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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Thursday, June 1, 2006****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, Honourable Michael Miltenberger, Mr. Pokiak, Mr. Ramsay, Honourable Floyd Roland, Mr. Villeneuve, Mr. Yakeleya

ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good afternoon, colleagues. Welcome back to the House on this June 1st afternoon. Orders of the day. Ministers' statements. The honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**Minister's Statement 8-15(5): Western Premiers' Conference**

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to provide Members of this Legislative Assembly with an update on the Western Premiers' Conference that I attended this week in Gimli, Manitoba. Western Premiers discussed a wide range of issues of interest to the Northwest Territories, including the green economy and energy, transportation, pandemic preparedness and strengthening the federation.

In a follow-up to when we invited regional aboriginal leaders to meet with western Premiers as part of the 2004 Western Premiers' Conference held in Inuvik, Premiers again met with the leaders of the five national aboriginal organizations.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report that western Premiers reasserted their commitment to closing the gap between the social and economic conditions of aboriginal and other Canadians. Western Premiers reaffirmed the goals and objectives adopted by First Ministers and national aboriginal leaders at their meeting last November in Kelowna. Our challenge now is to develop a process with the new federal government that will allow us to meet these goals and objectives.

Western Premiers also agreed to work with aboriginal leaders to hold a summit in the coming months on aboriginal women's issues and, in particular, violence against women.

---Applause

Mr. Speaker, this is an important initiative for the Northwest Territories and one in which we intend to fully participate.

Another main item on the western Premiers' agenda is labour market shortages in the North and the West. A significant part of these discussions was finding ways to address the low participation rates of aboriginal peoples in the labour force.

As the lead for the development of a Western Canadian Aboriginal Training Strategy, I provided an update on the work currently underway in each jurisdiction aimed at

removing the barriers that prevent far too many aboriginal people from fully participating in the booming resource economies of western Canada. As a next step, Premiers have directed their advanced education and learning Ministers to prepare a preliminary report on best practices

in advance of a summit on economic opportunities for aboriginal people to be held in Saskatoon on January 23 to 25, 2007.

Mr. Speaker, this discussion was important in the context of the northern leaders' meeting in Norman Wells and the determination of leaders to focus on new and innovative ways to bring more of our people into the workforce, so they can take up the opportunities that present and future economic growth provides.

Following the Western Premiers' Conference, I participated in a North American Leaders' Summit attended by western Premiers; Premiers Charest, McGuinty and Lord, Ambassadors Wilkins, Wilson, Lavertu and Segovia de Madero, and many United States and Mexican governors. Among the topics discussed, of particular interest to the NWT were Arctic sovereignty and security and continental energy.

Mr. Speaker, I believe these were important and useful discussions, however, I am happy to be back here in the Legislative Assembly and look forward to joining all Members in proceeding with the business of the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Premier. Ministers' statements. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**Member's Statement On Community-Based Alcohol And Drug Treatment Programs**

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, whenever MLAs go into small communities, the interactions with residents always turn into discussions on the state of alcohol and drug treatment in the Northwest Territories. It's also the number one issue being brought forward in written submissions to the JR Panel on the Mackenzie gas pipeline hearings. Mr. Speaker, people are divided on just what should be done to improve alcohol and drug programming in the Northwest Territories. Some believe there needs to be regional residential treatment centres and some residents believe that there is need to increase community capacity to deal with the issue at the local level. A recent study by the Canadian Centre for Substance Abuse quoted in News/North stated that the cost of the NWT economy for the abuse of alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs were about \$80 million for things like the medical costs of treatment centres, the extra costs of the justice system and the loss of productivity of jobs. When I hear the term lost productivity, it makes me think of the lost generations that we have in the Northwest Territories.

Fallout from the residential schools has affected more than just one generation that were focussed on attending these schools. Their children are affected because their parents never learned how to be parents. Children have no self-esteem because their parents' self-esteem was crushed by the residential school experiences. Children

don't know their language or their heritage because their parents never taught them because they just don't know it.

Mr. Speaker, many aboriginal residents have lost their way. They aren't at home out on their own land and they are not home in their own communities. This is why it's time to get off the bandwagon. Community-based alcohol and drug programs may make people more comfortable taking treatment, but the treatment will not work if people seeking help are not comfortable with themselves. There needs to be an on-the-land component to any program delivered at the local level.

Mr. Speaker, the department is always saying we need to treat the whole person to be very effective in their healing. So it logically follows that reconnecting aboriginal people to the land and their culture should be a part of any treatment program. If people feel better about themselves, they will get better. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Community Participation In Recruitment And Selection Process For Government Positions

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, as a Member of the Legislative Assembly, I wholeheartedly think the communities know what is best for the communities. When it comes to recruitment and selection of staff, the same principle applies. That is why I feel small and remote communities should be able to directly participate in the recruitment and selection processes for jobs in their community.

The communities have raised these concerns because their residents are being alienated from local government jobs. They are wondering why, time and time again, local northern and aboriginal staff is being screened out and why certain irrelevant criteria are included in job postings.

In the past, various GNWT departments involved the community and the leadership with many of the recruitment and selection processes. This practice has dwindled through the years and is now nonexistent, Mr. Speaker. So I would like to ask why. People in the Nahendeh riding are feeling increasingly alienated and discouraged with their applications for employment and also how the hiring process is going with the GNWT.

Servicing our communities and having the reflective staff must be our number one priority. I have had numerous discussions with my constituents stating that true northern representation is not reflective in the GNWT workforce. Staff is still constantly being brought up from down south even when the position requires little or no skills, but our local residents are being overlooked. We all expect some feathers to be ruffled with the Human Resources department changes within the last year, but these changes seem to be more and more a concern to me and my constituents. In almost every community in the Nahendeh, local concerns are continuing to escalate. Chiefs, councillors, and others, and elders from the community must be allowed to participate in every aspect of the recruitment and selection processes of our government jobs. This government must be serious about hiring local people. This government was committed and must be serious about local capacity building through local staffing. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Outstanding Rent Payments For Elders In Behchoko

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it has become apparent that approximately 80 tenants of Behchoko public housing units are at virtual eviction but this government does not investigate or remedy the situation.

It is hard to believe that some pensioners -- yes, Mr. Speaker, I am talking about our elders -- owe the Housing Corporation \$30,000 plus because of discrepancies in the calculation of their rent, going back to 10 or 15 years in some cases, Mr. Speaker. This is outrageous. The Housing Corporation should have stepped in when they first noticed these tenants were falling behind on their payments for rent, Mr. Speaker, and figured out what was going on.

It just accumulated over time. It still is and we are not doing anything about it as GNWT. Mr. Speaker, some unit renters that I have visited prior to my election and just recently when the Minister toured the community of Behchoko in March said there were some discrepancies in their rental units. They were at times paying as much as \$2,400 a month on a 30-year-old public unit, Mr. Speaker. A 30-year-old unit paying out \$2,400 a month times 12 months equals \$28,800 on an annual basis, Mr. Speaker. We are talking about our elders in the communities.

Mr. Speaker, it may be the case where family members were living with these elders, but that shouldn't have an impact on the elders in the communities. He or she rents a unit raising their children. Some families in the Dene culture are quite large, on an average of seven to 15 in a household or more, Mr. Speaker. The GNWT needs to step in and analyze the seriousness of the situation and find out if the owing of these 80 plus public units is accurate or not. I can tell you that some of these units I visited that owe approximately \$30,000 is not right when the pensioners are living there. One example is two unemployed sons are still required to pay approximately \$800 a month, Mr. Speaker. That is just one example. It is just disheartening to see and hear that our elders and community members owe so much in rent because of the rent scale that needs to be fixed. Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister of Housing at the appropriate time. Mahsi.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Student Financial Assistance For Post-Graduate Studies

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I spoke about some of the successful achievements of some of my constituents in the education field. Today I would just like to mention one of the shortfalls on this government's education system.

I am well aware, as all Members are I am sure in this House, that our government resources are stretched very thin in order to accommodate the broad range of needs northerners require every day. I do acknowledge the fact that this government spends approximately 25 percent of the \$1.2 billion budget on educating northerners, which is amongst the highest level on a per capita basis in this

country, Mr. Speaker, I am proud to say. But, Mr. Speaker, what I want to mention is the funding for higher education or funding for persons who want to obtain more than just one degree at the university level. Current eligibility requirements and limitations set out in this government's Student Financial Assistance Program only allows for the basic grant to be applied to 12 semesters in your lifetime.

Mr. Speaker, it is not the number of basic grants that a student can apply for and receive that raises my concern, but the fact that the three simple words included in this policy, those being "in your lifetime" is what raises my concern.

This is the gist of what I am trying to raise here today in my Member's statement. This simple insertion in the policy closes the student financial assistance's door on any northerner who has expended their basic student financial assistance support and perhaps received a bachelor of arts degree but chooses to return to the university maybe after a number of years, be it to get a master's degree or perhaps a Ph.D. or even a bachelor of arts degree in a different field. These people are no longer eligible for the basic student financial grant. I cannot see how this is fair let alone good foresight by this government, especially if these individuals are northerners, having lived and worked in the North and are returning to the North after receiving one or more prestigious degrees.

Mr. Speaker, I will be asking the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment these and other questions later in today's session. Mahsi cho.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Under-Representation Of Disabled Persons In Government Workforce

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I am going to continue on with the message I had yesterday for the Minister responsible for the public service, Mr. Roland, and the Minister responsible for Persons with Disabilities, Mr. Miltenberger.

I listened very closely to Minister Roland yesterday attempting to answer questions that I posed to him about the lack of representation in our public service for persons with disabilities. The Minister just did not seem to believe that his government was doing anything wrong when it came to hiring persons with disabilities, even though his own departments of FMBS and Human Resources themselves currently have no disabled persons working for them. Seeing that this Minister is responsible for carrying out the government policy that states quite clearly that the Government of the Northwest Territories will have a workforce representative of the population, it really makes me wonder why and how this gross misrepresentation is allowed to continue.

Let's do a comparison, Mr. Speaker. The Northwest Territories has a rate of 13 percent of our population that have a disability, yet .4 percent of our public service are employees with a disability. That is a factor that is 30 times out of sync. In Saskatchewan, 9.7 percent of the population has a disability, yet their public service has 3.4 percent representation for persons who are disabled; a factor of less than three. Just so the Minister is aware, the Labour department in Saskatchewan, which is the

equivalent of our HR department, is a role model for the rest of the government as it should be with over 13 percent of its employees having a disability. The last time I checked, we still had zero working in our HR department.

Manitoba; 2.79 percent compared to seven percent of the population with a disability. Nova Scotia had a rate of four percent compared to the general population of 13 percent. That is 10 times higher than the Northwest Territories. The federal public service had a rate of 5.1 percent. These jurisdictions also have their requirement that individuals self identify, just to clarify that for the Minister.

Given the crystal clear disparities that exist, I find that by the Minister's responses to me yesterday and his lack of a single solid proactive measure to remedy the situation, is avoiding his responsibility as Minister of Human Resources. I am hoping that, now that the Minister has the numbers in front of him, he can come up with creative ways to address the disparities than simply saying an employment equity policy is in the works. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It has been obvious that the affirmative action policy has needed a replacement for years. This is nothing new. When will we have this new employment equity policy that the Minister speaks of and when will the disparity be addressed? I will certainly have questions for the Minister at the appropriate time, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Need For Permanent Policing Services In Sachs Harbour

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday my colleague, the honourable Kevin Menicoche, spoke about the need for police services in his riding. I, too, continue to share his concern about the need to protect residents who don't have full-time police services. Mr. Speaker, on numerous occasions I have raised this concern; in particular on the situation in Sachs Harbour.

Sachs Harbour residents have raised this issue with me since I started to represent them in this House. Mr. Speaker, the response today from the Department of Justice continues to be that we are looking at alternatives to address protective services in communities without police services. I ask this Assembly once again, how would you feel if you don't have full-time protective services in your community? How would you feel safe and secure?

On a recent visit to Sachs Harbour, I was informed the superintendent of the RCMP met with the mayor and council to address the need for full-time police services. The RCMP continues to look for alternatives to address the need for protective services in communities without police presence. When will this service be found? Will it be after there is a tragic incident? Maybe.

Mr. Speaker, all residents of the Northwest Territories need to feel safe and secure. In the March session I raised this issue and I will continue to pursue this

important issue on behalf of the Sachs Harbour residents and for all the communities without a police presence.

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

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Burdensome Funding Process For Non-Government Social Services Agencies

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this government is always speaking to the social well-being of the residents of the Northwest Territories. In fact, Mr. Handley in his statement spoke to the fact that they're going to have a summit on aboriginal women's issues and, in particular, violence against women, and they said they consider it an important initiative.

That's my topic today, why we allow the people that provide these services to continually have to wait for their funding from the regional health boards. They have enough to do, Mr. Speaker, without constantly having to worry about funding. They have payrolls to make and we wonder why we don't have many people volunteering to provide these services and to try and run them. To quote from a piece of correspondence I received, it said, it's very disheartening for a volunteer board to have to spend hours of our volunteer time negotiating with the Department of Health and Social Services. She ended with saying, we are so very tired, and it's something they have to do every year.

This is something I spoke to last year in regards to the women's shelter in Inuvik. It's June the 1st today and they still haven't received their funding. We went through the same thing last year and I thought we were going to take care of that. The Family Counselling Centre is not asking for any more funding. They're just asking for a line item to be moved. Are we telling these people that the services they provide are down on the totem pole? We should move these people a little higher up in the pecking order, otherwise we're going to have nobody who's going to want to volunteer for anything if they constantly have to wait and wait and wait and let everybody get their feed first and then they get what's left over. I think it's time that this government, instead of always talking about the social well-being of the residents of the NWT, start trying to do something about it and make sure these people get moved a little higher up the pecking order. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Retroactive Social Assistance Payments

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to speak today on the exclusion of retroactive payments in income support programs and what I see as an oversight by these social assistance regulations. This issue is not the appeal process or the work done in the area by your dedicated civil servants, but rather a misstep in our policy.

Full confidence in the service being provided to the public requires diligence on the part of the government to see

logical lapses corrected, and corrected immediately. With social assistance regulations, it states that retroactive income support payments are prohibited. A reasonable clause, I would say. However, what happens when errors on the part of the program administrator result in unauthorized termination of benefits to someone? What about then? This prohibition on retroactive payment applies to persons applying for income support. That makes a lot of sense to me. But what happens if someone gets bumped off the system when it's not their fault? Where do we put the applicant in this process who is really in good standing all along, but an error has been created by the program itself, when it was the government at fault, when the government's administration was the problem? How can retroactivity be denied when this is a necessary element of this applicant's day-to-day life?

