three years, Colville Lake is expecting to graduate three students, and will have about 15 new students coming into that school. Mr. Speaker, the project has slipped many times in the Department of Education, in reducing its scope. I want to ask the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, what's the rationale the department uses in changing this crucial project from adding on to the existing school, to now having portable classrooms delivered in Colville Lake? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 209-15(4): Colville Lake School Expansion

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the credit of the families in the community, there has been tremendous growth in the population in that school. In the year 2000, there were only 19 students using the school, when we first started talking about an addition. But as the Member has pointed out, there is some pressure to move very quickly on this issue, and a plan to add to that school would probably be time consuming and relatively expensive, because of the nature of that school. It's not a regular shaped building, Mr. Speaker. It's a log structure, which is really quite striking, and has a number of different sides. I can't remember; I think it's six different sides. So it would be difficult to add to.

In order to accomplish the desire to get the space in the community as quickly as possible, the decision has been made to bring in a modular structure. We will be looking at ways to attach the two buildings together, so that the children don't have to go outside.

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

Supplementary To Question 209-15(4): Colville Lake School Expansion

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, because of the number of students we have in the gallery, I want to make a quick reference. Of these 60 students, if we took only 20 out, and we put all those students in one building, from kindergarten to Grade 12, that's what the children in Colville Lake are faced with. In this time and age, Mr. Speaker, that's just totally unacceptable. So I would like to ask the Minister, can he state, for the people of Colville Lake, that their school, where they send their children each school day of the year, does the school in Colville Lake meet the current standards set out by his department? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 209-15(4): Colville Lake School Expansion

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure. I can't answer that question. I would doubt that it does. Having seen the school myself, I would expect that that probably doesn't meet our current standards, and we are moving to put the addition in as quickly as we can.

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

Supplementary To Question 209-15(4): Colville Lake School Expansion

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that's totally unacceptable from the Minister of Education to have that type of response to the people of Colville Lake who send their children to school each day, that has a honey bucket that they're using in their school -- the kids are overflowing in that building -- to say he's not sure of the standards that are set out by his department. So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister if he can tell this Assembly whether or not his department considers the use of honey buckets in the GNWT educational facilities meets the capital standard that his department has formulated. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 209-15(4): Colville Lake School Expansion

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the community of Colville Lake started up as a community where the people said they wanted a traditional community. They, still today, don't have a water plant, so we don't have an ability to put in water and plumbing in that community. We understand that that will be installed by MACA within the next year. The modular classroom that we're going to add to the facility there will accommodate modern facilities to take advantage of the water plant that's being installed in the community.

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

Supplementary To Question 209-15(4): Colville Lake School Expansion

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have always said that the community of Colville Lake is a long way out of Yellowknife; it's far away. So sometimes it's out of sight, out of mind, for the people in Colville Lake. If they want to maintain a traditional economy, I support them 100 percent. For a traditional lifestyle, I support them 100 percent. But it's unacceptable, in this day and age, when we have education facilities such as are built in and around the Northwest Territories, that we cannot fix Colville Lake in terms of the use of the honey bucket. Can the Minister tell us, short of moving the honey bucket to an outhouse in the community, what is the department doing to alleviate the space in the Colville Lake school, to advance an affordable school this year in Colville Lake on the ice road? That would certainly help the people in Colville Lake. Can the Minister inform me? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 209-15(4): Colville Lake School Expansion

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure that we can meet the timeline that the Member has asked for, in terms of getting it on the ice road this year. The department will be meeting with the DEA, and with the residents of Colville Lake, to talk about how we can plan to bring the two structures into one unit. We will do our best to advance things as much as we can, but I can't guarantee that we'll make it on the ice road this winter. We will certainly make it a priority to look at whether we can do that, though. Thanks.

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

Question 210-15(4): Using Northern Construction Firms

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, further to my Member's statement today, I would like to pose my questions to the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I made a statement about the fact that there are a lot of small businesses and northern businesses who go through the ups and downs of running a business in the North, where everything is high. But they stick around, they pay their taxes, they employ our people, they train our people, in the hopes of taking advantage of an economic boom. One of the things that's going to happen when the pipeline comes is that there's going to be a real potential for building houses. The Minister of Housing is not only not looking at the North, but he won't even meet with people who come to tell him about a proposal. Could I ask the Minister why he refuses to meet with northern contractors who could possibly do the job? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 210-15(4): Using Northern Construction Firms

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have met with people in the private sector; I've toured different plants in the territory; and I've talked to a lot of people in the private sector about coming forward with a proposal that's a good business case and has financially sound information in it, so that we can proceed on pilot projects. I have not received anything from any of these companies to date, yet they're asking for \$3 million to make an investment from this government, with no documentation to back that up. So unless we get that documentation, we will continue to talk with other interested parties. I know that I mentioned that there are interested parties from Hay River talking to companies down south to look at the possibility of developing portable facilities in the North, so that they can construct these facilities in the North, and it has to be accessible to the transportation links in the North with regard to the pipeline project. The effect of that project will be up and down the valley, and it has to be assured that those communities up and down the valley have access to these programs. That's the whole emphasis behind this program.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I have been talking to those individuals. I have toured their plant. Again, we're waiting

for correspondence to come back from the different parties. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 210-15(4): Using Northern Construction Firms

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have to wonder why the government thinks it would be a great idea to invest \$26 million in an ATCO/Novel project in Calgary, but thinks that that's an unreasonable thing to consider a \$3 million investment. Mr. Speaker, I would like to know, from the Minister, in exactly what way he communicated to these companies that he's looking for a proposal. Was it a letter? In exactly what form did he invite these people to submit a proposal? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 210-15(4): Using Northern Construction Firms

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, just to clear up the Member's issue regarding the \$20 million, we have made no investment in this project. The only time there will be a financial investment will be at the end of the pipeline project, when we will consider looking at acquiring these facilities. So there is no investment by way of dollars switching hands here. It is not going to happen for the next five years.

Right now, it's basically a concept that's being put forward, which is unique in regard to the possibility of having a way of solving our housing crises up and down the valley. I think, in order to do that, we have to think outside the box of how we are going to meet our housing crises in the Northwest Territories, where we have communities with almost 80 percent core need for housing, and in most aboriginal communities, which consists of 20 of our communities in the North which are aboriginal, we exceed 35 percent core need. We have to solve that problem, and we can't do it the way we're delivering programs today where we're building 50 houses a year. We have to have a way of dealing with the crises that we face going forward.

