



**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
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The Honourable Tony Whitford, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Friday, October 18, 2002

Members Present

Honourable Roger Allen, Honourable Jim Antoine, Mr. Bell, Mr. Braden, Mr. Delorey, Mr. Dent, Mrs. Groenewegen, Honourable Joe Handley, Honourable Stephen Kakfwi, Mr. Krutko, Mr. Lafferty, Ms. Lee, Honourable Michael Miltenberger, Mr. Nitah, Honourable Jake Ootes, Mr. Roland, Honourable Vince Steen, Honourable Tony Whitford.

ITEM 1: PRAYER

-- Prayer

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Please be seated. Good morning. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 69-14(5): Foster Family Awareness Week

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, next week is National Foster Family Awareness Week. In honour of this week, I would like to invite Members of this Legislative Assembly to join me in thanking NWT foster families for the essential services they provide to children.

Mr. Speaker, we know that families and extended families play a vital role in helping children grow and develop to their fullest potential. We also recognize the valuable strength and contribution of the extended family in helping family members to raise children or even to assume the primary parenting role. Sometimes, however, children need a surrogate family to provide for their well-being. For example:

- the child's home may be unsafe due to child neglect, abuse or abandonment;
- the parents may be unable to provide care due to a parent's physical or mental illness; or
- the child may have behavioural problems, mental disabilities or physical disabilities that require extra attention or specialized care that cannot be provided by the parent.

Foster families fulfill this important role by providing safe, caring homes to children who require long-term, temporary or emergency placements. And let me clarify, Mr. Speaker, that foster parenting is more than just providing the basics of food, clothing and a place to sleep. Foster parents also:

- play an active role in maintaining and encouraging positive relationships between the child and their families;
- arrange for medical and dental care;
- provide discipline, structure and stability in a child's life

- help the child grow through educational, cultural and social experiences; and

- help prepare the child to return home (where possible).

Today's foster parent is a key member of a team of people dedicated to helping children and youth. They join social workers, mental health workers, nurses and other community professionals to meet the emotional, social and physical needs of NWT children.

For this reason, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to speak to new developments this year that contribute to training and peer support for foster parents. For example, a new NWT-wide foster family coalition will be created. This coalition will strengthen the links between foster homes and provide peer support to foster parents in all communities. A founding board of directors has already consulted with communities to develop a mission statement, goals, objectives and a framework for making sure all foster families have a voice in this new organization, and they anticipate their first annual general meeting to occur in the next six months.

In addition, this year will see the implementation of a training program for all foster parents. The Parent Resources for Information, Development and Education (PRIDE) program is used in other jurisdictions to provide foster parents with the tools to give quality care. This program is designed to strengthen the quality of family foster care by providing a structured, standardized framework for recruiting, preparing and selecting foster parents. It also provides foster parent in-service training and ongoing professional development.

At this time there are close to 200 foster families in the NWT. These families volunteer their time and open their hearts and homes for the welfare of NWT children. I ask all Members to join me in thanking foster families for the contribution they make to the health and well-being of children in the NWT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. Handley.

Minister's Statement 70-14(5): Decrease in Motor Vehicle Collisions Involving Alcohol

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in all too many instances alcohol is a contributing factor in motor vehicle collisions, injuries and deaths. Every day in Canada, on average, 4.5 people are killed as a result of impaired driving and many more are injured.

Mixing alcohol and automobiles is a deadly combination that continues to exact a toll in human suffering in the NWT, not to mention the personal financial losses and the added cost to our health system to care for those injured in alcohol-related crashes.

In 2001, according to statistics compiled by the Department of Transportation, there were 48 collisions involving alcohol in the Northwest Territories resulting in 36 injuries. Sadly this represents a full 17 percent of all traffic injuries in the NWT last year. The statistic that I find particularly disturbing is that 65 percent -- two-thirds -- of all drinking drivers were between the ages of 16 and 34.

This week groups such as Students Against Drunk Driving (SADD) are observing National Students Against Impaired Driving Week in Canada. SADD chapters in the NWT have also participated in this national observance as part of their continuing efforts to raise awareness and promote the value of education as part of overall efforts to combat drinking and driving.

Mr. Speaker, it is against that backdrop that I am pleased to report that, while renewed efforts are still needed to prevent this deplorable act of driving while impaired, there are encouraging signs that increased awareness, education and enforcement have led to some noteworthy progress in this uphill fight. A review of DOT statistics shows that over the last decade -- 1992 to 2001 -- the number of collisions involving alcohol has decreased by almost 50 percent, from 91 collisions in 1992 to 48 in 2001. Over that same period the number of victims injured in those crashes dropped from 38 to 21.