There needs to be a mechanism in place to protect these people of errors like this because administrative errors happen, and that's called life. But the fact is, the government's not doing anything and that's wrong, Mr. Speaker. I'm interested in seeing this addressed and I look forward to the Minister providing some insight into why we're not doing this and how we can clean up this program through this delivery mechanism to make sure that the people at most risk are those who have the biggest challenges are not being unfairly treated. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Poor Condition Of Government Roadside Facilities

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, over the past 11 years I have had a chance to drive the highway between Hay River and Yellowknife many, many times. I wish I would have counted because it's been many thousands. This past Sunday I had occasion again. After church on Sunday I got in my vehicle and drove to Yellowknife. I've come to this House and reported on things like bison on the road, the state of the yellow lines on the road, road conditions, ferry operations, ferry signage, and everything. But today I want to tell you about the condition of the Government of the Northwest Territories outhouses along the highway.

---Laughter

And it was bad. This is after the May long weekend. This is essentially summer. We could have tourists on the road. Now, I'm not a tourist and I don't say this to embarrass the Minister, but surely somebody has the contract to keep these places clean and to keep them supplied, and I can tell you 100 percent there was no toilet tissue in any outhouse that had the Government of the Northwest Territories name on it. One in particular that I stopped at was Chan Lake, and I have to tell you, I went there, they all got these beautiful signs, very expensive signs that say welcome to the Government of the Northwest Territories, they got little teepee shaped signs. I mean, like, we're advertising that they're ours, but it's an embarrassment.

Anyway, at Chan Lake as well there was a minivan, and I was thinking, if I was a tourist how would I feel? There was a minivan parked there at Chan Lake that had every window smashed out. It had all the rocks still lying on top of it. It had the wheels taken off and it was a really recent model of minivan. Anyway, if we're going to have territorial parks and roadside stops and we're going to put our name

on them, let's make sure we've got contractors in place to keep them supplied and keep them clean, and hopefully tow away the derelict vehicles, because I'd hate for any visitors to think that anything like that could happen to them while they're in our wonderful Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Member's Statement On Restoring Government Support For The Secondary Diamond Industry

MR. BRADEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I want to speak today about an issue that's very, very close to a number of my constituents and that is the stability and the future of our secondary diamond industry. Mr. Speaker, there are, I believe, about 150 people now engaged in working in the sorting and cutting and polishing industry here in Yellowknife. This was something that our government engaged in about 10 years ago with excitement and optimism, to be able to be leaders in Canada in introducing this new industry based on the success of our diamond miners. Now, there have been some failures and some successes. Most recently, Mr. Speaker, I think we can congratulate the new federal government for finally getting rid of the excise tax on jewellery.

---Applause

We can also congratulate, closer to home, BHP Billiton and Arslanian and Polar Ice Factories for achieving a three-year supply deal. But we have had setbacks, Mr. Speaker.

In the last few weeks a local cutting and polishing shop, Canada Dene Diamonds, a joint venture including the Deton'Cho Corporation, closed its doors with the loss of 14 jobs. But of most concern, Mr. Speaker, is our decision, our decision, this government's decision last fall to collapse our own government's four-person diamond projects unit. This unit was established to provide strategic investment and regulatory support, marketing support, training and immigration help to the businesses and to oversee and monitor our own very substantial investment in this industry, but now we're essentially down to one person looking after the certificate program. Mr. Speaker, I feel that, at least in part and certainly in spirit, by collapsing this unit we have abandoned the partnerships that we've established with the businesses, the customers and there are over 600 stores across Canada and the U.S. that want our product and especially, Mr. Speaker, the constituents that we share here in Yellowknife and in the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, a cost benefit analysis recently done by this government shows that on a sustained basis for a \$2 million investment a year we could see a total benefit of tenfold increase to some \$20 million a year. I want to see our government's commitment and optimism in this industry restored, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Members' statements. The honourable Member from Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Member's Statement On Novel Project Costs And Resource Requirements

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to speak about my latest thoughts on the work of the

Housing Corporation. First of all, let me, Mr. Speaker, commend the Minister of Housing on the latest affordable housing initiative in which we'll see a \$100 million investment and 50/50 percent cost share arrangement with the federal government that will see 530 new homes in the Territories, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

It's also very good to see that the Housing Corporation is working with MACA and I can assure both Ministers that they will have my full support in this regard. Mr. Speaker, I also appreciate the corporation's work on new housing projects in Yellowknife for the seniors, persons with disabilities and the transition home for men with substance addictions issues, which will open in the next two weeks. People involved in these projects cannot say enough about the good work the corporation are doing on the ground, Mr. Speaker.

Thinking of all this good work by the corporation at the ground level, and I know the Minister is waiting to see what my next part is, I cannot figure out why is it that the corporation cannot get their act together on the Novel housing, Mr. Speaker. After being told in this House that the Minister will come to this House for any new funding on this Novel project, I had to find out from the street and through the grapevine that in fact the corporation has appointed a new ADM solely responsible for Novel housing project and I have to call it that, although I don't want to use the name because all the information we are coming to is reporting to this product, Mr. Speaker. It made me wonder why don't we have an ADM solely responsible for affordable housing for seniors, for persons with disabilities, or trappers or hunters, or responsible for children, or even to tackle the violence against women. Why is it that a corporation that has their stocks listed in Toronto Stock Exchange deserve an ADM solely responsible for selling their product to the NWT government and residents within their corporation? I think that should make us think, Mr. Speaker.

The last question, which will be the first of many that I will be asking in this House, I'd like to know why is it that under the affordable housing policy, \$100 million investment, \$50 million from the GNWT, \$50 million from the federal government, will give us 530 units, but under Novel project for \$200 million it will cost us twice as much for 830 units. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Members' statements. Reports of standing and special committees. Reports of standing and special committees. The honourable Member from Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

ITEM 4: REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Committee Report 1-15(5): Report On The Review Of The 2004-2005 Annual Report Of The Human Rights Commission

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker

Introduction

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight met on May 2, 2006 to review the 2004-2005 Annual Report of the Human Rights Commission. The committee would like to thank Ms. Mary Pat Short, chair of the Human Rights Commission, and Ms. Thérèse Boullard, director of human rights, for appearing before us.

As the Human Rights Commission opened its doors on July 1, 2004, this was its first annual report and covers only the first nine months of operation, much of which was taken up by implementation matters. During the public hearing, Ms. Short and Ms. Boullard were also able to advise the committee of more recent activities and developments.

The committee was pleased to hear of the progress the commission has made in raising awareness about human rights through its web site, public service announcements and community meetings. We encourage the commission to continue expanding its efforts to make people aware of human rights issues, particularly in the smaller communities where the commission has not yet had a presence, and also through targeted outreach programs such as the one already under development regarding drug and alcohol testing in the workplace.

The committee was also pleased with the director's efforts to make the complaints process a relatively accessible one. However, we underline the importance of making it as easy as possible to obtain information and make complaints in all official languages.

Mr. Speaker, that concludes the introduction comments on this report.

Motion That Committee Report 1-15(5) Be Deemed Read And Printed In Hansard In Its Entirety, Carried

I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, that the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight Report on the Review of the 2004-05 Annual Report of the Human Rights Commission be deemed read and printed in Hansard in its entirety. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. All those in favour? Opposed? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Committee Report 1-15(5): Report On The Review Of The 2004-2005 Annual Report Of The Human Rights Commission

Recommendations

The report includes two specific recommendations for amendments to the act.

Systemic Remedies

The first recommendation is to amend the act to explicitly allow the Human Rights Adjudication Panel to order systemic remedies in addition to remedies to address the situation of individual complainants. Systemic remedies might include requiring an organization to implement employment equity or to change policies that have resulted in discrimination. The report cites the persistence of unequal pay for work of equal value between men and women as an example of systemic discrimination. In such a case, providing compensation or another remedy to one individual complainant would not address the overall issue or assist others being subjected to the same discrimination by the same employer.

The witnesses also suggested there is an inherent contradiction in the act in that it currently allows the commission to initiate complaints, which in practice it would most likely do in a case of systemic discrimination, but does not allow the adjudication panel to grant the corresponding remedies.

The committee was made aware that some other Canadian jurisdictions explicitly allow for systemic remedies in their human rights legislation, and that in other jurisdictions, the courts have interpreted the acts as allowing for systemic remedies even though they do not explicitly grant this power.

While the committee does not necessarily disagree with the recommendation, we would like to be assured that it would not have unforeseen implications beyond those identified by the commission. We would also point out that our act is as yet new and untested and that it may be more appropriate to revisit this recommendation after we have gained a few years' experience and established our own precedents.

Recommendation

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight recommends the GNWT review the implications and advisability of including systemic remedies in the Human Rights Act and report back on its findings in its response to this report.

Criminal Convictions

The act currently prohibits discrimination on the basis of pardoned criminal convictions. The report recommends that the act be amended in order to prevent discrimination on the basis of "unrelated" criminal convictions. The example provided in the report is of a person with a record for driving while impaired being refused a job that does not involve driving. The current act would not protect that person unless he or she had received a pardon. With the recommended wording, the person would have grounds for a complaint by making the case that a conviction for a driving offence is unrelated to a job that does not involve driving. Similarly, a person refused a job on the basis of a conviction from many years ago might have grounds for a complaint.

The committee had a lengthy and spirited discussion on this issue. Some Members are reluctant to support the recommendation because it would put employers in a very difficult position of making judgment calls about what is or is not an "unrelated" conviction. In some cases, it could be very difficult for them to balance their duties toward their clients or other employees with the legal requirement not to discriminate against a job applicant. For example, if a person had a twenty-year-old record for sexual assault and no subsequent convictions, would it be discrimination to refuse to hire him or her for a delivery job? On the other hand, would it be negligent to put customers and other employees in contact with a person whose history included a violent offence? Some Members are concerned that it would be unfair to expect employers to make these kinds of evaluations.

In support of the recommendation, Members pointed to some employers' policies of not hiring anyone with a criminal conviction without giving any consideration to the relevance of the offence. Such policies are making it difficult for many responsible adults who made mistakes in their youth to find employment and provide for their families. Prohibiting discrimination on the basis of unrelated criminal convictions would prevent employers from automatically refusing to hire anyone with a record and force them to consider applicants on a case-by-case basis.

Recommendation

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight recommends the GNWT review the

implications and advisability of amending the Human Rights Act to prohibit discrimination on the basis of unrelated criminal convictions and report back on its findings in its response to this report.

Other Issues

In the course of our discussions on the annual report, some Members noted the act uses the word "sex" to refer to discrimination on the basis of being male or female, and raised concerns that this terminology could be misunderstood or be offensive to some people. The committee suggests the government consider bringing forward an amendment to the act to change the word "sex" to "gender," which is in its opinion a less confusing and more appropriate term.

Conclusion

The committee looks forward to monitoring the continued evolution of the Northwest Territories Human Rights Commission, and to reviewing its next annual report.

Recommendation

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight recommends that, pursuant to Rule 93(5), the GNWT table a comprehensive response to this report within 120 calendar days.

MR. SPEAKER: Reports of standing and special committees. The honourable Member from Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

Motion To Receive Committee Report 1-15(5) And Move Into Committee Of The Whole, Carried

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, that Committee Report 1-15(5) be received by the Assembly and moved into Committee of the Whole.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. All those in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Committee report will stand before Committee of the Whole. Reports of standing and special committees. The honourable Member from Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Member from Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 93(4) and have the Committee Report 1-15(5) moved into the Committee of the Whole for consideration for Friday, June 2, 2006. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The Member is seeking unanimous consent to waive Rule 93(4). Are there any nays? There are no nays. Committee Report 1-15(5) will be moved into consideration of Committee of the Whole for Friday, June 2, 2006. Reports of standing and special committees. The honourable Member from Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Committee Report 2-15(5): Report On The Review Of The 2004-2005 Annual Report Of The Information And Privacy Commissioner

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Introduction

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight met on May 2, 2006, to review the 2004-2005 Annual Report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. The committee would like to thank the Commissioner, Ms. Elaine Keenan-Bengts, for her report and for her appearance before the committee.

The NWT's Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (ATIPP) came into force on December 31, 1996. The purpose of the act is to make public bodies more accountable and to protect personal privacy by giving the public a right of access, with limited exceptions, to records held by the GNWT and related public bodies, and by preventing the unauthorized collection, use or disclosure of personal information by the GNWT and related public bodies. The act also gives individuals the rights to see and make corrections to information about themselves.

The Information and Privacy Commissioner is an independent officer of the Legislative Assembly. Her primary role is to review and make recommendations on public bodies' decisions under the act. Reviews can be requested by people who have been refused access to information, third parties who have an interest in information someone else is requesting, and people who have concerns about how their personal information has been handled. The Commissioner's mandate also includes: research into matters affecting the carrying out of the purposes of the act; receiving representations about the operation of the act; and offering comment on the implications for privacy protection of proposed legislative schemes or government programs.

Mr. Speaker, that concludes the introductory comments on this report.

Motion That Committee Report 2-15(5) Be Deemed Read And Printed In Hansard In Its Entirety, Carried

I move, seconded by the honourable Member of Nahendeh, that the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight Report on the Review of the 2004-2005 Annual Report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner be deemed read and printed in Hansard in its entirety. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. A motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. All those in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Committee Report 2-15(5): Report On The Review Of The 2004-2005 Annual Report Of The Information And Privacy Commissioner

2004-2005 Annual Report

An underlying theme throughout the Commissioner's report and presentation to the committee was the need to foster a corporate culture that is committed to open and transparent government and strives to follow the spirit as well as the letter of the act. The Commissioner points to a trend of public bodies automatically refusing access to information wherever they have a discretionary exemption under the act, without evaluating whether there are clear and compelling reasons to do so. She is concerned that public bodies, and in particular the Financial Management Board Secretariat, are withholding information just because they can without considering whether they should.

In order to shift the corporate culture toward openness and transparency, the Commissioner believes a top-down

approach is necessary. In her words, "if the top members of the bureaucracy and the politicians are afraid of openness, that fear will translate to the department or government and there will be a corporate culture of secrecy. If the corporate culture is one of openness, the rest of the bureaucracy will follow."

As an example of the leadership required, she cites the Premier, management board and Attorney General of Ontario, who recently issued memoranda emphasizing the importance of freedom of information in the democratic process and encouraging a proactive approach to providing information to the public. She recommends the Premier, Ministers and Financial Management Board follow the lead of Ontario by publicly and clearly endorsing the goals of the act and taking positive steps to foster a corporate culture of openness and accountability.

The committee shares the Commissioner's concerns and strongly supports her recommendation.

Recommendation

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight recommends that the Premier, Ministers and Financial Management Board make public statements supporting the principles of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, and send clear messages to the public service about the importance of open and transparent government, and the need to grant access to information unless there is a clear and compelling reason not to do so.

The 2004-2005 annual report includes several other specific recommendations to enhance access to information and protection of personal privacy in the NWT, and to improve the administration of the act.

Boards And Agencies

A longstanding concern for the Commissioner has been the need for members and staff of boards and agencies to be aware of their obligations under the act and to implement appropriate records retention policies, particularly for documents in the hands of individual board members. The Commissioner recommends that, as a minimum, the chairs and executive directors of boards and agencies be required to take the training, although ideally training would be mandatory for all appointees.