As I mentioned, in four years, if we continue to deliver the program as we are, we're going to need 4,000 houses in the next 10 years. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 210-15(4): Using Northern Construction Firms

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't appreciate the Minister burning up question period time without answering my questions. Mr. Speaker, my question is very specific. There are builders all over the North -- in Hay River, in Yellowknife, and other places -- and let me just talk about the one in Yellowknife who is willing to use people who are in our correctional centre. He is willing to train people. He has built houses. I want to know, very specifically, how and when is the last time he talked to the builder in Kam Lake about how he could get involved in this project. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 210-15(4): Using Northern Construction Firms

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, again, I met with the individual a year ago. Basically, at that time, we asked him to put a proposal forward. It has to have a good business case behind it, and it has to be financially sound. That was the offer given at that time. To date, we have not received any correspondence regarding that proposal. So unless we have a proposal, we don't really have anything to talk about. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 210-15(4): Using Northern Construction Firms

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was there in the tour with the Minister. I recall a proposal, but I may be wrong, so I'd like to ask the Minister, when is the last time, or in what form -- in a letter, e-mail, phone call -- did he communicate to that business in Kam Lake, that we have this investment opportunity in the government, and what can you do, is submit a proposal. I want to know when and how. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 210-15(4): Using Northern Construction Firms

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, we have staff in our department who deal with the business community in regard to proposals, tenders and whatnot. Right now, we are talking to the individual about the project that we're doing in Norman Wells, with the Metis local in Norman Wells, through the development corporation, and the company she's talking about is part of that proposal. Our people have been talking to them regarding that proposal. So it's not that we haven't been talking to them. If anything, we've been talking with them in the last two weeks, making sure that that proposal is sound and going forward with the partnership that was formed in that case.

Again, there have been ongoing discussions between my office and the individual she's talking about, in ensuring that whatever he does, it has to be on paper, it has to have a good business case, and it has to be financially sound. Thank you.

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

Question 211-15(4): Corporate Tax Overpayment

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If I may just say I'd like to thank the students for coming today so they can see oral question period, see history being made, and they're part of it today by being in the gallery.

Mr. Speaker, hoping for the best isn't good or sound fiscal policy. I spoke earlier, in my Member's statement, about the \$296 million in corporate tax overpayment that we received from the Government of Canada. We can no longer dodge this, or keep pushing it away, or even ignoring it. So my question to the Minister of Finance is, will the Minister have his officials look into fiscal policy that

would require the GNWT, when they become aware of an overpayment, to either set it aside, or return it promptly? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 211-15(4): Corporate Tax Overpayment

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Member for that awe-inspiring question.

--Laughter

Mr. Speaker, this issue is not a new one. We've been trying to deal with this, and how we can deal with our federal counterparts around this issue. We have looked at a number of issues around our fiscal policy, and what we've looked at putting forward is a fiscal responsibility policy that would look at the overall fiscal situation of the government, our ability to borrow and finance that borrowing.

The issue of the overpayment itself, as the Member stated, was a decision made by a previous government. They were aware of the overpayment, and also aware of the payment plan that the federal government has in place, which is basically a three-year program once it has been identified. That has been flowing since the overpayment has been recognized. We are, in fact, coming up to the final year, where, in the next budget cycle, that overpayment has come due. We can look at ways of doing things differently. The previous government had looked at it as an interest-free loan and were aware that it would have to be paid back. In fact, we have a fair bit of that cash sitting, waiting to be repaid. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 211-15(4): Corporate Tax Overpayment

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To put it in perspective, almost \$300 million is approximately 30 percent of this government's budget. By redrafting a fiscal management policy, still doesn't speak to the fact that we're spending money that does not belong to this government. So, Mr. Speaker, if the Minister will not commit to a fiscal policy that stipulates that overpayments be set aside and returned promptly, will the Minister consider a fiscal policy which stipulates that if any overpayment is to be treated as an interest-free loan, as he just pointed out, that money must be specifically voted on in this House by way of a formal motion? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 211-15(4): Corporate Tax Overpayment

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, all funds that come through this government, through the Department of Finance, are voted on in the House. When we present our budget, we present the corporate taxes we receive, our own source revenues, and other fees and disbursements from the federal government. So it does come to this House; it is voted on,

and how we spend that money then is also voted on. So it is taken into account. It's not like we have a separate account sitting on the side that nobody is aware of. All Members are made aware of our fiscal situation, the revenues we have coming in, on that basis.

We have, Mr. Speaker, looked as if we had decided to repay it or use it as an interest-free loan, as had been done in the past. We've looked at our numbers. In fact, our numbers for our fiscal situation, the bottom line, so to speak, would change by quite a small number. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 211-15(4): Corporate Tax Overpayment

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. But we have to consider most loans are paid over 20, 25 or 30 years. This has to be paid back within four years; almost \$300 million. Mr. Speaker, this government can never be taken responsibly, until we show that we can deal with overpayments like this in a responsible manner. So we need to be seen as a responsible government, cleaning up the last government's mess. Would the Minister have his officials at least conduct an inter-jurisdictional review of best practices of how federal overpayments are done, and received and taken care of in their provinces? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 211-15(4): Corporate Tax Overpayment

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our fiscal responsibility policy that we put forward to the federal government, and how we deal with the federal government, is based on their terms that this overpayment situation has occurred. They're aware of it; they have the repayment plan that affects every jurisdiction. It's the same plan. It's a three-year plan, and it's also based on your population, of how much is repaid on an annual basis until the third year, which is coming up in the next fiscal cycle we have.

Everything we do is processed in accordance with the rules, and so on. So I think we're of a position, we've taken the situation as we have it, and worked with the federal government, and have been working with them around a number of other initiatives. But when we look at it, we are scheduled for that repayment coming up. We have taken that into account; it's built into our fiscal plan. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 211-15(4): Corporate Tax Overpayment

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think we continue to avoid the fact that we're spending money that doesn't belong to us, and we've negotiated it into an interest-free loan, by avoiding it and putting it as a burden on the next government. So my awe-inspiring question to the Minister of Finance, whom I have a lot of respect for, is, what, then, will the Minister do to ensure

that this government will conduct its finances with integrity and true responsibility, and we don't leave the next government and the next Assembly with any type of burden from our willy-nillyness on dealing with interest-free loans? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 211-15(4): Corporate Tax Overpayment

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, let me reaffirm to the Member, and this House, and to the people of the Territories, that this government is not dealing willy-nilly with the finances of the Territories.