Despite these advances in the struggle, Mr. Speaker, much still remains to be done to prevent alcohol-related collisions. We must change outdated and dangerous attitudes and behaviour to reduce the number of people who drink alcohol and get behind the wheel of a car.

Mr. Speaker, as a society that is concerned for the safety and well-being of our citizens, we must loudly and forcefully condemn those who insist on putting themselves and others at risk by drinking and driving. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement on Messages Emanating From the NWT

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the past couple of weeks, Mr. Speaker, the Premier has been delivering some messages, both in Calgary to oil and gas executives and other stakeholders in the northern energy plan, the Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce and over the weekend, the Native Women's Association.

Mr. Speaker, I was trying to keep track of this and I listened to how the message was heard and interpreted and it has come out in a number of different ways. I think some audiences heard the message as a threat that the Northwest Territories government was going to halt development unless we got

certain things. Others heard this message as kind of a downer signal that we had a demoralized Premier and a directionless government.

Mr. Speaker, I heard it as a message that the North is edging closer to realizing its goals of self-sufficiency and taking its place as a peer amongst the provinces. A region that really does have something to offer the rest of Canada, and not a place that is constantly in need of a helping hand.

We cannot do it ourselves. The message said clearly and unequivocally that Ottawa has to cast off its leffagy and indifferent attitude about the Northwest Territories and take a stand and support what we are trying to do. It was a message of frustration that our repeated efforts to get attention and some kind of commitment have been stymied over and over.

Mr. Speaker, I also heard it as a message of leadership, positive leadership and the stubborn belief that what we are doing is right and that as leaders we must never lose sight of our goals or let our beliefs flag. It was a message, a plea, for unity among all leaders in communities, among aboriginal First Nations, in business and here in this Legislature to stay united and to achieve this great purpose. We in this Legislature have not been doing much of a job of that this week.

While we have been consumed with issues surrounding our Power Corporation what really matters out there, Mr. Speaker, jobs, education, health care, an alarming rate of social decay are going untended. We are failing our people, Mr. Speaker. I implore my colleagues on both sides of this House to look beyond the issues of the day and steer ourselves towards those things that will truly make a better tomorrow. Thank you.

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

Member's Statement on Birthday Greetings to Mother of Tu Nedhe MLA

MR. NITAH: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to recognize women. Even though it is not mother's day, I would like to recognize my mother today because today is her birthday. Happy birthday, Mother.

-- Applause

My mother is Emmeris Cardinal, formerly Emmeris Drygeese of Lutselk'e. She is a long-time employee of this government, a former teacher, former supervisor of curriculum development, but most recently Mr. Speaker my mother is taking on the challenge of writing a Chipewyan dictionary and she is still in the process of finalizing that.

I would like to wish her and all mothers who are celebrating their birthdays today a happy birthday. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah, and happy birthday to your mom. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

Member's Statement on Sustainability of the NWT Health Care System

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I wanted to reflect on some of the concerns that I have been hearing about the sustainability of our health care system. This is something certainly that the entire Legislature is aware of, aware of our concerns. The issues at Stanton have been highlighted in the media and certainly have been on the lips of most of our residents, Mr. Speaker.

We know that the Minister of Health has an operational review underway to determine exactly what is the problem at Stanton, are these systemic issues, are these issues that we are up against in competing for talent nationally and internationally, or are there other issues at play?

Mr. Speaker, I do not think any of us, and certainly any of our constituents, expected -- and I believe we had assurances from the Minister to this effect -- that all other activities would grind to a halt, and I hope that they have not. One thing is certain, Mr. Speaker, the ICU at Stanton is not open, and I am not certain that it is going to be open any time soon. Certainly my constituents have a grave concern about this. I think everybody in this room and residents of the Northwest Territories believe that we have to have a basic level of service available to all residents, and I believe that includes having a working and open ICU at Stanton.

Mr. Speaker, I also have some concerns about the operational review, and I will be honest and say that the Standing Committee on Social Programs also had some concerns specifically with the independence, or perceived possible lack of independence, of the make-up of the steering committee -- a couple of deputy ministers, a couple of trustees from the board and the secretary to the FMB. We were willing to put those concerns aside and wait to see what the recommendations of the operational review came up with and judge them for their own merits, Mr. Speaker, and I thought that the most prudent and fair thing to do was to give the benefit of the doubt to the department and to the review.