The GNWT advised in its response to the 2003-2004 recommendations that ATIPP training is routinely available to all board members and public servants, and that the Department of Public Works and Services would make available to board members its records management standards, policies and guidelines.

The committee is concerned that the GNWT's approach to date has been far from proactive and supports the Commissioner's recommendation for mandatory training.

Recommendation

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight recommends the GNWT make basic records management and ATIPP training mandatory for all chairs and executive directors of boards and agencies to which the act applies.

Municipal Governments

For the sixth year in a row, the Commissioner's report speaks to the lack of information and privacy legislation for municipal governments.

The GNWT has identified concerns about the impact on day-to-day municipal operations and administration, costs, training and capacity as reasons why municipal information and privacy legislation cannot proceed at this time.

Municipal governments collect a substantial amount of personal information from residents and hold a great deal of information of interest to the public. The need for openness and transparency applies as much to them as to any other level of government. While the committee acknowledges the challenges of developing and implementing information and privacy legislation, we are not satisfied that they excuse the GNWT's failure to take a proactive approach on this issue. Elections and human rights legislation, to name two examples, could also be said to be challenging to implement, expensive and at times inconvenient; however, we recognize their importance in a democratic society and do not question the need to allocate resources to them. Why should information and privacy legislation be any different? As the Commissioner said to us, quoting her Alberta counterpart, Mr. Frank Work, "the right to access to information is precious. No government should ever oppose or impede it on the basis that it is too expensive, too time consuming or that only the troublemakers use it."

The committee would also point out that municipal staff are required to handle personal information and respond to information requests from the public in any case, and suggests that training and guidance in the form of legislation and policies would, if anything, make that aspect of their work less difficult.

The committee has, therefore, taken it upon itself to write to the NWT Association of Communities in order to hear directly from them what is required in order for them to implement information and privacy legislation. Given the time needed to draft new legislation, we do not expect that a bill could be introduced before the next election; however, we encourage the government to begin work immediately to allow legislation to be brought in during the term of the 16th Assembly. In our view, this would provide ample time for the government to resolve implementation concerns raised by municipal governments.

Recommendation

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight recommends the GNWT bring forward a plan, including timelines, for developing and implementing municipal information and privacy legislation that addresses the implementation concerns raised by municipal governments and that will allow for consideration of legislative amendments by the 16th Assembly.

Private Sector Privacy Legislation

Another of the Commissioner's ongoing recommendations from past years is that the NWT enact its own "made-in-the-north" privacy legislation to regulate how the private sector collects, uses and discloses personal information. As an example of a concern with how the private sector handles personal information, she cited the continued practice of some NWT businesses of printing credit card numbers in their entirety on transaction slips. In southern Canada, it is now standard to print partial numbers only, which helps to prevent theft.

Although the NWT private sector is already regulated by the federal Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA), the Commissioner points out that a small and distant office in Ottawa is unlikely to have the time to address complaints and issues of a local nature. PIPEDA also does not protect employees from misuse of their personal information by employers. Some other Canadian jurisdictions, including Alberta and B.C., have already enacted provincial legislation to address the gaps left by PIPEDA.

The GNWT has indicated it intends to review the effectiveness of PIPEDA in 2006 in order to determine whether territorial legislation is also necessary. The committee looks forward to seeing the results of this review.

Recommendation

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight recommends the GNWT review the effectiveness of the PIPEDA and the need for territorial legislation on private sector use of personal information, and provide a report on its findings to the committee before the end of 2006.

Emerging Aboriginal Governments

As in previous reports, the Commissioner recommends the GNWT take the initiative to raise information and privacy issues in devolution discussions and with aboriginal governments in order to encourage them to include some form of regulation within their governance structures. She states that although there are likely to be cultural differences on many information and privacy issues, all peoples have the right to an open government, which requires access to records, and the right to expect a certain level of privacy.

The GNWT indicated in its response to the 2003-2004 recommendations that information and privacy matters are being addressed in devolution and aboriginal land, resource and self-government negotiations, in the Tlicho Agreement and in the Deline, Gwich'in and Inuvialuit self-government agreements-in-principle. It is unclear to the committee whether the provisions are limited only to information the governments handle as delivery agents for GNWT programs and services, or whether they extend to all the governments' operations. The committee would like more information from the GNWT on the scope of the access and privacy issues being discussed in the negotiation process and how proactive the GNWT has been in encouraging emerging governments to incorporate freedom of information and protection of privacy into their structures.

Recommendation

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight recommends the GNWT ensure access and privacy issues are considered in devolution and self-government negotiations, encourage and offer assistance to aboriginal governments to develop their own regulations where other legislation does not apply, and provide further detail to the committee on its efforts in its formal response to this report.

Contractors

As in past reports, the Commissioner raises the importance of ensuring contractors who handle government information are aware of and comply with the requirements of ATIPP. Her concerns appear to be

addressed in part by terms and conditions incorporated into GNWT contracts and the October 2005 amendments to the act, which made contractors directly responsible for protecting personal information. However, the need for ongoing enforcement and monitoring of compliance continues to be an issue. Specific measures she recommends include requiring contractors to notify the public body of any requests or demands made by foreign authorities for personal information, and of any unauthorized disclosure of information that has taken place.

Recommendation

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight recommends the GNWT ensure adequate measures are in place to monitor and enforce contractors' compliance and to detect and defend against disclosure of personal information to foreign authorities.

Development Of Online Registries

The Commissioner's report also emphasizes the need to consider privacy issues before moving public registries online. While information from registries such as the land titles registry has always been open to public inspection, the ability for someone to misuse personal information or collect it in mass for commercial purposes has been limited until recently by the practical limitations of a paper registry in a fixed location. The Commissioner suggests a number of questions the GNWT should be asking itself before moving public registries online; for example, what is the purpose of the registry, and whether individuals should be asked whether they consent to their personal information being disclosed or used for other purposes such as direct marketing.

Recommendation

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight recommends the GNWT consider privacy issues and consult with the Information and Privacy Commissioner in order to take advantage of her expertise before moving any more public registries online.

Amendments To Clarify The Act

The Commissioner recommends two amendments to the act to address problems that came to light in the course of a review of a decision to refuse access to information by the former Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development.

The first issue was with a specific provision of the act, paragraph 24(1)(f), which states that a public body must not disclose information that is a statement of financial assistance provided to a third party by a prescribed corporation or board. The Commissioner interpreted the words "prescribed corporation or board" to refer to any corporation or board subject to the act. The department interpreted them to require a specific designation as a "prescribed corporation or board." The Commissioner recommends the act be amended to clarify the meaning of paragraph 24(1)(f).

The second issue was with the department's response to the Commissioner's recommendations, which in her opinion seriously undermined the credibility of the review process. The Commissioner's recommendations were based on the department's argument that the information requested was subject to a specific exemption in the act. On receiving the Commissioner's recommendations, the department declined to follow them on the basis that they

had changed their mind about which exemption they wanted to rely on and that they had determined the exemption they had initially cited, and on which the Commissioner based her recommendations, did not apply to them.

One of the Commissioner's concerns with this kind of response on the part of a public body is that it leaves no recourse for the applicant other than to make an application to court and effectively sidelines the role of the Commissioner. The act does not allow for the Commissioner to reconsider a request for review if a department changes its mind about its arguments after she has made her recommendations. In her report, she therefore recommends an amendment to the act requiring public bodies to refer to all relevant sections of the act when responding to the Information and Privacy Commissioner, and to be bound by those submissions. During her meeting with the committee, she suggested an alternative would be an amendment requiring that no final decision be made by the head of a public body until the Commissioner is given an opportunity to make recommendations based on all the arguments the public body wishes to rely on.

In our discussions with the Commissioner it became apparent to the committee that the underlying problem is likely not so much a gap in the legislation as the overall corporate culture and approach to requests for review of access to information decisions. The Commissioner advised us that public bodies often take what she referred to as a "lazy" approach in making their submissions and fail to provide complete lists of their arguments and the specific exemptions or sections of the act they wish to rely on. As the Commissioner pointed out, the onus is on the public body to demonstrate that an exemption applies. However, because of the poor quality of submissions, the Commissioner sometimes finds herself in the position of having to research and make the public bodies' arguments for them because of the possible consequences of not considering all the angles.

The committee is not convinced that the solution to this problem lies in amendments to the act. We see the problem as relating back to the overall corporate culture and attitude discussed earlier in this report, and therefore suggests that the appropriate response is leadership and direction from the top down to ensure public bodies are more diligent and thorough in preparing submissions to the Commissioner.

Recommendation

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight recommends the GNWT set standards for submissions to the Information and Privacy Commissioner and provide appropriate leadership and direction to ensure they are understood and followed.

The committee further recommends that the GNWT review the need for amendments to the act to allow the Information and Privacy Commissioner to reconsider a request for review where a public body changes its arguments after the Commissioner has made her recommendations.

The committee further recommends that the GNWT either bring forward an amendment to clarify the meaning of paragraph 24(1)(f) or provide direction to public bodies on how it is to be interpreted.

Updating Regulations

For the second time, the Commissioner's report includes a recommendation that schedule A of the regulations be kept up-to-date in order to ensure new or renamed public bodies are subject to the act. As of the date of our meeting with the Commissioner, the regulations still did not list the Business Development and Investment Corporation, although it was established over a year ago. The committee fails to understand the reason for the delay in making such a simple amendment. We therefore support the Commissioner's recommendation that the regulations be updated at least annually. Ideally, they should be updated immediately each time a new public body is created or renamed to ensure the continued application of the act.

Recommendation

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight recommends that schedule A to the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Regulations be updated at least annually.

Updated Directory Of ATIPP Coordinators

The Commissioner recommends that a link be provided from the Legislative Assembly web site to the directory of ATIPP coordinators as it is currently difficult to find on the Justice and GNWT web sites. She further recommends that a paper directory be made available throughout the NWT.

While the committee is not convinced that keeping an up-to-date paper directory in circulation is feasible, Members do support linking the directory to the Legislative Assembly's web site in order to make it more accessible to users.

Recommendation

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight recommends the GNWT continue to keep its online directory of ATIPP coordinators current, and that a link to the directory be included on the Legislative Assembly web site.

Other Issues

At the time of our public review of the 2004-2005 report, the Commissioner raised two additional issues which the committee wishes to comment on.

The first was a concern that the Department of Health and Social Services and health authorities have not sought her advice in the course of the move to electronic health records. As with the shift to online public registries, the change in the management of health records raises a number of privacy issues. The committee believes it would be sensible for public bodies to seek the Commissioner's expert advice on privacy matters when they undertake such initiatives.

Recommendation

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight recommends that GNWT public bodies consult with the Commissioner to identify potential privacy issues in the early stages of projects resulting in the transfer of personal information to electronic records systems.

The second issue the Commissioner raised was a concern with the capacity of existing staff to respond to access to information requests. As an example, she cited the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, which is currently dealing with a high volume of requests due to inquiries related to residential schools. Public

bodies typically assign responsibility for coordinating ATIPP matters in addition to an employee's other duties rather than to a dedicated staff person. The Commissioner suggested the GNWT consider either hiring dedicated ATIPP staff for high-volume departments or establishing a central unit of dedicated ATIPP staff that public bodies could access.

Recommendation

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight recommends the GNWT evaluate its capacity to respond to access to information requests.

Conclusion

As the Commissioner stated to the committee:

"Secrecy and closed doors lead to corruption and bad government no matter how well intentioned governments may be. It is far easier as a member of the public to accept the bona fides of government when they seem to be open and willing to accept responsibility, even for bad news, than if they appear to be secretive."

The committee encourages the government to heed this advice, and to strive for full compliance with both the spirit and letter of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

Recommendation

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight recommends that, pursuant to Rule 93(5), the GNWT table a comprehensive response to this report within 120 calendar days.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member from Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Motion To Receive Committee Report 2-15(5) And Move Into Committee Of The Whole, Carried

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that Committee Report 2-15(5) be received by the Assembly and moved into Committee of the whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. A motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Committee Report 2-15(5) is moved into Committee of the Whole. The honourable Member from Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Finally, I would like to seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 93(4) and have Committee Report 2-15(5) moved into Committee of the Whole for consideration on Friday, June 2, 2006. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to waive Rule 93(4). Are there any nays? There are no nays. Committee Report 2-15(5) is moved into Committee of the Whole for consideration on Friday, June 2, 2006. Reports of standing and special committees. The honourable Member from Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

Committee Report 3-15(5): Report On The Review Of The 2004-2005 Annual Report Of The Languages Commissioner

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight met on May 2, 2006, to review the 2004-2005 Annual Report of the Languages Commissioner. The Committee would like to thank Ms. Shannon Gullberg, the Languages Commissioner, for appearing before us.

The 2004-2005 report does not include any recommendations, however, the committee would like to take the opportunity to comment on other issues that were raised during our public meeting.

Mr. Speaker, that concludes the introductory comments on this report.

Motion That Committee Report 3-15(5) Be Deemed Read And Printed In Hansard In Its Entirety, Carried

I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, that the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight Report on the Review of the 2004-05 Annual Report of the Languages Commissioner be deemed read and printed in Hansard in its entirety. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Committee Report 3-15(5): Report On The Review Of The 2004-2005 Annual Report Of The Languages Commissioner

Effective July 1, 2004, the mandate to preserve and promote official languages was transferred from the Languages Commissioner to two new languages boards under the authority of the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. The Commissioner's role is now focused on ombudsman-like functions: monitoring compliance with the act; reviewing complaints; responding to requests for information; and initiating investigations where appropriate.

Members are concerned that we have heard little about the activities of the Aboriginal Languages Advisory Board and Official Languages Advisory Board. Since it is no longer the Commissioner's role to champion the promotion and preservation of official languages, it is essential that those boards be vigorous and action-oriented in taking up that mandate. We have not seen any evidence that this is happening. The Standing Committee on Social Programs will be pursuing this discussion; however, all Regular Members will be monitoring it with interest.

The Commissioner advised us that she is currently preparing a report on interpreter services in health centres. The committee shares the Commissioner's concern about the lack of interpreters trained in medical terminology in health centres and looks forward to her report. Although health centres often have well-intentioned staff that can assist with interpreting for patients, most of these people do not have training in medical terminology, much of which is very difficult to translate into aboriginal languages. This creates a safety issue as well as frustration for both patients and the people trying to help them.

We also share the Commissioner's more general concern about the overall availability of interpreters in the

aboriginal languages. The committee believes it may be time for the GNWT to consider re-establishing in-house interpreter and translation services, which could be located in the appropriate regional centres. We also see a clear need for the GNWT to work with Aurora College to reinstate interpreter/translator training programs for aboriginal languages, including specialized training in medical terminology.

Recommendation

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight recommends the GNWT examine the feasibility of re-establishing in-house interpreter and translation services and report back on its findings in its response to this report.