--Applause

We, in fact, have taken full responsibility for this and have accounted for it. In the future, working with the federal government, if our fiscal responsibility paper is adopted by them, that would give us much ability to look at how we deal with our finances.

Ultimately, yes, as a government, we do have to look at every time this occurs, and in most cases, it's much smaller than that amount, than the \$290 million that has been identified; but, unfortunately, this one was a very large one, and we would be able to deal with these on an annual basis without much impact on our fiscal situation.

As I stated, we did look at the options, and did a scenario, and if we decided to pay it back immediately and just sent the money back, what that would do for our fiscal picture. Our fiscal forecast would not change significantly by doing that. But I will, as I have mentioned to the Members in this House, look at what options are in front of us, and what we can do to make sure that the NWT remains in a sound fiscal position. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

Question 212-15(4): Regional Student Financial Assistance Services

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I look behind me and I see all these students from the school here in Yellowknife, and some day they'll be applying for SFA when they go to college. I'm sure people here wouldn't want to have their decisions made from an office in Inuvik or Fort Smith. So I would like to ask the Minister of Education, why are there no regional offices in the NWT with the authority to make decisions? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 212-15(4): Regional Student Financial Assistance Services

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact, there are no offices in the student financial assistance system that can make decisions that would have changed the situation the Member spoke of in his Member's statement today. The way our system is set, the officers have no power to overrule the regulations, and the regulations have to be followed explicitly. So a more

important issue is, what can we do to make the regulations work for the students? The Member has brought an important issue to light here, where the regulations, in this situation, cost the government more money than if we had been able to do what was probably the sensible thing and pay for the travel. So I have ensured that we are taking a look at how we can address that issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 212-15(4): Regional Student Financial Assistance Services

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister talks about regulations. I'm sure these regulations aren't written in stone, and I'm sure we do have the authority, or I'd like to know if the Minister has the authority to overrule some of these decisions, based on facts, not on regulations. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 212-15(4): Regional Student Financial Assistance Services

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, the current situation is that the Minister cannot overrule the regulations. So the way that we deal with issues when they come to our attention, that we have a problem like the one that the Member has brought up, is we look at how we can change the regulations to go forward in ways that we can recognize better results. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 212-15(4): Regional Student Financial Assistance Services

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister look at establishing regional offices that have the authority to make decisions for the students, once these regulations are changed? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 212-15(4): Regional Student Financial Assistance Services

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have looked at this issue, in terms of student financial assistance officers. Given the nature of the program and how it works, in that all of the applications come in in a very short period of time, typically two times a year, there aren't enough dedicated staff to spread out across the Territories in a cost-effective way. I am certainly prepared to work with Members to see how we can strengthen the work of the regional offices, to make sure that they're working with students to help them navigate their way through the system. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 212-15(4): Regional Student Financial Assistance Services

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister spoke of dedicated staff across the Northwest Territories. I'm sure there are not dedicated staff or positions here in Yellowknife that could move across the Northwest Territories. So my final question to the Minister, with this particular constituent that I'm dealing with, the Minister says we can't overrule the decision. So will he look into this constituent's concern and make a good business decision, or is this a final decision? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 212-15(4): Regional Student Financial Assistance Services

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Ministers cannot overrule a regulation like this and change the situation retroactively. I am committed to looking at the situation and making a change to the regulations, to ensure that we don't run into this sort of situation again. My goal would be to establish a policy whereby travel assistance is provided on a cash basis, so that everybody can look after their own travel themselves, and we don't get into this sort of situation where we pay minute attention to where people are travelling from or how they're travelling. Thank you.

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

Question 213-15(4): Consultation On Proposed WCB Office Complex

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board. Mr. Speaker, a few days ago, the Premier stood up here in the House and listed up a bunch of folks that the Workers' Compensation Board had consulted with, prior to building a new building. I was surprised to hear that Regular Members of this House were not a part of that list, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board why there was no notice given to Regular Members that the WCB was proceeding with this new initiative. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 213-15(4): Consultation On Proposed WCB Office Complex

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can only assume that the reason for that would be that the Worker's Compensation Governance Council sees the stakeholders in that operation as labour and employers, and those are the groups that have been consulted. I know that I have talked to the chair, and have invited him to make a presentation to the standing committee here, so they can discuss the issue of the construction of a new facility. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 213-15(4): Consultation On Proposed WCB Office Complex

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the meeting scheduled for next Wednesday, a briefing between the WCB, the Minister responsible for the WCB, and the Regular Members of this House, only took place after enquiries were made to the Minister's office to make that happen. I would like to mention to the Minister that assessment rates and monies that are paid to the WCB come out of the pockets of employers here in the Northwest Territories, our constituents, who have every right to come and visit their MLA, when they see assessment rates for next year going up. I would like to ask the Minister responsible for the WCB if his intention was to share these new assessment rates, that are proposed for 2006, with the Regular Members of this House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 213-15(4): Consultation On Proposed WCB Office Complex

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I had, in fact, planned to do a Minister's statement on those rates, at one time in the House, but the WCB released the information publicly through a press release, so I didn't feel it would be appropriate any longer because the information was already out there. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 213-15(4): Consultation On Proposed WCB Office Complex

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Does it concern the Minister, at all, that in the proposed 2006 assessments that the WCB is proposing, that mining operations will decrease by 20 percent, and virtually every other sector of the economy will see an increase to their 2006 assessment rates? Does the Minister have any issue with that? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 213-15(4): Consultation On Proposed WCB Office Complex

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The rates that are established by the WCB are entirely based on actuarial studies of the numbers of accidents, and the cost of those accidents, to each of the rate categories. So if those are the being established, it's to ensure that there is no cross-subsidization between one sector and another in the business. I know that the WCB has been quite vigilant at making sure that their accident fund is fully funded, so that there won't be any surprises for employers. I think that they are looking at ways that they can ensure the stability of the funding. But changes will always happen, depending on accidents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 213-15(4): Consultation On Proposed WCB Office Complex