Recommendation

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight recommends the GNWT work with Aurora College to deliver a basic interpreter/translator training program for aboriginal languages, as well as specialized training in medical terminology.

The committee noted, with concern, that the Commissioner received only one complaint in 2004-2005 and believes this is likely the result of a lack of awareness about the Official Languages Act and the Commissioner, especially in smaller communities. We, therefore, encourage the Commissioner to step up her efforts to publicize her office. In particular, we encourage her to undertake community visits to meet with stakeholders and to raise public awareness about her office and to also ensure that printed information about the complaints process is made available in aboriginal languages.

We also encourage the Commissioner to exercise her powers and make full use of her mandate, which, as outlined in section 20 of the Official Languages Act, includes ensuring recognition of the rights, status and privileges of each of the official languages and compliance with the spirit and intent of the act in the administration of the affairs of government institutions, and conducting investigations on her own initiative.

Recommendation

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight recommends that, pursuant to Rule 93(5), the GNWT table a comprehensive response to this report within 120 calendar days.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Member from Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

Motion To Receive Committee Report 3-15(5) And Move Into Committee Of The Whole, Carried

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, that the Committee Report 3-15(5) be received by the Assembly and moved into Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The motion is in order. Motion is on the floor. Motion is in order. All those in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Committee Report 3-15(5) will be received by the Assembly and moved into Committee of the Whole. The honourable Member from Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 93(4) and have

the Committee Report 3-15(5) moved into the Committee of the Whole for consideration on Friday, June 2, 2006.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The Member is seeking unanimous consent to waive Rule 93(4) and have Committee Report 3-15(5) moved into Committee of the Whole for consideration on Friday, June 2, 2006. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Committee Report 3-15(5) will be moved into Committee of the Whole for consideration on Friday, June 2, 2006. Reports of standing and special committees. The honourable Member from Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Committee Report 4-15(5): Progress Report On Priorities And Objectives

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Introduction

In April 2004, the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight held a two-day operational planning workshop to review its mandate and set its priorities and objectives for the 15th Assembly. These plans were shared with our colleagues and the public in our first Report on Priorities and Objectives, which we presented to the Legislative Assembly on June 1, 2004.

The committee held its second operational and strategic planning workshop in Tuktoyaktuk from April 15 to 17, 2005, at which time we reviewed progress made to date on our priorities and objectives. A progress report followed on June 2, 2005.

The third annual workshop took place in Fort Simpson from April 10 to 12, 2006. This report summarizes our progress on priorities as we see it. It also outlines changes we have made to our priorities, including the adoption of a new priority: adequate support for frontline organizations.

Background

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight includes all 11 Regular Members. Its mandate as set out in the Rules of the Legislative Assembly is to:

1. review issues which have government-wide implications, including the overview of the budget and fiscal framework;
2. review multi-year business plans, budgets and bills of the Department of the Executive, including the executive offices, the Financial Management Board Secretariat and the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, and of the Department of Finance;
3. consider the budgets and financial management of any other boards and agencies that are outside the responsibility of any standing committee;
4. examine the reports on the annual financial statements and public accounts of the Government of the Northwest Territories and the report of the Auditor General;
5. review government reports on financial and performance results on program and policy evaluations to ensure anticipated outcomes are being achieved and accountability is maximized;
6. review, as necessary or appropriate, the annual and other reports of statutory offices of the Legislative Assembly, including the Commissioner of Official Languages, the Conflict of Interest Commissioner, the Information and Privacy Commissioner, the Equal

Pay Commissioner and the Human Rights Commission;

7. coordinate House business, scheduling and planning in cooperation with appropriate Cabinet representatives; and,
8. consider any other matters referred by the House.

The vision adopted by the committee in April 2004 is:

a strong, effective consensus government that has the confidence of the people of the NWT.

Our mission is:

to take purposeful and unified action, where appropriate, to support, question or oppose government initiatives and to hold government accountable. We will also use our collective power to influence government to take action and/or to change its policies when in the public interest.

Progress On Committee Priorities

As we stated in our June 2004 Report on Priorities and Objectives, our key priority is:

holding government accountable to our collective 15th Assembly vision and goals.

The Standing Committee accomplishes this through a number of regular activities and, in particular, the annual review of the government's draft business plans. In the fall of 2005, the committee implemented the first ever pre-budget consultations, which added a new element of public input into the planning and accountability for government use of resources.

The committee also holds government accountable through its input on policy, program and legislative initiatives, by organizing theme days on various topics, and by formal motions in the Assembly directing the government to take specific actions.

The committee continues to see our constitutional evolution and the negotiation of a fair devolution and resource revenue sharing deal for our territory as key to achieving our collective vision, and continues to support the principle that the people of the Northwest Territories should be the primary beneficiaries of the development of our resources.

Mr. Speaker, at this time I would now like to pass on the rest of the report to Mr. Braden. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Member from Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The following summarizes progress on committee's other priorities.

Human Resources

Effective April 1, 2006, a new Department of Human Resources was created, with the committee's support. The committee will continue to monitor the new department closely to ensure that it does result in a more efficient and accountable system. In particular, we would encourage the government to task the new department with re-examining the affirmative action policy and bringing forward options for discussion within the life of this Assembly.

A Review Of All GNWT Boards And Agencies

The Joint Cabinet/AOC Working Group has now concluded its mandate and advanced a great deal of work on data gathering and preparing a new governance

framework for boards and agencies, including a policy on boards and agencies. Mr. Speaker, the committee urges the government to implement the working group's recommendations for additional resources to better coordinate boards and agencies.

A Review Of The Operations And Mandate Of The NWT Housing Corporation, Including The Rent Scales For Social Housing

Committee members have raised a number of serious concerns with the NWT Housing Corporation to which we have not received satisfactory responses from the Minister and government. This led us to bring forward a formal motion on March 2, 2006, requesting a performance audit of the corporation by the Auditor General for Canada.

Public consultation was recently conducted on the NWT Housing Corporation's mandate. The committee looks forward to the results of this consultation later this year.

An Operational Review Of The Workers' Compensation Board And Completion Of The Amendments To The Legislation

The committee looks forward to reviewing the Auditor General's report on the performance audit of the Worker's Compensation Board.

Members continue to be concerned that they have heard little from government about the status of the rewrite of the Workers' Compensation Act, which is needed to address several outstanding issues and complete the work begun in the 14th Assembly. The committee has communicated to the government that we expect them to introduce a bill in October 2006.

Consideration Of New Legislation To Protect Whistleblowers

Members continue to believe consideration of such legislation is timely, both because of local issues and national trends toward increased accountability expectations from the public service, most recently evidenced by the "sponsorship scandal." The committee has asked the government to bring forward a public discussion paper on whistleblower legislation prior to the October 2006 sitting.

Review Of The Liquor Act

The committee has communicated to government that we expect them to introduce this legislation in the October 2006 sitting.

Review of the Residential Tenancies Act

The committee has communicated to government that we expect them to introduce a bill during the life of this Assembly.

Cost/Benefit Analysis Of Business Incentive Policy

Mr. Speaker, the committee has received the government's cost/benefit analysis of the business incentive policy and is aware that there is a great deal of apprehension among northern business owners about its future. Members look forward to seeing the results of the government's consultations before the October 2006 sitting.

Improving The Land Transfer Process And, In Particular, Accelerating Land Transfers To Municipalities

The committee is concerned that progress on this initiative is not keeping up with the demand for land, especially for

housing, Mr. Speaker. More coordination and streamlining of the land transfer process are needed if housing initiatives are to succeed.

Increased Investment In Early Childhood Development Programs

While the future of the federal Day Care Program is uncertain with the recent change of government in Ottawa, the committee encourages the Minister to continue lobbying Canada for reasonable base funding for the NWT for early childhood development.

In addition to the lack of adequate program funding, many communities lack childcare facilities. This is something the committee believes the government can do something about now, by allowing surplus government infrastructure and public housing to be used for childcare programs. The committee urges the government to come forward with a childcare infrastructure policy to make these facilities available. Mr. Speaker, I would now like to ask my colleague, Mr. Ramsay, to continue with the committee's report. Thank you.

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

Construction Of An All-Weather Road Between Tuktoyaktuk And Inuvik

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Braden. The committee was pleased to see the November 2005 "Connecting Canada Coast to Coast to Coast" proposal by the Government of the Northwest Territories to the Government of Canada and continues to affirm its support for construction of an all-weather road between Tuktoyaktuk and Inuvik.

Increased Programming For Drug And Alcohol Addictions Rehabilitation And Treatment

The committee is frustrated with the government's consistent refusal to act on our recommendations for additional drug and alcohol treatment facilities. With the recent release of the Chalmers report, the government appears to have dug in its heels even further in its determination to invest almost exclusively in community-based services. Members sincerely believe this is the wrong approach for the NWT, based on what we have heard from our constituents and on our own experiences. In the absence of regional, culturally appropriate treatment facilities, we fear that many residents will never have the support they need to win their battle with addictions.

The committee supported a motion on February 27, 2006:

That this Assembly reaffirms its motion of October 29, 2004, requesting that the government establish a centre dedicated to treating addictions to drugs other than alcohol, establish an addictions treatment centre specifically for youth and reopen residential treatment centres in Yellowknife and Inuvik.

Adequate Resources For Transition Houses For Victims Of Domestic Violence

During its pre-budget consultations, the committee heard from transition houses that are struggling to meet the needs of clients in crisis with inadequate resources for programming, staffing and basic infrastructure maintenance. Their concerns are outlined in detail in the committee's October 2005 Report on Pre-Budget Consultations. The committee understands there has been some progress in shortening the amount of time it takes for shelters to receive their funding, however, we

remain concerned about the overall adequacy of funding to transition shelters.

Reduction Of The Infrastructure Deficit

Years of fiscal restraint have left the NWT with a serious infrastructure deficit. Many communities are lacking facilities, while many existing public buildings are in serious disrepair. The committee is therefore pleased to see the amount of the GNWT's resources as well as new federal funding now being directed to capital projects.

Role For Elders In NWT Government

Committee members believe that elders have a great deal of knowledge to offer the government, particularly on issues such as climate change and wildlife management. The committee requests that the government initiate a formal consultation process with elders to ensure they are given appropriate recognition and respect in our institutions, and that their knowledge informs our policy-making.

Equal Access To Student Financial Assistance For Trades Students And Persons With Disabilities

Increased Investment In Trades And Apprenticeship Programs

Facilities For Seniors

The Standing Committee on Social Programs will pursue these priorities.

Introduction Of Measures To Mitigate The Impacts Of Past Hydro Projects

Development Of A Hydro Project On The Bear River

Adequate Resources For Dust Control In Communities

The Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development will pursue these priorities. Mr. Speaker, I would now like to pass the report on to Mr. Menicoche. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

Ongoing Objectives

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The committee will also continue to pursue the objectives explicitly included in our mandate, which are:

- the comprehensive overview of the GNWT's budget and fiscal framework;
- the consideration of bills, budgets and financial management of the Department of the Executive, including the executive offices, the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, and the Financial Management Board Secretariat, and the Department of Finance;
- examination of Auditor General's reports;
- examination of the reports of statutory offices including the Commissioner of Official Languages, the Conflict of Interest Commissioner, the Information and Privacy Commissioner, the Equal Pay Commissioner and the Human Rights Commission; and
- coordination of House business scheduling and planning in cooperation with Cabinet.

New Priority: Adequate Support For Frontline Organizations

During its 2005 pre-budget consultations, the committee received presentations from frontline organizations in several communities raising concerns about the level of support they are receiving from government. Staffing is an especially acute problem for non-governmental organizations and will rise to crisis level if they continue to lack the resources to offer competitive wages and benefits in order to recruit and retain qualified staff. Additional concerns, which are outlined in detail in the committee's October 2005 Report on Pre-Budget Consultations, included:

- overall inadequacy of funding, particularly as this limits their ability to provide holistic programming to meet clients' multiple needs;
- the need for multi-year funding arrangements;
- the administrative burden associated with having to apply to and meet the accountability requirements of multiple programs, particularly where programs have not been designed to fit clients' actual needs; and
- the need for more direct involvement of frontline organizations in the GNWT's planning exercises.

The committee sees frontline organizations as key to the success of many of the Assembly's goals: they are delivering some of our most essential services and have the best knowledge of their clients' needs. Moreover, they are made up of highly dedicated people who are providing programs far more effectively and at far less cost than if government were to try to achieve the same results on its own. It is critical that we support their efforts and ensure they continue to be viable.

The committee understands that the government is developing and implementing new funding criteria and approaches for frontline organizations. We look forward to hearing from these organizations again during this year's pre-budget consultations on whether they have experienced any improvements as a result of the changes made by the GNWT.

Other Activities

Over the course of the last year, the standing committee has continued to move its priorities forward through "theme days." A theme day is when Regular Members decide to collectively focus on a particular issue in the House through Members' statements, oral questions, and/or debate on motions. This provides an opportunity to raise the profile of a given issue with the government and with the public.

A motion during the formal Session of the Legislative Assembly is a proposal for the Assembly to do something, order something to be done, or express an opinion on an issue that is presented to the Assembly for a decision. Following the introduction of the motion, there is an opportunity to debate it and then a vote.

In addition to the motions mentioned in earlier sections of this report, the committee supported the following:

Energy And Cost Of Living

This motion, carried October 24, 2005, called on the government to develop comprehensive strategies to address energy costs and the overall cost of living, and to present those strategies to the committee in public meetings. As a result, public meetings did take place in November 2005 and January 2006, and a great deal of information presented at those meetings is publicly available on the government's web site.

Beverage Container Recovery Program

This motion, carried October 26, 2005, called on the government to delay implementation of the Beverage Container Recovery Program in every community without an approved depot until such time as a local depot became available. Although the government proceeded to implement the program territory-wide, the motion did press the Minister and department to come up with interim arrangements for several communities to ensure residents could receive refunds for their recycled containers.

Northern Residents Tax Deduction

This motion, carried on February 9, 2006, called for the Premier and Minister of Finance to begin working with their counterparts to lobby the federal government to increase the northern residents tax deduction and to index it annually in the future to keep pace with the cost of living.

Conclusion

With just over a year remaining in the life of the 15th Assembly, the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight looks forward to seeing significant progress on several priorities between now and the end of 2006 and to working with the government to address the many outstanding priorities and objectives noted above.

Recommendation

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight recommends that, pursuant to Rule 93(5), the GNWT table a comprehensive response to this report within 120 calendar days.

Mr. Speaker, that concludes the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight's Committee Progress Report on Priorities and Objectives 2006.

Motion To Receive Committee Report 4-15(5) And Move Into Committee Of The Whole, Carried

I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, that Committee Report 4-15(5) be received by the Assembly and moved into Committee of the Whole. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. There's a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Committee Report 4-15(5) will be moved into Committee of the Whole. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 93(4) and have Committee Report 4-15(5) be moved into Committee of the Whole for consideration on Friday, June 2, 2006.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The Member is seeking unanimous consent to waive Rule 93(4) and have Committee Report 4-15(5) be moved into Committee of the Whole for consideration on Friday, June 2, 2006. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Committee Report 4-15(5) will be moved into Committee of the Whole for consideration on Friday, June 2nd.

Reports of standing and special committees. Returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

ITEM 7: ORAL QUESTIONS**Question 17-15(5): Backup Water Filter Systems For Tulita**

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are directed to the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, the Honourable Michael McLeod. I just received notice that the community of Tulita is on water advisory notice and the water advisory has many facets, however one of the key indicators are the filters in the water plan system. Are there any backup filter systems in the small communities who may get these water advisory notices? How come these filters weren't ready for the communities to be put in, so they wouldn't have such an advisory given under the health centre? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. McLeod.

Return To Question 17-15(5): Backup Water Filter Systems For Tulita

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The community of Tulita has encountered some problems with the water treatment plant in the area of the filter clogging up. The community does not have a backup filter for this plant. However, it does still have the use of the old water plant that was left in place as the backup and the community is utilizing that facility. It does not have the filtration system that the new guidelines require. That's why the community has issued the boil water warning. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 17-15(5): Backup Water Filter Systems For Tulita

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister inform the people in Tulita when they will be able to get these filters and where will these filters come from? Why didn't they have the filters in place for such an emergency as this? Thank God for the old backup system in Tulita.

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

Further Return To Question 17-15(5): Backup Water Filter Systems For Tulita

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we will have the filter in the community as soon as we can. The filter has to come from outside of the country. It comes from the United States. We don't have a filter system in place. It wasn't an area we thought would be a great risk. We do have a backup system. The backup system is the old water plant and that's what is being currently used. Nobody has really been cut off from the water supply. There is the inconvenience of the boil water advisory and it's working well.

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

Supplementary To Question 17-15(5): Backup Water Filter Systems For Tulita

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, thank God for the old backup system, I guess. People in our communities have been using this water thousands of years. I don't know why all of a sudden we have this boil water system. Anyhow, I want to ask the Minister, in terms of these filters in our water plant system, why are they so

elaborate to have to order them from outside of Canada? It must cost quite a bit of dollars. Does the community of Tulita or hamlets that have a similar plant system, are they adequately financed to get this filter system and are they checked on a regular basis? There are a few questions there. Mr. Speaker, thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 17-15(5): Backup Water Filter Systems For Tulita

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the system in Tulita was designed and put in place at the time when this type of filtration system, this type of plant, was only available from the United States. We have been working with the community to look at what backups are required. The old plant is still there and we do also have a portable water pump in the event of both plants going down. We are discussing with the community on a plan to carry some backup material, filters and equipment, so that we can avoid the situation in the future. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

Supplementary To Question 17-15(5): Backup Water Filter Systems For Tulita

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's good government, Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Minister of Municipal Affairs, is the department willing to look at these filter systems? Is it the only one in the Northwest Territories or are there a number of filter systems like this in other communities to ensure that we have additional supplies of filters in our communities rather than rely on the old backup system. Sometimes that backup system needs major repair. Again, I want to ask the Minister in terms of an action plan that would be satisfactory to the people in Tulita. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 17-15(5): Backup Water Filter Systems For Tulita

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, we will commit to doing that. We will have a discussion with Public Works and talk to the communities and see what some areas that may be requiring parts or filters that we should keep in the communities so we can avoid the situation. We will commit to doing that with all the communities in the Territories. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

Question 18-15(5): Next Steps For GNWT On The Federal Offer To The Dehcho

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs with respect to Canada's offer to the Dehcho First Nations. Aboriginal rights and the protection of lands that balance an economically prosperous future are all issues that I have taken to heart with my responsibilities as MLA for Nahendeh. Because of the recent announcement, Mr. Speaker, I was just wondering if the government, through the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, had an opportunity to comment on the next steps this government will take with respect to this offer. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs, Mr. Handley.

Return To Question 18-15(5): Next Steps For GNWT On The Federal Offer To The Dehcho

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs has had a look at the offer. We still have to do more analysis of it, but, at the first look at it, it appears to be an offer that is very similar in nature to the other settlements that have been achieved in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, there will be a meeting with all of the parties on June 19th. At that time, they will jointly take a look at the offer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 18-15(5): Next Steps For GNWT On The Federal Offer To The Dehcho

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do realize that clearly the GNWT is outside the process, but on the June 19th meeting, will the GNWT be there? For my part there, Mr. Speaker, shared ownership and jurisdiction of the entire region is still something key to our people. Is that something that our government can support when we are at this table on June 19th? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. There are two questions there. Mr. Handley, answer one or both.

Further Return To Question 18-15(5): Next Steps For GNWT On The Federal Offer To The Dehcho

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, yes, the GNWT will be there on June 19th and on further negotiating sessions. With regard to our position on the various issues, Mr. Speaker, I would like to leave that to the negotiators. I don't have enough detail to be able to enter that debate in the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 19-15(5): Costs Of Novel Housing Project

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of the Housing Corporation in regards to the latest update on the ATCO Novel housing product. Mr. Speaker, we have just got the information that the size of this project has reduced quite a bit, from 1,400 housing units to about 830.

Mr. Speaker, let me just start by saying once again that I believe that ATCO Novel is a good product. It is a clever idea. It is a company that could stand on its own. The issue here is whether or not this government and this territory and people of the Territories are getting enough advantage in getting into a contract with this government with this company. So far we have not a good enough deal, as far as I can see. I would like to know, Mr. Speaker, as I stated in my Member's statement under Affordable Housing Strategy, the Minister plans to spend \$100 million over the next three years to build 530 homes. Under the latest project on the ATCO Novel, the government is planning on spending over \$200 million and yet we would only get 830. For \$200 million, we should get at least 1,000. I would like to know where this great deal is that Novel is going to give us that warrants them as to be a lobbyist for them and have our own ADM when I don't see any deal. So what is the deal? What is the

advantage we are getting? Where is the beast, Mr. Speaker?

---Laughter

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister of Housing, Mr. Krutko.

Return To Question 19-15(5): Costs Of Novel Housing Project

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are talking about two different projects. The affordable housing initiative will put some 530 houses on the ground, but half of those houses that are going to be delivered are multi-configured construction. So they are going to take less land to put that many units on the ground. On the other areas that we are looking at is the Novel housing which are single dwelling units, which you are going to have to develop some 830 lots to put that many more houses on the ground. Also, with Novel, there is also going to be a project management cost associated with this major development for land and lot development which is not the case in the affordable housing project.

Again, Mr. Speaker, the price that we are looking at in which in Novel is, we are looking at putting out almost half of those units to be sold on the public market. We are hoping to recover some \$40 million out of the \$200 million cost. Again, we are going to have dollars coming back to this project, which is estimated at about \$160 million after we recruit those costs by selling off the units. Again, Mr. Speaker, we are talking about two different projects. We are talking about two different ways of constructing our units, multi for the affordable housing units, 530 houses. The 800 units for Novel are single dwelling units where we have to develop some 830 lots. That is where the major difference in this cost is. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 19-15(5): Costs Of Novel Housing Project

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me just get really simple on this. What I am hearing from the Minister is that instead of this government getting advantage and getting a better deal by buying these used workforce housing, we are actually paying more. The Minister is saying that we have to do what Novel wants, which is that they want individual lots instead of its restricting our options of going multi lots which could reduce costs. I would like to know why it is that we have to pay \$28 million in premium for buying this Novel trailer and paying \$71 million to convert, and yet we end up with less housing units for \$200 million than what we would if we would have had our own plan under Affordable Housing Strategy and extend that by six years for \$200 million instead of paying it to buy these used trailers and spending \$200 million to convert them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 19-15(5): Costs Of Novel Housing Project

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if someone can buy a home these days for \$130,000, I think they got themselves a good deal. The majority of the costs associated with Novel, \$77 million of that is land development costs which, again, is not associated with the affordable housing program. The biggest cost associated is land development. These lots and whatnot have to be developed in communities. We

have to ensure that the infrastructure is there to handle it by way of power poles, roads and the other infrastructure it needs, but, more importantly, there is going to be a project management cost associated with this project which is not in the affordable housing program. Right now, it is administered through our office by way of tenders. There is also a \$22 million financial arrangement where we have to finance at the front end to develop these lots so that when Novel does come on stream, we are ready for them. Again, there is a difference between these programs. We had a presentation to committee this morning. We have laid it out. We tried to explain it the best we can. Again, there are still some concerns out there. Again, this program is not completed. We are still in the process of evolving to a time and place where we will have to make a final decision on this and see exactly how the numbers come out and exactly what the difference is between the cost of the Affordable Housing Strategy and Novel. Right now, Novel is coming in at cheaper costs than the cost of stick-built today. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. I would like to remind Members on both sides of the House that the Speaker would like the...(inaudible)...Member the opportunity to ask questions today. So I will remind you to keep your supplementaries short and answers short, please. Ms. Lee.

---Applause

Supplementary To Question 19-15(5): Costs Of Novel Housing Project

MS. LEE: Once again, Mr. Speaker, I am really trying to shorten my question. I have not heard an advantage. I think my question is very clear, Mr. Speaker. Under Affordable Housing Strategy, we are spending \$100 million and it will get us 530 units. Under the Novel housing strategy, we are going to spend \$220 million plus to buy used units, clean up the yard for Imperial Oil, and we are going to end up with 830. Where is the math? Mr. Minister has not answered that question. It is pretty straightforward, especially when he has a whole person working in his office doing nothing but answering these questions.

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

Further Return To Question 19-15(5): Costs Of Novel Housing Project

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the difference is the affordable housing will deliver 530 units, not 530 houses. Novel will deliver 830 houses. That is the difference. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 19-15(5): Costs Of Novel Housing Project

MS. LEE: Mr. Speaker, I believe the difference is that we are paying for the premium to buy the cleanup of the yard for \$28 million. We are paying project management costs in \$20 million that we are not under the Affordable Housing Strategy. We are spending \$21 million on financing and contingency. We are paying way extra under Novel than buying brand new manufactured homes or any other home. I would suggest to the Minister that he does his homework over again and this project is way far away from being done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. There is no question there. I would also like to remind members that question period is not an opportunity to make statements; it is just to ask questions. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

Question 20-15(5): Outstanding Rent Payments In Behchoko

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I highlighted earlier in my Member's statement, the seriousness of an issue we are faced with in Behchoko on the discrepancies on public unit rent scale. I would like to ask the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. David Krutko. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of the Housing Corporation advise this Assembly the amount of outstanding rent payments that have been accumulated over the years in Behchoko? Mahsi.

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

Return To Question 20-15(5): Outstanding Rent Payments In Behchoko

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't have that information in front of me, so I will have to get back to the Member with that. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 20-15(5): Outstanding Rent Payments In Behchoko

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my next question leads to what has the corporation done to remedy the situation that we were faced with in the past and also currently? What is the department doing now to deal with the long-outstanding arrears in the community of Behchoko? Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 20-15(5): Outstanding Rent Payments In Behchoko

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in regards to the collection of rent, we all know it is a problem in most of our communities, but especially in Behchoko we had a problem over the last number of years where we had a contract that was out where very little collections were done. There was a mandate given to our housing authorities which they have to collect 90 percent of their income by way of collections. We are moving in that way. Some two years ago, the collection rate was somewhere in the range of nine percent. We are now in the process of being up to 75 percent. We have instructed our housing authorities to do a better job under collections. Because of that, we have been getting a lot of bad press in that area. Again, in order to operate our units in the communities, we have to generate revenues with the change of our mandate and the \$30 million that was given to Education in regards to the rent supps that are out there that now they have to go to basically the Department of Education, Culture and Employment to recoup that income. We are doing a better job on collections. I know that people have concerns on that. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 20-15(5): Outstanding Rent Payments In Behchoko

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the corporation's been mandated to look into collection of the arrears in Behchoko. At the same time, I am just wondering if the corporation was looking to investigate the discrepancies on the rent scales that have occurred and what they have come up with to address this situation where the client has been charged the wrong amount for rent. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 20-15(5): Outstanding Rent Payments In Behchoko

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we do allow the members to sit down with the people within the communities in regards to our housing authorities. If they have a discretion in regards to the amount that they are being paid, there is a process that they can go through in regards to working out a payment plan and also bringing in the verification on what their incomes were when that income was assessed. I think the problem that we are running into is because people work in the diamond industry and are moving in and out of the community where people are being hindered, especially our seniors, with seeing a major increase in their rent. Again, we are telling our authorities to sit down with each of the clients, go through exactly where the discretions are, come to an arrangement on what the amount is and work out a payment plan so that they are able to pay off the arrears over the period of time. As long as they agree to pay their rent along with a little more towards their arrears, we can work out those payment plans for these individuals. There is a process that they can go through to resolve this issue without being evicted. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 20-15(5): Outstanding Rent Payments In Behchoko

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in light of the 1,300 plus units and houses going through the North, the Tlicho community will certainly benefit from some of them. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister commit today in this Assembly to expedite, to initiate a joint task force with a representative from Behchoko general public, one from Rae Band board member and one from YK district office to investigate and re-evaluate the rental scales and reasons for outstanding rental arrears on the 80 plus public units in Behchoko? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 20-15(5): Outstanding Rent Payments In Behchoko

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as we all know, we do have a different arrangement now by way of how we do our collections because of the subsidy going to Education. I think we also have included them. So I am open to sitting down with my colleague, Mr. Dent, and yourself to see if there is a process that we can use here and try to find an arrangement that we all can move forward with. I do believe that it is a process that is being phased in. I think people are having some problems understanding exactly the differences between what we are doing now in housing and what is under the responsibility of income

support by way of the subsidy that has been transferred to them. Also, in regards to the arrears in the communities, we have to find ways there again. So I am open to working with the Member and my colleague, Mr. Dent, in trying to find a solution to this problem. Thank you.