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to also ask the Minister, I know the proposed new building is going to be built or located in the Frame Lake South area in Yellowknife, an area that's already plagued with traffic congestion, and, obviously, has a nice waterfront view. I'm wondering, is it better that the WCB be located in this area of the city, or downtown where it's currently located? What options were pursued to have that building located in the downtown core of Yellowknife? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 213-15(4): Consultation On Proposed WCB Office Complex

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member has asked for my opinion as to where the building should be, and it's not really mine to give an opinion on that. I can say, though, in response to one of his questions, there were a number of different alternatives considered. One was the space right beside City Hall. Members will be aware that the city council rejected the old Gerry Murphy site, or a site near the old Gerry Murphy Arena, as a possible location. The WCB looked at assembling land in the downtown core, and they had some discussion about space off of School Draw. So there were a number of different spaces that were looked at. It was quite a public process, when they did start looking at finding land to assemble. They sought RFPs, and where they sought by RFP, submissions for space. As I understand it, it's entirely a business decision based on cost, and ensuring that it makes economic sense for the WCB to build a building.

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

Question 214-15(4): Adult Basic Education

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement, I spoke highly of the importance of literacy, so I have a question to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister please tell the House how much money is being spent annually on adult basic education programs, and also, specifically, the percentage to the smaller communities? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 214-15(4): Adult Basic Education

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can answer some of that question quite easily. Adult literacy and basic education programming in the Northwest Territories has a budget of \$2.4 million. We've had programming offered in 30 of the 33 communities in the Northwest Territories. To list off the percentage though, I can't do that. I have my listing here by dollars by community, and I would be happy to share that with the Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 214-15(4): Adult Basic Education

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister tell this Assembly what is being done to identify the specific needs of each community in terms of adult basic education, or does the Minister subscribe to the philosophy of one size fits all? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 214-15(4): Adult Basic Education

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, clearly, one size doesn't fit all. We have a number of different options in different communities. In some communities, the adult educator and the principal of the school work together to provide different types of programming, so that it's not all the same sort of curriculum. In other communities, there's more of a challenge to get the community to work together. But it is up to the adult educator and the college to work with the community, and the expectation is that they will work with the communities, to determine what is most appropriate for delivery in that community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 214-15(4): Adult Basic Education

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, research indicates that people with low literacy are twice as likely not to have jobs, or to access training and ABE programs. What is the Minister doing to ensure that literacy programs meet the needs of NWT residents, in order for them to improve their quality of life and take advantage of economic opportunities? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 214-15(4): Adult Basic Education

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know the Member brings a lot of passion to this issue, because he has a history of involvement in literacy, and particularly working with the college. He is absolutely right. We know the figures. We know that people in the North are much less likely to be working if they don't have an adequate education. Since 2003, we've had four literacy funds that have been administered by our regional offices, including the workplace education fund, the community skills for Work, community literacy projects, and literacy programs and support for seniors. Those are some of the extra things that we are doing, in order to ensure that we have more money available for different kinds of literacy programming in various communities.

We have also, just in the last couple of years, agreed to core funding for the NWT Literacy Council, and we've managed to maintain and slightly increase their funding over the last year, to help them help community organizations better deliver literacy programming. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 214-15(4): Adult Basic Education

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we know that many people in the Northwest Territories with low literacy skills are employed. We also know that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment cut the support of workplace literacy funding last year, Mr. Speaker. How is the government supporting workplace literacy? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 214-15(4): Adult Basic Education

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the amount of money that was cut from the workplace literacy budget last year was the amount that historically had not been taken up by employers. If we can find a way to increase the number of applications coming in from employers to take advantage of that money, I can tell the Member that I'll go to bat to try and find money to increase that budget. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 215-15(4): Northern Contractor Participation In Housing Initiatives

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, and they are in follow-up to some of the issues that have been raised about the capacity for northerners to participate in the manufacturing of units which could serve as camps during the construction phase of the pipeline, and, ultimately, housing units after the fact. Mr. Speaker, in some instances, it's hard to discuss these things on the floor of the House, because we are dealing with proprietary information; we're dealing with patents, in some cases; we're dealing with business plans of private corporations; but I do think that we can talk about the concept of northern participation in general terms. I would like to ask the Minister if he has recently had discussions with representatives of Hay River, with respect to including northern participation in the procurement of these types of units. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 215-15(4): Northern Contractor Participation In Housing Initiatives

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I did have an opportunity at the Far North Oil and Gas Conference where there were some members of the Hay River council. We offered them a tour of the ATCO Novel facility. We also put them in contact with the people who work for ATCO with regard to this project. The issue of the possibility came up of developing some sort of plant facility in the North. There are certain components

of these facilities that can be built in the North by these portable plants. They have plants all around the world and there is no reason why we can't do that. Through those discussions, we are hoping they will continue on with the deliberation between the town council in Hay River and the proponents, to ensure that workforce camps for the pipeline are being constructed in the North. We know we can't construct all of it in the North, but there are certain elements that can be constructed in the North. We are hoping to proceed with the town council in Hay River to continue their deliberations regarding the ATCO structure, to see if they can develop the infrastructure in the North to bring those benefits to the North through this project. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 215-15(4): Northern Contractor Participation In Housing Initiatives

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we all know, on this side of the House, that it is the nature of the private sector that there may be, from time to time, competing interests amongst competing businesses, and perhaps even competing communities, on this. Again, it isn't always possible to share all of your business's plans on the floor of this House. In a general sense, Mr. Speaker, since there may be people who have already expressed interest and there may be other people potentially interested, I would like to ask the Minister if he feels that he is familiar with what Hay River has to offer in terms of manufacturing capacity. Does he feel he is personally familiar with that capacity? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 215-15(4): Northern Contractor Participation In Housing Initiatives

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do believe that Hay River does have a lot to offer with regard to this project, regarding lands and also being the transportation link for the North through barging. The key transportation of these structures will be by barge that will go up the Mackenzie River and drop these facilities in different locations up and down the valley. So the crucial components are ensuring there is land availability, and having the workforce and the transportation link to ensure we are able to access the barges required to transfer these infrastructures. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 215-15(4): Northern Contractor Participation In Housing Initiatives

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, the Minister is right; in order for the North to be competitive on this, you do need to look at things like access to raw materials, material that could be brought in by train into Hay River, and the fact that the finished products could be shipped out by barge down the Mackenzie River system. All those kinds of things go together to give the North the competitiveness that they need to get involved in these activities. I would like to ask the Minister, for the benefit of those people in Hay River

who are interested in, perhaps, participating in such a venture, would the Minister himself come to Hay River to meet collectively or individually with interested businesses, and to see firsthand all the manufacturing activity that is already occurring in Hay River? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 215-15(4): Northern Contractor Participation In Housing Initiatives

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again, I will commit to that. I think it's important that we do move on this very quickly. With the announcement of the pipeline, there will be a decision made on who will get the contract to build workforce camps for this project that will be purchased through the Mackenzie pipeline project itself. So they will have to make that decision. I am committed to that, but we do have to move on this.