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

Question 21-15(5): Denial Of Support Payments

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today my Member's statement was about the denial of what I would call natural justice. I have called into question a regulation that is in writing that our bureaucrats are following. Mr. Speaker, just because it is in writing, it doesn't make it morally correct. Could the Minister of EC and E explain to this House today and the public that is listening about the fairness of the policy where, at no fault of the client, they have been denied their rightful support payments? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 21-15(5): Denial Of Support Payments

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't know specifically which policy the Member would be speaking of. I don't believe that we have policies in place that are intended to harm our residents. I can say that while a regulation is in place, the Minister has no ability to overturn it, but a Minister can change a regulation. If regulations are brought to my attention that are causing problems with our residents or have unintended consequences, as soon as I am aware of that, I issue instructions that the regulations be reviewed and changed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 21-15(5): Denial Of Support Payments

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess there are a couple of ways I can approach this. The first option is to let him know that he got an e-mail from his constituent that I was sent to, as well, so I'm surprised he wouldn't know about the regulations, referring to that e-mail and this problem about the lack of retro pay. So that being said, maybe I can, as an olive branch approach, maybe we can take the Minister up on his offer. I'll bring the matter to his office if he's willing today to look into it further and deal with this problem. That will be all. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: No question there. Oral questions. The honourable Member from Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

Question 22-15(5): Under-representation Of Disabled Persons In Government Workforce

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions again today are for the Honourable Floyd Roland, Minister responsible for the public service in the Northwest Territories. I guess I'll start off by just saying numbers do not lie. If you looked around the country and his Human Resources department went out and did a comparison of rates of persons with disabilities that are employed in various public services across this country, the Northwest Territories would rank absolutely at the bottom of that list, Mr. Speaker, and I think that is an

absolute shame. I'd like to ask the Minister exactly, and he is the Minister for Human Resources, also the Minister for FMBS, and I'd like to ask him, given the size of our public service relative to our population, it's huge. It's 4,200 employees, 42,000 residents, 13 percent of our population have a disability. Why is it that the Minister who's responsible for FMBS and Human Resources does not have one single person with a disability working in his two departments? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Honourable Minister responsible for FMBS, Mr. Roland.

AN HON. MEMBER: Disability. He's got a disability himself.

Return To Question 22-15(5): Under-representation Of Disabled Persons In Government Workforce

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm aware that we do in fact, within HR, have an individual. In a number of departments we have individuals who are disabled. But I'm not going to stand here and highlight who, where and what position. We have individuals working with disabilities. The issue at hand is, as the Member stated, there are numbers and then there's statistics. He's used the fact that 13 percent of people are identified as disabled within the Northwest Territories. The question should more appropriately be, I guess, I look at it is how many of those are in the area of looking for work, how many are seniors, how many are younger individuals in the North? And then how many of them, the result, how many are applying for positions with the Government of the Northwest Territories?

As stated, we recognize, and the trend has been a long time, that we have not pulled the numbers up in regards to disabled individuals working for the Government of the Northwest Territories. I stated that we are reworking our policies around our hiring practices to bring it more into line around affirmative action and our hiring policies for the Government of the Northwest Territories, and I hope to have that paper to my Cabinet colleagues before the end of the summer, and then to the Members of this House for review before we get to the fall sitting. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 22-15(5): Under-representation Of Disabled Persons In Government Workforce

MR. RAMSAY: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, given the fact that now I have armed with some real numbers and statistics, I guess yesterday was a different story the Minister gave me, was the fact that in the Northwest Territories maybe people don't self identify disabilities. But in fact, in other jurisdictions across this country the self-identification process is at play. So I believe it's a fair comparison to compare the amount of disabled persons working for the Northwest Territories government with other jurisdictions; absolutely a fair comparison. I'd like to ask the Minister, aside from this employment equity policy paper that is somewhere in the Human Resources department and might see the light of day by the end of the year, when will he take some concrete and some sincere measures to improve these abysmal numbers that we have in employing persons with disabilities here in the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 22-15(5): Under-representation Of Disabled Persons In Government Workforce

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the fact is, and we've agreed that there needs to be work done around our hiring practices within the Government of the Northwest Territories. We've committed to doing that and bringing a paper forward for this Assembly to review, the Members and our government, to improve on a number of areas. As the Member's well aware, we've just done the human resources amalgamation, and getting those processes, our normal processes, in working order so that we can do an effective job with our staff today. We haven't had the opportunity to deal with these issues the Member's bringing up in a way that would show some positive results. So we are bringing that paper forward and we'll be reviewing it, and hopefully we can actually implement it before the end of our term and actually show that we are taking concrete steps to change the way our hiring practices are used. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 22-15(5): Under-representation Of Disabled Persons In Government Workforce

MR. RAMSAY: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Boy, am I ever looking forward to that paper coming to see the light of day and see the work that the \$450,000 that went to an American company to study the human resources problems come to light. I'd like to see it and I'd like to see it soon, because again, Mr. Speaker, the majority of concerns I hear from constituents today come from pay and benefits and issues dealing with our Human Resources department. Bar none, it's the most. I'd like to again ask the Minister why he would continue to treat arguably the most disadvantaged and underrepresented group, which they are, worse and more suspiciously than other groups that are currently in the affirmative action policy that the government trumpets every day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 22-15(5): Under-representation Of Disabled Persons In Government Workforce

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member says I treat disabled people differently than I do other individuals, or the government treats them differently. The fact is when we put a job description or a competition out there, we have criteria for those jobs. Those people that apply can identify whether they fall under our affirmative action policy if they have criteria that we have to take into consideration as we fill those positions. Ultimately, though, Mr. Speaker, it's going to be the qualifications of the individual that will apply to whether they get that job or not. We're not going to fill positions just on a percentage basis because that target is there. We need to put people in place that can do the job. I don't personally treat those individuals differently than I would any other individual. It's circumstance by circumstance, competition by competition, and we are working to try to improve that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

Supplementary To Question 22-15(5): Under-representation Of Disabled Persons In Government Workforce

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do take issue with what the Minister is saying because the affirmative action policy and direct appointments fly right in the face of what the Minister just said, because appointments are made and this government has made many of them that really don't have much merit. You can go and talk to a lot of different people and they'll tell you the exact same thing. The Minister said yesterday in the House that affirmative action didn't come into play with direct appointments. I beg to differ. They're trying to get the numbers up in one category and ignoring another category, and that's exactly what's happening, Mr. Speaker. So I'd like to ask the Minister, perhaps I'd like from the Minister a definition of how direct appointments are used and why direct appointments are used only when they deem them necessary to use them. They're not used for persons with disabilities, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. There's two questions there. The Minister may answer one or both.

Further Return To Question 22-15(5): Under-representation Of Disabled Persons In Government Workforce

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member has an amazing ability to be able to rewrite what's been said in this House, or responses. Yesterday, in response to his questions, I stated quite clearly that as direct appointments, a tool that we do have available to us, they're outside of the affirmative action policy. But the affirmative action policy is used in the ranking of a decision that is made. It is a tool. Direct appointments are a tool that we have and the government has, as past governments have, made priorities of people we will hire within the government: graduates from our Nursing Program, Social Work Program, Teacher Education Program, and those that do interns with the government where we've invested money in them. It makes sense to keep them in the system instead of going out and retraining somebody further to that. So that's the areas that we would use that in, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Oral questions. The honourable Member from Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Question 23-15(5): Availability Of Dialysis Services In The NWT

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Health and Social Services, the Honourable Michael Miltenberger. I will keep my questions short and concise, Mr. Speaker, today, with your admonition to do so. Mr. Speaker, I also fly back and forth between Hay River and Yellowknife a lot, and I have a person from Hay River who I see in the airport almost every time I travel. This is a person who has to travel to Yellowknife three times a week for dialysis treatment at Stanton Hospital. I would like to ask the Minister where are dialysis services available in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 23-15(5): Availability Of Dialysis Services In The NWT

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We currently have dialysis services available in Yellowknife. In Fort Smith we have arrangements as well with the Capital Health Authority in Edmonton. We are in the planning process for having those services available in the community of Hay River, which we anticipate will be up and operational by the end of October or early November. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 23-15(5): Availability Of Dialysis Services In The NWT

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to know if the Minister knows how many people in Hay River are in need of dialysis services and will those services in Hay River that he speaks of serve Hay River only or the region? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 23-15(5): Availability Of Dialysis Services In The NWT

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the catchment area that's there for Hay River would be the area of service. That includes people from Fort Resolution, Kakisa, Enterprise, possibly Providence, should the need arise. Yes, we have an idea of those individuals currently requiring dialysis, as well as trying to identify those who may become candidates down the road based on indicators we have at this time. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 23-15(5): Availability Of Dialysis Services In The NWT

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, like so many other allied health professionals, I would like to ask the Minister if he anticipates there being a difficult or challenging finding, people who know how to operate this. Is it a challenge in finding people who know how to operate this? Is it something that when training is received, it could be done by an RN, or do you require dedicated staff for dialysis services? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 23-15(5): Availability Of Dialysis Services In The NWT

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have training arrangements both with the Stanton Hospital, as well as Capital Health and training can be provided to nurses quite readily and on a regular basis. As well, as we look a little ways down the road, we are also moving towards further enhancing the performance service mandate of LPNs, so they can take on those kind of duties as well. In Fort Smith, for example, we've trained nurses. They have that duty plus others and if they are fully booked up at the dialysis unit, that's what they do. If there is other time available, then they perform other functions as well. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 23-15(5): Availability Of Dialysis Services In The NWT

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is June 1st, so the constituent from Hay River who requires travel to Yellowknife three times a week for dialysis, it would be fair to tell him that within five months he will no longer have to make that journey, that those services will be up and running and staffed in the Hay River Hospital. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 23-15(5): Availability Of Dialysis Services In The NWT

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in fact, I shared that information with the individual in question since I spend a lot of time in the airport, as does he. We had a chance to talk about this, but yes I appreciate the Member's concern and we are going to be making every effort as well to recognize the efforts of the Speaker on this because it's a very, very important issue for everybody. We are pushing very, very hard with Public Works and with our own training to make sure we are ready to go late October or early November. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

Question 24-15(5): Clarification On Recycle Return Compensation

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources again with respect to the recycling program that I asked him about yesterday and I think we had some clarification on it today. I just want to let the public know that there isn't just a trash for cash on a per container basis. This method only applies to the smaller depots, Mr. Speaker, and that the larger centres that the smaller depots bring all their recyclable materials to is based on a weight basis, Mr. Speaker. So just for the public record, I just want to ask the Minister what clarification is he going to put out there and how is he going to alleviate any discrepancies that might arise between the small depots and the larger depots where the small depots are paying on a per container basis and the large depots are paying them on a weight basis? There is always some discrepancy there. So can the Minister just let the public know what his department is going to do to alleviate any more discrepancies? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. The honourable Minister responsible for Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. Miltenberger.

Return To Question 24-15(5): Clarification On Recycle Return Compensation

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when individuals come in with their recyclable beverage containers, they are compensated on an individual item basis, be it cans, bottles or other containers. The issue at hand is when you are dealing with the aluminum products, what has been done is we process these through the system. It has been estimated, for example, how much 500 aluminum cans would weigh crushed up and they pay on a weight basis. The concern, I understand from having talked further with the Member, is that there may be a discrepancy where the contractor may come in with what

he says is 500 cans and the depot may say our weight may tell us there's only 300, so we are only going to pay you for 300. So we are going to check back to make sure that that process is accurate, that the scales used are accurate, that the calculations that are done are accurate to ensure that everybody is fairly compensated for the work that's being done and for this program. I committed to the Member that we would do that and not only for his community, but we'll check to make sure across the system that everything is working as it's supposed to. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 24-15(5): Clarification On Recycle Return Compensation

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just on the inspections part on the weigh scales, I don't know who is going to do that. I don't know if the government is going to send out an inspector every month to inspect every weigh scale at every depot to ensure that the mathematical conversion that the scale comes out with is correct and accurate.

On another point, Mr. Speaker, when you are in a community, you collect 10,000 cans, with or without the tabs, and you bring them to the depot and the depot weighs them and the conversion they are doing is with or without the tabs. These tabs can add up. When you add one million tabs, it makes for a pretty big bag and that could equate to about 10,000 cans in weight. So, Mr. Speaker, the mathematical conversion, is that adjustable? Do we have to start marking cans with tabs or without tabs and separating them? Why don't they just keep it on a per unit basis right across the board and that way there is no discrepancy? If there is one, you have to sit down and count every item. Why don't they just leave it at that? That's just simple as can be. Why confuse the system with a bunch of mathematical formulas and calculations in the smaller urban centres? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 24-15(5): Clarification On Recycle Return Compensation

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can appreciate the Member's concern that he wants to ensure the system is fair, especially for the small contractor. But it would be problematic where volumes are very high like Yellowknife where they are processing hundreds of thousands of beverage containers to have individuals sitting there counting one can, another can. I think they've come up with ways through the recycling processes across the land in terms of weight and what that's equivalent to in terms of the number of cans and such. So we will make sure that the process is fair, that it's efficient and we don't tie people up and that we can demonstrate that we've allowed for all these particular specifics that the Member has referenced. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 24-15(5): Clarification On Recycle Return Compensation

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What is going to stop people from filling their cans with gravel, dirt and everything just to add a little more weight on them when they bring them into the recycling centres? That is

what it's going to come to and then the larger centres will say you are 50 pounds overweight, according to 1,000 cans. Then there will be another discrepancy on the other side of the coin. So it's just more confusion than is warranted. If you want to pay a summer student to count cans, then do that. I don't think it's too expensive and it alleviates a lot of questions that will arise in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 24-15(5): Clarification On Recycle Return Compensation

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I gather it's a lot like going to the butcher shop and you buy a steak. You buy some by the pound and you want to make sure the butcher doesn't have his finger on the scale.

---Laughter

I appreciate the Member's concern. This is a relatively straightforward process. There's a certain amount of setting up the system that's operating in good faith here where we want to work with the communities to deal with a very important environment issue. Once again, we'll make sure that we go back and double check to make sure everything is working as it's supposed to. As to people slipping boulders into their bags and filling things with water to add to the weight, it's within the realm of possibility, Mr. Speaker, but at this point, in my own mind as Minister, I would say it's something we'll look for, but it's somewhat hypothetical. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Oral questions. The honourable Member from Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Question 25-15(5): Future Of Secondary Diamond Industry

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions this afternoon are for Mr. Bell, the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, about the future of our secondary diamond industry. Mr. Speaker, the decision by the department last fall to collapse the diamond project division sent a confusing and a disappointing signal to my constituents in this community that our government had abandoned its commitment to this emerging new industry and leaves us, Mr. Speaker, without a team whose job it was to lead our government's initiatives, protect our investments, help these companies and grow this industry. I felt abandoned myself, Mr. Speaker, after so many efforts that I've made, along with my colleagues in this Assembly, to foster this initiative. Now, Mr. Speaker, the question that I want to ask is, in light of these decisions and all the work that has been done that had been undertaken in the past, does this government still believe there's a future in the NWT for a secondary diamond industry? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bell.

Return To Question 25-15(5): Future Of Secondary Diamond Industry

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Absolutely, Mr. Speaker, and I'm proud of the work that this government has done in this area.

---Applause

I think it was the foresight of past government to establish this, recognize that this was a trade that was worthwhile and worth pursuing. We spent a lot of effort, a lot of time, a lot of money to set up the programs at Aurora College and if you look at the factories today, whether its Polar Bear or Arslanian, you see the recent press announcements and we have the benefit of seeing some of the financials and know that they're financially stronger than they have been in the past. The Tiffany factory is moving along, is moving quite well and doing quite well. We did have this issue with the Canada Dene factory that has really been struggling for quite some time. That's not been any secret, Mr. Speaker. There are business model issues. It was our smallest factory. It was up against a number of very challenging hurdles. That is not the death knell for this industry and I think that the kinds of things that we've done with cutting and polishing should be replicated elsewhere. If we are to look at this sector, do a bit of a gap analysis, I think you'd recognize and quickly find that there are probably other areas we can focus on as well, continue to support this. Potentially small engine or diesel engine mechanics, could we put together more programs and more effort in those areas, and there are many, many others. I think we need to sit down and talk about some of these opportunities, but I think we've done well here and continue to support it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 25-15(5): Future Of Secondary Diamond Industry

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, I'm wondering if what the Minister is telling us is that now the diamond unit has been collapsed and things are better without it, I really can't have that kind of decision. So, you know, now that the expertise that had been assembled over some time has now been dissolved or dissipated, just what is the government doing to grow and enhance this industry, Mr. Speaker?

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

Further Return To Question 25-15(5): Future Of Secondary Diamond Industry

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Well, Mr. Speaker, we're working successfully with our industry partners. Our industry partners said to us, quite clearly, we're not interested in you putting a lot of effort into the National Diamond Strategy. We recognize that and we've moved away from that. They asked us to look for a public relations firm that was professional and capable as compared to trying to do these things in house. That meant spending some money with an outside contractor, but we're doing that. We're working with industry, we're recognizing what they need, we're helping them build brands, we're fully committed to this. I think our success is evident. I think we're getting stronger by the day. Our Rare in Nature Campaign is evidence of that, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 25-15(5): Future Of Secondary Diamond Industry

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, a key factor at start-up of the secondary diamond industry, and I believe in the sustainability of it, is the deals that are in place with the suppliers. We have three of the world's greatest miners

exploiting our resource here, doing the best we can to get some value out of it. Now the socio-economic agreements that we've signed have been singled out quite often, Mr. Speaker, for the weaknesses that they have in compelling the mines to do deals that are attractive to cutting and polishing, not just the ones that we have here now, Mr. Speaker, but we should really be looking at what can we do to grow this industry. Are we going to revisit these deals, Mr. Speaker, to help us move forward and grow and enhance this industry? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 25-15(5): Future Of Secondary Diamond Industry

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, I think if there's any threat to the secondary industry, any real, credible threat, it's probably that we won't find new mines in future. What do we do in 15 years when the pipes that we know about are gone? Really, that's the threat to the secondary industry. I think we need to focus a lot of our efforts and departmental resources on finding new mines. We continue to support the secondary industry. That's critical. These arrangements that we're hearing today, we hear that Arslanian Cutting Works and the Polar Bear factory are very much happy with the new arrangement and new agreement that they have with the mines. They are moving forward, they're in a stronger position than they've ever been in. I think you can say the same for Tiffany, and the Member is well aware of the De Beers arrangements and agreement we have under the socio-economic agreement. Obviously, De Beers is not in production yet, but we look forward to their support of value-added activities in the North. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 25-15(5): Future Of Secondary Diamond Industry

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, I share the Minister's hope that we will find new mines and continue on in the future, but what I don't see, Mr. Speaker, are cutting and polishing factories banging on the door out there looking for authorization and ways to get involved. This industry is not one that has a very optimistic future and that's why I'm asking these questions, Mr. Speaker. The Minister referenced the National Diamond Strategy, also something that we abandoned. Now Saskatchewan and Ontario are next to become Canadian producers. Their economies of scale are much bigger; their pockets are a lot deeper than ours. What are we going to do, Mr. Speaker, to protect the industry that we have here today as these other Canadian producers come on line without being involved in some kind of a National Diamond Strategy? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 25-15(5): Future Of Secondary Diamond Industry

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, we consulted with the local industry about the National Diamond Strategy and about where we should focus our efforts. The local cutting and polishing industry said to us, you know, national efforts are fine and they may make sense in future; right now, work on supporting our efforts and our brands, this is fledgling locally, never mind about Ontario and Saskatchewan, the time will come. At the same time, they were confused that Members in the House would be concerned about the National Diamond Strategy

abandonment, as the Member has said, when they were lobbying for that. Mr. Speaker, I think Members have an obligation to sit down and actually talk to the industry before standing up in the House and understand what their efforts are focused on, because that's what we're doing, Mr. Speaker, and that's who we've been working with. So National Diamond Strategy in future, yes, probably. Right now, support for this local industry in building these brands. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Oral questions. The honourable Member from Nunakput, Mr. Pokiak.

Question 26-15(5): Permanent Policing Services Needed For Sachs Harbour

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today I spoke about Sachs Harbour again because of RCMP. Another question I mentioned was discussions going on for some time now. So I would like to ask the Minister of Justice what has been happening since March session? Has he talked with the RCMP and have they come up with a plan to address RCMP presence in communities without police services? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. The honourable Minister responsible for Justice, Mr. Bell.

Return To Question 26-15(5): Permanent Policing Services Needed For Sachs Harbour

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I have, and I appreciate the support of the Member. I think Members know that I have written to the Minister of Public Safety, Stockwell Day, asked and pleaded with his folks to help us put some new detachments into some of the communities that don't have them; Sachs, obviously, Gameti, Wrigley, Mr. Speaker. I then also sat down and had the time to brief his chief-of-staff on another trip, sat down with Assistant Commissioner Bill Sweeney, Chief Superintendent Pat McCloskey and we are making progress, Mr. Speaker. We are looking and the RCMP has identified Sachs Harbour as a priority. They've been into the community on May 16th to assess the assets. Unfortunately we've determined that we need a new building there. We can't renovate the existing one, it wouldn't make code, but that doesn't mean that we can't do this. We think that by summer of 2008 we could have a new building on the ground. So now my challenge will be to work with this House and my colleagues to find the operational money to make that a reality. But I appreciate all of the efforts and I think we're almost there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 26-15(5): Permanent Policing Services Needed For Sachs Harbour

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to ask the Minister, 2008 is not very far away, but the people have been talking about that for two or three years now, even maybe further, Mr. Speaker. So I appreciate the 2008 possibility, but can the Minister provide me with a copy of the inspection report that may be conducted since March? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 26-15(5): Permanent Policing Services Needed For Sachs Harbour

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, I'll certainly endeavour to do that and I'll see what the RCMP has. New assets on the ground by 2008, we are striving for

that, Mr. Speaker, that doesn't mean that we couldn't have an RCMP presence, permanent presence in the community earlier than that, potentially next summer. We'll have to see. Accommodations we think we can deal with. I appreciate the Member's help in that regard. So it really is a matter of sitting down now through our business planning process, talking to committees, talking to my Cabinet colleagues, talking about what it would cost to have that presence on the ground there. But it's an absolute top priority for my department and I appreciate the patience and the support of the people in Sachs Harbour. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Oral questions. The honourable Member from Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

Question 27-15(5): Funding For The Inuvik Women's Shelter

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement before, I spoke to the concerns of the women's shelter in Inuvik and I'd like to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger, if he would commit to looking into the concerns and seeing if there's anything he and his department can do to help finding a solution for the problems that are going on there. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Return To Question 27-15(5): Funding For The Inuvik Women's Shelter

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd be pleased to do that. I'll make that commitment that we'll sit down and I'll talk further with the Member and we'll work with the Inuvik Health and Social Services Authority to make sure that we can try to address the issues. I'd also like to point out that we did add out of some of the federal money we had another \$100,000 a year to the shelters. The five shelters we fund and the shelter directors got together and, I believe, agreed that Inuvik was one of the shelter's that should get that money as opposed to some of the other ones, but I will make that commitment. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 27-15(5): Funding For The Inuvik Women's Shelter

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to the Minister for that. I'd like to ask the Minister if he'd communicate to the regional board the concerns of the frontline providers and the importance of having that good working relationship with these frontline workers. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 27-15(5): Funding For The Inuvik Women's Shelter

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that kind of working relationship is critical at frontline levels and at every level. Once again, I'm aware of the concerns that the Member is talking about and I will, as well, commit to make sure that that's part of our discussion. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 27-15(5): Funding For The Inuvik Women's Shelter

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, during our pre-budget consultations there was a suggestion that the shelters be funded directly by Health and Social Services, because some of the money wasn't always filtering through to the shelters. So I would like to ask the Minister if he and his department will consider an option like this? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 27-15(5): Funding For The Inuvik Women's Shelter

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a system, the Government of the Northwest Territories has made a significant investment in setting up local authorities with representatives from the communities to administer almost 80 percent of the government's or our Health and Social Service budget. Once again, I appreciate the Member's concern. While it's an option we'll consider, our primary concern is still to try to work with the regions and the communities to ensure that these very valuable resources are supported the best way possible. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Oral questions. The honourable Member from Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Question 28-15(5): Need For Citizenship Judges

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier this year I talked about the need for citizen judges here in the Northwest Territories. In Yellowknife there's an annual tradition; on July 1st we have new Canadians sworn in, but through further investigation I found out that there are only 19 citizenship judges across Canada and recently I found out that we won't be having our citizenship ceremony here on July 1st, which has become quite a tradition here in Yellowknife. I'd like to know what the Minister is doing to investigate this problem about us not having swearing in ceremonies July 1st. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 28-15(5): Need For Citizenship Judges

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have recently written the federal Minister to encourage him to appoint more citizenship court judges and particularly here in the Northwest Territories. I have asked that be done as soon as possible. I have not yet been able to confirm that we will not have a ceremony in the Territories this summer, but my office, when informed by the Member that this was likely, we started to follow up on that and we will pressure Citizenship and Immigration Canada to try and find a way to have citizenship court here this summer. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Time for question period has expired. However, I will allow the Member to proceed with his supplementary question. Mr. Hawkins.

Supplementary To Question 28-15(5): Need For Citizenship Judges

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recognizing the difficulty of getting a citizenship judge here in the Northwest Territories, I approached the concept of getting our honourable Commissioner to become one of the citizenship ceremony officials. I approached honourable Whitford and he liked the idea. I brought his name forward to the department and I see Minister Dent has written a letter in support to our federal Minister, Monte Solberg. Again, recognizing the problem that I've got and the information from the MP's office, which is they will not be holding a citizenship ceremony, could I get the Minister to say today that he will agree to follow up in some type of a speedy manner? Will they look at processing the Honourable Whitford's accreditation? Would they look at that possibility of maybe making him a citizenship judge in the Northwest Territories as soon as possible? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 28-15(5): Need For Citizenship Judges

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member is right that I have written to the Minister's office. We have had no response to that letter. So I can't promise that we will get a response even if we follow up again. I will ensure that we are in contact with Minister Solberg's office to let him know that it is important that we see access to citizenship courts here in the Northwest Territories and that we would like to see that take place very quickly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Time for question period has expired. The honourable Member from Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to return to item 7. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 7 on the Order Paper, oral questions. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Return to item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member from Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

REVERT TO ITEM 7: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 29-15(5): Future Of Secondary Diamond Industry

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, thank you, and thank you, colleagues. I would like to continue to take up the issue regarding secondary diamond industry with the Minister, Mr. Bell. In our exchange a little earlier today he suggested that maybe I was a bit behind in my homework and my communication with the principals involved in this, and I was no where up to speed on this as he was. Mr. Speaker, I would like to be able to refer the Assembly to an appointment that I had last week, I believe it was last Thursday. I spent an hour and a half with the owners and managers of Arslanian and Polar Ice Works. Mr. Speaker, I spent an hour earlier this week with a senior representative of Aber Resources to hear about things from the miners' point of view. So I am not at all going to stand here and take a cheap shot from the Minister about my not being up to speed on what's going on out there. Points that I have raised are valid and certainly come from experienced voices. Mr. Speaker, I'm going to get to my question. If the Minister wants to talk about communications, perhaps he could tell the Assembly why he decided in secret last fall to collapse the diamond

projects division and withdraw from the National Diamond Strategy, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bell.

Return To Question 29-15(5): Future Of Secondary Diamond Industry

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll send a copy of the letter to the Member that I sent to the Governance and Economic Development committee about that reorganization. Mr. Speaker, my concern is the suggestion that we've abandoned the National Diamond Strategy and a characterization that this was something that was supported by the secondary industry. In my consultations with all of the factory operators, they suggested to me that we needed to move on, move past this and refocus our efforts. In fact, when the issue came up in the House the last time around, I met with them again to ask if potentially they had changed their minds, because there seemed to be an advocacy for this National Diamond Strategy. They said no. We haven't met with the Members asking the questions about the NDS. We still don't support it. We are happy you did that. They continue to suggest to me that they applauded the move to move away from the National Diamond Strategy, which they didn't find very useful. So if there is some miscommunication here, if the Member is hearing something different, maybe he would like to indicate which of the factories is in support of the National Diamond Strategy and thinks it was a mistake. The mines that I am talking to are telling me different. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 29-15(5): Future Of Secondary Diamond Industry

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, when was the last time the Minister or the department briefed committee on this whole area of the National Diamond Strategy? When was the last time the Minister took the time to speak to individual MLAs with constituencies directly concerned with this? It's one of the expectations that we have in our consensus system. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. There are two questions there. Mr. Bell, you can answer one or both.

Further Return To Question 29-15(5): Future Of Secondary Diamond Industry

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, again, I will provide that letter to GED. The last few days, I have talked to the chair of Governance and Economic Development committee about pulling together a focus group that would do some gap analysis of a number of sectors. We talked to specifically about the mining sector, the need to make sure we understand where all of the opportunities are. I am more than prepared to sit down with any of the constituents that the Member has that potentially have been displaced at the Canada Dene factory failing. I can sit down and meet with them, as well with the Minister of Education who has the North Slave career office here. I believe most of them, Mr. Speaker, have chosen to go back to Israel. Many of them were on work permits, but if there are Canadians here who were displaced, need our help, need our resources, that is our first priority. I am absolutely prepared to do that. If there are other issues that his constituents have, other concerns related to the

industry, I am more than happy to meet with them. The Member need only ask. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 29-15(5): Future Of Secondary Diamond Industry

MR. BRADEN: Okay, Mr. Speaker. So we have to ask. I will tell you where the gap analysis is, it's in the communication strategy and the communication attitude that the Minister has about informing committees and Members about things that are going on that are very valid to our jobs and expectations and our obligation to our constituents. Mr. Speaker, why is it that the Minister puts the obligation on me or committees to have to ask to be kept up to speed. The Minister is the one with the resources; the Minister is the one with the mandate; the Minister is the one with the obligation to uphold the principles of consensus government and involve me when and as things are happening. It's not on my back to do that; it's on his. When is he going to pick up that responsibility and honour his mandate as a Minister, Mr. Speaker?