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

Supplementary To Question 215-15(4): Northern Contractor Participation In Housing Initiatives

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that probably November is the best time. I don't know what the Minister's schedule is like, but if the MLAs for Hay River coordinated this, would sometime in November fit into your schedule to come into Hay River to spend at least a day or two? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 215-15(4): Northern Contractor Participation In Housing Initiatives

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I will commit to look at my schedule, and see how we can fit in one or two days in November. Thank you.

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

Question 216-15(4): Housing For Pre-Trades Entrance Program Students

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I just want to talk about one of the education programs that has been run out of Yellowknife, particularly the Pre-Trades Entrance Program that was developed, not surprisingly, by a contractor from down south, to the tune of \$30,000 over the last year. Now this expenditure, Mr. Speaker, may be a total waste of money if the program doesn't attract any northern interest or we have no students enrolling in the program. Mr. Speaker, I say attract, not in the sense that we don't have any young northerners interested in the program, because we do, Mr. Speaker. We have a lot of interest in the smaller communities to these types of programs. But many of these individuals who apply to enrol in this program are not attracted to this program anymore, because they are being told by the program directors that they will have to find their own accommodations if they want to participate in the program. Could the Minister of Education tell these youths, and other residents in these outlying communities,

why they are required to find their own accommodation in the capital, when other programs have more than enough housing units available for their particular program? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 216-15(4): Housing For Pre-Trades Entrance Program Students

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the college has long been interested in finding a way to have a residence built in Yellowknife for college students and the programs here, but we have been unable, at this point, to find the money in the capital program to support that kind of approach. I, like the Member, would dearly love to see us better accommodate students here. I know that we've had to restrict the availability of housing to certain programs to ensure that the people in this program can find housing. So it is a problem, and it's a particular problem because of the cost of housing here. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 216-15(4): Housing For Pre-Trades Entrance Program Students

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's good to know that the Minister acknowledges that it is a problem. I just don't want to downplay some of the other programs, Mr. Speaker, but I know they are just as important as this Pre-Trades Program, such as the Nurse Practitioner Program. I have to let it be known that this program has received approval and funding, Mr. Speaker, to secure twice as many units for these nursing students this year as compared to last year. Another high demand sector of our labour market, that being trades, does not receive one red cent to put towards one unit available for any of these out-of-town students, Mr. Speaker. So can the Minister tell these trade students why that is the situation today? Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 216-15(4): Housing For Pre-Trades Entrance Program Students

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will continue to work with the college to see if we can find a way to address the housing issue, but this government has invested heavily in assistance to the nursing program. That's because of the difficulty we are having filling nursing positions across the North. So we put a real emphasis on getting northerners into the field. The Member is right, though, we need to see a similar sort of emphasis on the trades. We have, this year, put an extra \$600,000 into trades training. What we are doing there is encouraging employers to take on tradespeople with increased subsidies. One of the benefits there is that the apprentices actually earn a salary while they are studying. So unlike other students like nurses, they don't wind up further in debt as they go through the process. So there is an expectation that they will be able to pay for a bit more. I recognize the Member has talked about the pre-trades where they don't necessarily have a job yet.

That is a problem. It's an area I will discuss with the college. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 216-15(4): Housing For Pre-Trades Entrance Program Students

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I don't want to downplay the nurses program, but I know there is no guarantee that these nurses who graduate from the program are even going to stick around in the North, because there is a big demand right across Canada for nurses, Mr. Speaker. But in many of the trades programs that these youth in the North enter into, they wind up staying in their communities and developing their trade expertise there. How does the Minister plan on making more programs readily available to out-of-town students who cannot find adequate accommodations in the capital? If it's a big problem for this government to address today, how about sending these smaller pre-trades programs into the smaller communities where sufficient interest has been generated. Has this been considered, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Two questions there, Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 216-15(4): Housing For Pre-Trades Entrance Program Students

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just for the record, we know that the vast majority of the graduates from our nursing program do stay in the Northwest Territories. That program has proven to be quite successful in getting northerners into nursing.

The Member makes a very good suggestion in terms of getting the training into communities. It's one we encourage the college to pursue. We have, right now, a mobile lab for welding. The college does move from community to community to offer the Pre-Trades Training Program. That is one of the ways in which we are hoping to expand that training. We do hope to be able to provide more training in more communities. One of the things we have discussed, under the Northern Strategy, is the acquisition of six mobile labs for trades training; so we have other opportunities besides welding, and we can bring those into the smaller communities, too. We think it's essential that we take more of this sort of training to the communities, because it becomes more available to more young people to learn what the opportunities are. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Villeneuve.

Supplementary To Question 216-15(4): Housing For Pre-Trades Entrance Program Students

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I am glad to hear that there will be more mobile labs coming down the line. This pre-trades program was developed last year for this year's enrolment. It's unfortunate to say that enrolment has gone down from the small, outlying communities because of the fact that there are no accommodations. Could the Minister give some reassurance to the directors and the people who work in the Aurora College who have to turn away these students

and say, "You have to find your own place to stay or else you can't enrol in the program"? What kinds of assurances or other options can these people who are dealing directly with the students who would like to enrol in these programs offer these students? Give them some timelines: "In two or three months, we will have something rolling into the community, and we will have more money to develop programs within the community." What kinds of other options can the Minister provide to these directors who deal with students? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 216-15(4): Housing For Pre-Trades Entrance Program Students

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will have to discuss this with the college -- and I will commit to the Member that I will do that very quickly -- what the options might be, so that I can make sure that the directors can have to see the answers to those questions. Thank you.