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

Further Return To Question 29-15(5): Future Of Secondary Diamond Industry

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, I think I have a very close working relationship with the Governance and Economic Development committee. We meet quite frequently to discuss issues formally and informally. I am more than willing to do that with Members as it relates to constituents who have specific concerns. Yes, I do rely on the advocacy of Members to bring those issues forward. In terms of communication on major initiatives, that is my job to come forward to committee and present them with those things. Of course, we had that discussion when we decided to move away from the National Diamond Strategy. I did present committee with that information. If there is a change and we decide we want to get back into national initiatives, obviously I would come back before committee. If there are major departures or changes of direction, I will come back before committee, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

Question 30-15(5): Student Financial Assistance Available For Post-Graduate Studies

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Just a question to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment relating to the policies and procedures manual for the basic grants that are allowable to students in the NWT. Like I stated in my Member's statement, a lot of students in this day and age go to university for nine years straight. They want a couple of bachelor of arts degrees. Some want to go for master's and Ph.D.s. Our 12-semester limitation per lifetime in our policies and procedures manual for Student Financial Assistance to me just seems to undermine the initiative our students have. When was the last time this policies and procedures manual was updated to accommodate the growing number of university students who are going for their master degrees or Ph.D. level degrees in the NWT today? Would he be willing to commit to deleting the "in your lifetime" portion of that one sentence in the maximum number of grants available? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 30-15(5): Student Financial Assistance Available For Post-Graduate Studies

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am a fan of life-long learning, so I enjoy seeing people getting back into school and continuing on with their education, but the simple fact is we don't have unlimited funds. That was one of the reasons the limits were put there. Even if we were to take away the "in your lifetime" sentence, still right now we tie the amount of contributions to the years of schooling. So there is one semester of funding for every year of schooling, which means that maximum for somebody who has been schooled in the Northwest Territories for 12 years is 12 semesters, or typically to a master's degree if they go through in consecutive years.

I point out, Mr. Speaker, that we do have very, very good scholarship programs available, particularly for those who are taking master's in Ph.D. programs; \$5,000 and \$10,000 per year. So we do have other ways that we support students who are following up on post-secondary education. But to do what the Member is asking, which is to provide even more grants than the 12 semesters that we provide for right now, would take a significant increase in funding. As the Member will be aware, that is a bit of a challenge. As we have more funding available, I would be happy to review the regulations and look towards changing that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 30-15(5): Student Financial Assistance Available For Post-Graduate Studies

MR. VILLENEUVE: I know the Minister just raised another real concerning issue for me. Northern residents schooled in the NWT 12 years, you live here in the NWT, you go to school here in the NWT, and you are only eligible for 12 semesters of funding. What's the rationale on that? I just don't see how they come up with some kind of an eligibility requirement like that. I think if you go to school 12 years here in the NWT, you should be eligible to any unlimited amount of funding for Student Financial Assistance to carry on and go ahead, over and above the scholarships and loans available. That's one of these policies that I would like to see reviewed and probably taken out of the whole policies and procedure manual. I just want to ask the Minister how much of the basic grant funding that the government allocates in their Student Financial Assistance Program has been spent this year so far. Do we have to use it all up? Do we use it all up every year?

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

Further Return To Question 30-15(5): Student Financial Assistance Available For Post-Graduate Studies

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This being early in the fiscal year, I would expect that we haven't used very much yet of our Student Financial Assistance allocation since the budget was only approved to be effective April 1st. Most of the money goes out in September for the rest of the year. We do typically use almost all of the Student Financial Assistance. In fact, many years we have gone over what we put in the budget and have had to reallocate from other budget line items or

else come back to the Assembly for an increase in funding. This Assembly has never turned the department down when they needed more funding to put into that line item. I think we do see the importance of funding education.

I think we've also recognized that there is a certain amount of money that we can put into a program. The decision was made that to go to six years' worth of funding was a reasonable allocation. I would certainly be happy to expand on that, but then we would have to be looking at taking money from some other programs or we are going to have to be successful at winning in our arguments with the federal government that we should have access to resource royalties and revenue sharing because we need a new source of revenues to put into important programs like Student Financial Assistance.

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

Supplementary To Question 30-15(5): Student Financial Assistance Available For Post-Graduate Studies

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know we are kind of stretched thin on education funding. I know the Minister has said typically we use all the funding. I know that, right off the top of my head, I know three students who are carrying on with law degrees, over and above the BAs they have and they can't ask the government for any money because they have used their 12-semester limit. Can't the government make the exception to the small number of students that we do have as it is at the university level to provide them with some sort of basic government grant, so that they don't have all these financial woes that you hear about every day? Can we take exception every year and look at each individual on a case-by-case basis? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 30-15(5): Student Financial Assistance Available For Post-Graduate Studies

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have probably the most generous Student Financial Assistance Program in Canada at this point. It is one that this Legislative Assembly has agreed we should invest in because of the importance of ensuring northern residents are well educated. It is a shared program. There is responsibility on students and their families to contribute as well. The expectation is, particularly for those who are going into programs like medicine or law, we know they are going to have tremendous earning power. It's not that they are cut off from Student Financial Assistance; they can access repayable loans. There is an expectation that they will invest in their own future and be prepared to borrow some money in order to pursue their goals. In spite of having said that, both Health and the Department of Justice offer tremendous bursary programs, as well, to help people who are pursuing those kinds of expensive degrees to continue. So between what we offer with the scholarships, the bursaries that are available and the repayable loans, we think we still have the best Student Financial Assistance Program in Canada. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 31-15(5): Need For Permanent Nursing And Policing Services In Small Communities

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to follow up on my request or my Member's statement of yesterday wherein I spoke about the leasing of community health services. In recent correspondence with the Minister of Justice, he indicates to me he is working in tandem with the Department of Health and Social Services in trying to address how we best service the needs of our very small communities and one of the success stories is the operation in Gameti this year. The Department of Justice is touring the North. Is the Department of Justice going to tour the NWT? I know they are in Nunavut this week, but will they be coming to the NWT to look at our small communities, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Bell.

Return To Question 31-15(5): Need For Permanent Nursing And Policing Services In Small Communities

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We do have a group of officials from my department, from the RCMP who are working on a small Community Policing Strategy. I am not sure if he's referring to the federal Justice officials who are touring Nunavut. I don't know their schedule, but if that is what the Member is referring to, I can certainly find out. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 31-15(5): Need For Permanent Nursing And Policing Services In Small Communities

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister is absolutely correct; there is a federal tour happening in Nunavut. I am just wondering if that tour is going to come to the NWT and look at our small communities and our challenges, which I am sure the Minister has been lobbying for in Ottawa. Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 31-15(5): Need For Permanent Nursing And Policing Services In Small Communities

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will certainly find out. The Member is right that I have said the department's foremost priority is to get additional resources on the ground in our smaller communities. Members know there are 13 communities that currently don't have a permanent police presence. Of course, they are served out of the larger centres and I think we do a very good job with the resources we have, but I have made the case to the federal government that we have pressing needs. There are pressures coming from development. We need a strategy, we need more resources and we will continue to do that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 31-15(5): Need For Permanent Nursing And Policing Services In Small Communities

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister spoke of needing a strategy, but I am sure they are developing a strategy like the Gameti example of this spring. Are there more plans to do that in some of the

other smaller communities such as Holman, Wrigley, Nahanni Butte, for example, Mr. Speaker?

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

Further Return To Question 31-15(5): Need For Permanent Nursing And Policing Services In Small Communities

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know the RCMP are evaluating the pilot in Gameti. We originally thought it would potentially take two officers. We had to bring in additional reinforcements. I think we are up to five or six officers at a time for periods in Gameti. It was, by all accounts, very, very successful. We will continue to evaluate. We will look at other communities where there are pressures. My focus in Wrigley is to try to get a permanent police presence, but if there are other things that we need to do in the interim in addition to our small community strategy, I am prepared to discuss those. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 31-15(5): Need For Permanent Nursing And Policing Services In Small Communities

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can just assure the Minister that this side of the House will support any initiatives the Minister puts forward with regard to small communities. Is there a special action team that the Minister has with Health and Social Services to address health concerns and policing at the same time, Mr. Speaker?

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

Further Return To Question 31-15(5): Need For Permanent Nursing And Policing Services In Small Communities

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have been discussing this with my colleague, the Minister of Health. We do have a Social Envelope Ministers Committee that discusses these issues frequently. I have talked about this and we have seen over the years here, especially recently, that it has been difficult in his community of Wrigley to get a permanent nurse in the community. One of the concerns was about the lack of a permanent policing presence. We are trying to work on that. We recognize there are linkages here. We can't afford to be a stovepipe. So we are collaborating. I am trying to coordinate our efforts. It is important for us to get both police and nurses on the ground in the small communities and we recognize the concern, problem in Wrigley. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Oral questions. Written questions. The Honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

ITEM 8: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Written Question 2-15(5): Public Housing In Behchoko

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are to the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

1. What is the total number of public housing units in Behchoko, and what is the number of each type of unit?
2. How many of those units are occupied by:

- a. 1-2 persons
- b. 3-4 persons
- c. 5-6 persons
- d. 7-8 persons
- e. 9 or more persons

3. What is the maximum number of persons occupying any one of those units?
4. How many of those units had a monthly rent, as of June 1, 2006, of:
 - a. Under \$100
 - b. \$101-\$250
 - c. \$251-\$500
 - d. \$501-\$750
 - e. \$751-\$1,000
 - f. \$1,001-\$1,250
 - g. \$1,251-\$1,500
 - h. \$1,501-\$1,750
 - i. \$1,751-\$2,000
 - j. \$2,001-\$2,250
 - k. \$2,251-\$2,500
 - l. \$2,501 or more
5. What is the highest rent being charged on any one of those units?
6. How many of those units have rent arrears owing by the current tenants of:
 - a. Under \$100
 - b. \$101-\$1,000
 - c. \$1,001-\$5,000
 - d. \$5,001-\$10,000
 - e. \$10,001-\$15,000
 - f. \$15,001-\$20,000
 - g. \$20,000-\$30,000
 - h. \$30,001-\$40,000
 - i. \$40,000-\$50,000
 - j. Over \$50,000
7. What is the maximum amount of arrears owed on any one of those units?
8. Of all the units on which arrears are owed, what are the average and median amounts of the arrears?
9. How many of those units have had major repairs within the past five years, and what was the nature of those repairs?
10. As of June 1, 2006, of the current public housing tenants, how many have had their most recent household income assessment within:
 - a. the last month
 - b. the last 1-2 months
 - c. the last 2-3 months
 - d. the last 3-6 months
 - e. the last 6-12 months
 - f. no income assessment within the last year
11. For each type of unit, what are the minimum, maximum and average buy-out costs?
12. As of June 1, 2006, how many of those public housing units had received at least one visit from a Tenant Relations Officer within the last year?

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Written questions. Returns to written questions. Replies to opening address. Petitions. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

ITEM 11: PETITIONS**Petition 1-15(5): Specialist Surgical Services Located In The Inuvik Hospital**

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to present a petition dealing with the matter of specialists surgical services located in Inuvik Hospital. Mr. Speaker, this petition contains 794 signatures of Beaufort-Delta residents and, Mr. Speaker, the petitioners request that the Minister of Health and Social Services confirm through a ministerial directive stating that the Beaufort-Delta Health and Social Services Authority has the authority to staff specialists who are necessary for surgical service and salary and benefit level for a specialist, including general practitioners with special training, surgeons, obstetricians, anaesthesiologists, nurse practitioners and registered nurses. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Petitions. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Tabling of documents. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Bell.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS**Tabled Document 5-15(5): Sixteenth Annual Report Of The Victims Assistance Committee Of The Northwest Territories, April 1, 2004 - March 31, 2005**

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled Sixteenth Annual Report of the Victims Assistance Committee of the NWT, 2004-2005. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Tabled Document 6-15(5): Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act - Election, Mr. Lafferty

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Tabling of documents. Pursuant to section 5.31 of the Supplementary Allowances Act, I wish to table the Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act - Election for the Member for Monfwi, Mr. Jackson Lafferty.

Tabled Document 7-15(5): Legislative Assembly Retiring Allowance Fund - Financial Statements For The Year Ended March 31, 2006

Pursuant to section 21 of the Legislative Assembly Retiring Allowances Act, I wish to table the financial statements for the Legislative Assembly retiring allowance fund for the year ended March 31, 2006.

Tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: I beg your pardon, Mr. Speaker. It's the next item.

MR. SPEAKER: Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

ITEM 14: NOTICES OF MOTION**Motion 1-15(5): Designated Budget For Art In GNWT Buildings**

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, June 5, 2006, I will move the following motion. Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Great Slave, that the Government of the Northwest Territories establish a policy requiring it to spend the equivalent of up to one percent of the budget of each new GNWT building or major building renovation on northern art creations displayed or integrated into the design of that building. And further, that the policy provides for the establishment of a selection process for

deciding on acquisitions. And furthermore, that the policy be enforced by April 1, 2007.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Notices of motion. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bell.

ITEM 15: NOTICES OF MOTION FOR FIRST READING OF BILLS**Bill 6: Engineering And Geoscience Professions Act**

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, June 5, 2006, I will move that Bill 6, Engineering and Geoscience Professions Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Bill 7: Pharmacy Act

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, June 5, 2006, I will move that Bill 7, Pharmacy Act, be read for the first time.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Bell.

Bill 8: Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2006

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, June 5, 2006, I will move that Bill 8, Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2006, be read for the first time.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

Bill 9: Write-off Of Assets Act, 2006-2007

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, June 5, 2006, I will move that Bill 9, Write-off of Assets Act, 2006-2007, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Bill 10: Forgiveness Of Debts Act, 2006-2007

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, June 5, 2006, I move that Bill 10, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2006-2007, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bell.

Bill 11: Tourism Act

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, June 5, 2006, I will move that Bill 11, Tourism Act, be read for the first time.

Bill 12: Garnishment Remedies Statutes Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker, I also give notice that on Monday, June 5, 2006, I will move that Bill 12, Garnishment Remedies Statutes Amendment Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. Motions. First reading of bills. The honourable Minister for Industry, tourism and Investment, Mr. Bell.

ITEM 17: FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 3: An Act to Amend The Legislative Assembly And Executive Council Act

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 3 has had first reading. First reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bell.

Bill 4: An Act to Amend The Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 4 has had first reading. First reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bell.

Bill 5: An Act To Amend The Territorial Parks Act

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Territorial Parks Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 5 has had first reading. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters. Report of Committee of the Whole. Third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, there will be a meeting of the Accountability and Oversight committee at adjournment of the House today. Orders of the day for Friday, June 2, 2006 at 10:00 a.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions

9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motion
15. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
17. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 1, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2005-2006
 - Bill 2, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2006-2007
18. Second Reading of Bills
 - Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act
 - Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act
 - Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Territorial Parks Act
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Committee Report 1-15(5), Report on the Review of the 2004-2005 Annual Report of the Human Rights Commission
 - Committee Report 2-15(5), Report on the Review of the 2004-2005 Annual Report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner
 - Committee Report 3-15(5), Report on the Review of the 2004-2005 Annual Report of the Official Languages Commissioner
 - Committee Report 4-15(5), Progress Report on Priorities and Objectives (2006)
20. Report of Committee of the Whole
21. Third Reading of Bills
22. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Friday, June 2, 2006, at 10:00 a.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 16:08 p.m.