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

Question 217-15(4): Employment Insurance As Income

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome Mr. Dent back to the Assembly, after doing battle with his colleagues on the federal front. I would like to ask him questions in his capacity as the Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board. In my statement earlier today, I explained the dilemma that injured workers find themselves in, because the WCB has not accepted that it should include EI remunerations in the calculation of an injured worker's pension. Mr. Speaker, why has the WCB refused to accept multiple rulings from the independent appeals tribunal process, to include employment insurance in pensionable earnings calculations? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 217-15(4): Employment Insurance As Income

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have to be careful with this one, because the Member is likely aware that the decision of the governance council is currently under appeal before the courts on this issue. So I am not sure that I can answer that question at this point in time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 217-15(4): Employment Insurance As Income

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Minister's caution on this. I have looked into the same point in raising these questions, and the information I have is the process has actually been concluded and is something that can be looked at in this House. So I would like to continue with my questions on this point.

Mr. Speaker, some of these appeals tribunal processes are now four years old. Workers continue to be stymied by this. While the WCB Act is not specific in allowing employment insurance earnings, and it gives the board, or the tribunal, the discretion to rule on these kinds of things, it certainly seems mean spirited and punitive to backdate its policy on this some 28 years. Why did the board take such a heavy-handed action in backdating this policy for this period of time? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I apologize to the Member if a decision has been issued in this case in the last 24 hours, but my information is there is an appeal before the courts in Nunavut on this very issue that has been filed just in the last couple of weeks that has not yet been heard. So I am in a position where, under the rules of sub judice, I don't believe I am able to answer his question.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The Chair will not rule the question out of order, but the Minister can refuse to answer the question or take the question as notice. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 217-15(4): Employment Insurance As Income

HON. CHARLES DENT: Mr. Speaker, I will take the question as notice. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The question has been taken as notice. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Question 218-15(4): Colville Lake School

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to continue with my questions to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, regarding the Colville Lake school. As you are well aware, kindergarten to Grade 12 are all taught in one room. In desperation for quiet time, one teacher now teaches in the boot room, which is adjacent to the honey bucket and equipment room. Mr. Speaker, building codes may be violated in terms of the limited capacity and having 41 people in the school. I am not sure if the fire marshal has given any kind of indication to the Department of Education on a honey bucket being in that facility.

What can this government tell the parents or people in Colville Lake, that they can get some comfort in dealing with this disturbing situation that they have in Colville Lake right now? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 218-15(4): Colville Lake School

HON. CHARLES DENT: I am aware of the community's interest. I have been in the community. I have seen the school. I have received a letter, as the Member pointed out, from the chair of the divisional education council, on the issue. We are prepared to have staff visit the community to discuss the issues with the community, and to move as quickly as we can to provide the additional space that we have in our capital plan. Having said that, I believe that there is not an issue around public safety with

the facility if it's being used as it was intended to be used. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 218-15(4): Colville Lake School

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe if the Minister sat down with the people in Colville Lake, we would beg to differ on the issue of public safety and the use of that school. Mr. Speaker, the chair of the Sahtu Divisional Education Council wrote a strong letter regarding the school in Colville Lake and the lack of proper facilities to have a proper learning environment. Mr. Speaker, I applaud the Minister in terms of his strong advocacy of having graduates in the communities. The Minister is making the commitment to visit Colville Lake. Can he visit by the end of this month? This is an emergency situation. Can we get some strong commitments today, in this House, to let the people in Colville Lake know that the situation is being taken care of? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 218-15(4): Colville Lake School

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will commit to have somebody from the department visit the community and the school within 30 days.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The time for question period has expired; however, I will allow the Member a short supplementary. Mr. Yakeleya.

Supplementary To Question 218-15(4): Colville Lake School

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the commitment from the Minister. Within these 30 days, the people in Colville Lake will still have the same situation. What can we tell the people of Colville Lake that have the overcrowding, the honey bucket, the boot room, that they can have some other facilities to have proper educational training? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 218-15(4): Colville Lake School

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In advance of us having somebody there, I can't make any other commitments. We will ensure that we are dealing with the situation if there is a significant problem. I would also mention that my reading of the letter from the chair of the DEC is that they want to make sure that this project doesn't fall down the list of urgent projects again. It would be my goal to make sure that that doesn't happen, too. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Time for question period has expired. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to opening address. Item 10, petitions. Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 51-15(4): Photographs Of Colville Lake School

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table a document of three photographs of the school in Colville Lake with the infamous honey bucket closet the students are forced to use on a daily basis.

Tabled Document 52-15(4): NWT Human Rights Commission 2004-2005 Annual Report

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Item 13, tabling of documents. Pursuant to section 21 of the Human Rights Act, I wish to table the 2004-2005 Annual Report of the Northwest Territories Human Rights Commission. I would like to draw to the attention of Members, the presence in the visitor's gallery of Ms. Mary Pat Short, chair of the NWT Human Rights Commission.

---Applause

She has joined us here today to witness the tabling of the first report of the Human Rights Commission since the commission was established. Please join me in welcoming her to the Assembly. Welcome, Ms. Short.

Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

Tabled Document 53-15(4): Package Of 45 Letters Of Complaint Regarding Liard River Ferry Dispute

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I have another 45 letters of complaint with respect to the ferry situation in Nahendeh and Fort Simpson. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Item 13, tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to go back to item 14, notices of motion.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 14, notices of motion. Are there any nays? There are no nays. We'll go back to item 14, notices of motion. Item 14, notices of motion. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

REVERT TO ITEM 14: NOTICES OF MOTION

Motion 6-15(4): Appointment Of Electoral Boundaries Commission

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, October 24, 2005, I will move the following motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, that the Legislative Assembly recommends to the Commissioner that the Honourable Justice John. Z. Vertes be appointed chairperson, and Mr. Eddie Erasmus and Mr. Rod O'Brien be appointed members, of the Northwest Territories Electoral Boundaries Commission, 2005. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Item 14, notices of motion. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

Motion 7-15(4): Appointment Of Conflict Of Interest Commissioner

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, October 24, 2005, I will move the following motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, that pursuant to section 91 of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, the Legislative Assembly recommends to the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories that Gerald Gerrand be appointed Conflict of Interest Commissioner, effective December 1, 2005. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 16, motions. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Minister's Statement 24-15(4), Sessional Statement; and Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Education Act, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

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

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Madam Chair. The committee wishes to consider Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Education Act.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): We will do that after a brief break. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Okay. I'd like to call Committee of the Whole back to order. We are, today, dealing with Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Education Act. At this time, I'd like to ask Mr. Dent if he has opening comments related to the bill. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes. I'd like to thank the committee for this opportunity to discuss Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Education Act.

The key objective of the amendment to the act is to allow division education councils to offer full-day kindergarten programs. The Education Act currently specifies a maximum allowable number of hours of kindergarten instruction equivalent to a half-day program. The changes proposed to the act specify a minimum number of hours, thereby mandating half-day programs while allowing education authorities the option of full-day programs or both half and full-day programs.

Over the past few years some education authorities have argued that children entering the school system require additional preparation prior to their enrolment in Grade 1. Research supporting full-day kindergarten programs shows that, if providing developmentally appropriate

learning activities, they can contribute to improved academic skills in the primary grades and to general school readiness.

Divisional education councils, or DECs, and district education authorities, or DEAs, would like to implement full-day kindergarten programs. In fact, some districts have been offering full-day options for five-year-olds. These additional half-day programs are early childhood development programs and not regulated under the Education Act. The proposed legislation will ensure that programs for five-year-olds in the school system are comprehensive and cohesive.

To provide guidance to DECs and DEAs, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment is in the process of developing curriculum guidelines for school programming for five-year-olds that extends beyond the current half-day kindergarten program.

In advance of development of the legislative amendment to change the Education Act, consultation was undertaken with the chairs of the district education councils, district education authorities and the Commission Scolaire Francophone de Division. The education authorities unanimously support the concept of removing the current limitations on the kindergarten program.

It is important to note that education authorities are not currently funded for full-day kindergarten. We have noted that the Standing Committee on Social Programs recommended that funding be provided to ensure the ability of education authorities to offer full-day kindergarten should the bill be approved. This recommendation is being considered as part of the current business planning process. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Now I will ask the Member for Range Lake, Ms. Sandy Lee, chair of the Social Programs committee, to present the committee's comments on the review of Bill 4.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Standing Committee on Social Programs conducted public hearings on Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Education Act, in the communities of Fort Smith, Fort Resolution, and Hay River, during the week of June 22 to 28, 2005, and in Yellowknife on June 20, 2005, and October 11, 2005.

Bill 4 will have the effect of changing the number of hours allowed for kindergarten instruction from a maximum amount based on a half-day program, to a minimum amount, again based on a half-day program. This will have the intended effect of allowing full-day kindergarten programs to continue in the Northwest Territories, and will legitimize the current practices of many school boards. Many boards have chosen to use their surpluses and discretionary funding to deliver full-day kindergarten programs, and have shown improved results in testing at the Grade 3 level for those children who attended a full-time or full-day structured kindergarten program. There are many studies that show improved early childhood education programs help children to succeed in school. We need to give our children every advantage.

It is important to note that this bill will not require school boards to deliver full-day kindergarten programs nor require parents to enrol their children in full-day programs. Indeed, parents, under the Education Act, are not even required to send their children to school until they turn six

years old. This bill will allow the government to fund full-day kindergarten programs. The way the Education Act is currently written, the department can only fund half-day kindergarten programs, and this bill can be considered to be establishing the legislative base that will allow the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment the ability to establish funding in a future budget.

The concerns that we heard from presenters centred on the fact that this legislation will not do much good if there is no money for the school boards to implement a full-day program and that if appropriate programming was not developed to fill a full-day of kindergarten it was, essentially, a babysitting service for five-year-olds. The committee is aware that the department is funded for, and is currently developing, what we hope is quality programming for a full-day kindergarten program.

The Standing Committee on Social Programs would like to thank the Minister and his department for introducing this amendment. It is a necessary step in establishing funded full-day kindergarten programs in the Northwest Territories. Committee members will be pursuing the necessary funding through the business plan and main estimate process, and will be supporting the Minister in securing this funding for the 2006-2007 school year.

This concludes the committee's general comments on Bill 4. Individual Members may have questions or comments as we proceed. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Lee. At this time, I'd like to ask Mr. Dent if he would like to bring witnesses into the chamber.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Yes, please, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Is the committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. Then I will ask the Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms to escort the witnesses to the witness table.

Mr. Dent, could you please introduce your witnesses for the record?

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. On my left I have Mr. Mark Aitken, who is the director of the legislation division for the Department of Justice; and, Mr. Mark Cleveland on my right, who is the deputy minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Members, general comments on Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Education Act. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Obviously, I support the amendment, and I do thank the Minister for making this an action item. We're not being exactly proactive in this area; we're sort of catching up to what school boards have been doing, because we know that there are many school boards in the North who have already been providing full-time kindergarten, and now we're just saying that it's okay for you to have at least minimum and maximum half-day programs. We're not even really fully legitimizing full-day kindergarten programs.

I support this amendment, but this got me thinking about how it was possible that, for so many years, school boards have been able to fund full-time kindergarten, and does the department know what kind of effect that has on the school budget and the money that we gave the school boards to do other things? I guess the PTR ratio, two or three years ago, was 18 to one. We have made efforts to reduce them to, I don't know what it is now, less than 16 to one, and here we are, in this Assembly, doing what we can to reduce the PTR ratio so that there can be more money for students in the school system. It's good that they have the choice to do this, but it's a balancing act. How much leeway are they supposed to have, and how can we know, then, that what we are doing here is translating into classrooms? If the school boards decide that they're going to fund full-time kindergarten when they weren't funded for it, then we have to ask where they were taking the money from. While I'm sure the educators know, they have to make the decisions on where and what, but how much knowledge do we have, and how much do we have a say on how our public money that we vote here is being spent?

I support this legislation, because I think kindergarten education is very important because most parents now work. Most parents are not able or willing to provide the kind of pre-school education and support to the kids that maximize learning potential and activities for the kids for many, many different reasons. It is beneficial to have a structured kindergarten program for the kids. But we're not making this uniform across the board. There will be lots of schools around the North who are not able to do this, whether it's because they don't have money from within the funding, or because they can't get teachers, or they don't have a classroom, or their school boards decide that this is not the priority of the board.

So I am concerned about the fact that we may have a sort of patchwork kindergarten programming, and the extent and quality of pre-school education available to our kids. So let me just say again, I support the bill and what it purports to do, but I do want to discuss with the Minister, in general, about those two points. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Lee. General comments. Did you have a question? Was there a question there, Ms. Lee, for the Minister?

MS. LEE: I do want to get the Minister's responses to my two points. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Okay. Thank you. It sounded more like a comment than a question. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. The approach to delivering education in the Northwest Territories, now, is one that is substantially decentralized. We have elected bodies in communities that get to make decisions that are relevant to that community in terms of how the programming is offered. So, for instance, the culture and language programming is not the same in any two communities. It's substantially different. The Tlicho region's approach to cultural inclusion will be different than that which is found in the Gwich'in region, perhaps. We don't stipulate that schools have to follow or deliver exactly the same programs in the same ways. That's one of the beauties in the system, in that it can recognize local priorities and bring those into the schools. So there is a considerable amount of flexibility in the funding.

Where has the funding been coming for the programming that has been provided? In some cases, that has been through external sources. DEAs will have applied for, and received, funding through the Healthy Children's Initiative, for developmental programs, as they have pitched as fitting into the early childhood programs. There will be some that have said that this important enough, and we are satisfied that we are seeing enough of a difference in Grade 3, that if it means larger class sizes for the other grades, then that's what we'll do.

So the approach hasn't been a cookie cutter one. Where the monies have been coming from, has been varied across the Territories. Does this mean that we might have a bit of a patchwork approach? Yes, that is entirely possible, because it will be up to the elected people in each community to determine what their priorities are and where they fit. My goal is to make sure that if a community or a school is offering a full-day program, that we are able to provide them with the funding for full-day programming. But I don't think we're going to necessarily offer the funding if the program isn't offered for a full day.

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

MS. LEE: Why is it that when we know that schools have been funding full-time kindergarten when they were not budgeted for it, and obviously taking money from somewhere else because they have decided to do so, now we are saying that we want to catch up to that, because we support full-time kindergarten? Why is it that we're not saying you could have full-time kindergarten at a maximum, or half-time kindergarten at a minimum, and then fund accordingly? Why are we just going half way?

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm not sure that...I think we're going half way. I'm saying that if the school is offering a full-day kindergarten program, based on our curriculum, it is my goal to make sure that we're able to offer the funding to support that programming. We don't provide the budget right now. We don't say to a school, you have to have a librarian; we don't say that you have to have a computer specialist. Those decisions are made locally. The schools themselves determine whether or not they want to have those positions, and whether or not they want to use PTR funding in order to accommodate that. So it will become a local decision as to what programs they want to offer in each community. If they choose to offer this program, then I'm hoping that we're going to be prepared to support it.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't think the Minister understood my question. My question is, we know that many school boards in the Inuvik area, Delta, Yellowknife for sure -- I don't know in other areas -- have been delivering full-time kindergarten programs, even though they have not been funded, even though it's actually illegal, really, technically speaking, because there was no legislation to say that. Now we're saying you can have a kindergarten program if you want to. But this only says minimum half time, or maximum full-time kindergarten. We're not saying, "Have full-time

kindergarten." I guess one way of doing that, is because then we are only required to pay half of the kindergarten and not full time. But we're saying that you can have full-time kindergarten, but we're going to only legitimize half-time kindergarten; therefore, we're only going to pay for half-time kindergarten, knowing fully, and we are implicit in this, and we're condoning this, knowing fully that the school boards are not going to have money to, technically, deliver full-time kindergarten programming, and they have to take the money from elsewhere. So we're not exactly doing what we say we want to do and what we say we're doing. So I don't think we're going all the way. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Minister Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just for clarity sake, I wouldn't want people to believe that district education authorities or councils have been breaking the law. What they have been operating, in addition to a half-day kindergarten program, is early childhood programming, which hasn't been subject to the kindergarten curriculum. That has been a local decision. They felt it was important enough to bring this sort of program into the school, and we certainly allow that kind of flexibility.

As the Member will note from the last sentence in my opening comments, we have advanced the issue of funding, and being able to provide the full-day funding, as part of the current business planning process. So we are very hopeful that we will be able to provide the funding to allow the boards to offer full-day programming. But since the Education Act only requires that students attend between the ages of six and 15, we aren't going to say to the boards that they have to provide the programming. If in a community there isn't the interest in the program, then there's no point in forcing a board to deliver. That's why we're making it available as an option, and where that option is taken up, I believe we'll be able to support it financially.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Dent. General comments. Detail. Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Education Act, clause 1.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Clause 2?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Does committee agree that Bill 4 is ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Bill 4 is now ready for third reading. What is the wish of committee? Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to report progress.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): You have to make a motion.

MR. HAWKINS: I'd like to move that committee report progress. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Just before we deal with your motion, Mr. Hawkins, I would like to thank Minister Dent, Mr. Cleveland, and Mr. Aitken, for their attendance here. You can now leave the table. Thank you.

Mr. Hawkins' motion is in order to report progress. The motion is in order; it's not debatable. All those in favour of the motion? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

I will rise and report progress.

MR. SPEAKER: May I have the report of Committee of the Whole, Mrs. Groenewegen.

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Education Act, and would like to report that Bill 4 is now ready for third reading. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Do you have a seconder? The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland. There is a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

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

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Orders of the day for Monday, October 24, 2005, at 1:30 p.m.:

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

14. Notices of Motion

15. Notices of Motion First Reading of Bills

16. Motions

- Motion 6-15(4) - Appointment of Electoral Boundaries Commission

- Motion 7-15(4) - Appointment of Conflict of Interest Commissioner

17. First Reading of Bills

- Bill 11, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2005-2006

- Bill 12, An Act to Amend the Territorial Court Act

- Bill 13, An Act to Amend the Financial Administration Act

- Bill 14, Public Airports Act

- Bill 15, Court Security Act

- Bill 16, Tobacco Control Act

- Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Public Colleges Act

18. Second Reading of Bills

19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

- Minister's Statement 24-15(4), Sessional Statement

20. Report of Committee of the Whole

21. Third Reading of Bills

Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Education Act

22. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Monday, October 24, 2005, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 12:50 p.m.