We note that one of the concerns and one of the things that was being analyzed was whether or not money was a real issue here. Were we underpaying our staff at Stanton, and indeed across the Northwest Territories? If we were, Mr. Speaker, then maybe the claim that we could add money to this problem and it would go away certainly made sense. This is one of the things that we know the review was set to have a look at, Mr. Speaker.

Over the past couple of years, if you look at the operational review parameters... Sorry, Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

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

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, colleagues. If you look at the operational review parameters for this review we see that, number 3, over the past two years Stanton hospital has experienced a great deal of difficulty in recruiting and retaining health care professionals. The review will identify what are internal versus systemic factors contributing to staff turnover at Stanton and make

recommendations to address these, with particular focus on internal factors, Mr. Speaker. Really what that says to me is that we want to look at this situation and see if it is a money problem, we simply are not paying enough, or are there other management, morale, etc., other issues internally in management.

When I look in the paper today there is an article talking about a GNWT comparison of national nursing salaries comparing us against other jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker. I think the comments in the paper lead us to believe that the department has already made the conclusion that it is not about money. Indeed, one of the members of the steering committee, the secretary to the FMB, is reported as saying -- and I am not certain he said this but he is reported as questioning -- he makes the comment, do you take your pay cheque home every two weeks saying you make enough, probably not, he said.

I think most people would agree that many of us are unsatisfied with the amount of money we have, but I think this is going to put doubts in many people's minds that the department, and indeed this government, has already come to the conclusion that this is not about money, there are other issues at play here, and I would only say, Mr. Speaker, that if this operational review is not done -- and I do not believe it is -- and if the recommendations and conclusions have not been arrived at yet, then we should certainly refrain from saying that we have the answers and we know what it is not. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Disappointment With Recent Ministerial Performance

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to say how completely disappointed I am with the performance of Minister Handley yesterday in answering to the questions of this House with respect to his responsibility, involvement and actions, or inaction, in his role as Minister responsible for the Power Corporation.

I do not intend to spend a lot of time on this issue after today, but I would like to summarize what I have heard to date. In October 2001 NTPC began work on a general rate application for a single rate zone, with or without the Minister's and Cabinet's blessing, and I am not sure which it was. In June 2002 Mr. Handley did tell Members that a single rate zone would be a hard sell to the hydro communities and he had no confidence he could get Cabinet approval, let alone support from the Members of this House, and that is assuming that we were going to be consulted at all.

At the same time the president of the Power Corporation informed Members that NTPC was proceeding to phase 2 of their application on the basis of community-based rates. Less than two months later, on August 6, Cabinet took the position that consultation on the new rate structure and several other issues should be deferred until after the energy strategy was complete. This strategic direction, as Mr. Handley has characterized it, was clear to him and made clear to the chairman of the Power Corporation.

One week later on August 13th, in the presentation to regular Members, Cabinet's position was clearly laid out in terms of the deferral of the discussion with Mr. Handley, the chairman and the president of the corporation present. Close to the end of that discussion Members were surprised with the announcement that NTPC was proceeding to file their application in the next few weeks based on a single-rate zone.

Rather than attempting to reconcile that information with what Members understood, Mr. Handley took the opportunity to share his personal views seemingly contradicting Cabinet's direction on the merits of a single rate zone. This timing left no opportunity for regular Members to be consulted, and after the filing of the application the public became increasingly confused with the Minister responsible speaking out publicly about his support for a single rate zone and another Minister using his weekly column in his local newspaper to speak against the flat rate and filing for intervenor status. It is little wonder that the Premier had to step in to clarify the situation.

There are so many things wrong with this picture. I could attempt today to reword the questions about key points that contributed to this situation. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude her Member's statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Mrs. Groenewegen, you may conclude.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, thank you colleagues, and thank you, David. I could attempt today to reword the questions about key points that contributed to this situation. Whether the direction was clear, whether it was clearly communicated, whether the Minister even cared about the position of Cabinet, whether he feels any responsibility for the unfortunate circumstances leading to the dismissal of the board and the chairman's belief that he had the Minister and Cabinet's full support, or the lack of consultation with Members.

Judging by the contradictions in yesterday's answers, the Minister's repeated forays into the media with what he characterizes as his personal views and his cavalier attitude towards Cabinet solidarity one thing is clear. There is little point in asking any more questions of this Minister on this subject. I have worked with and observed Mr. Handley's performance as a Minister and I have to say that, overall, it has been very good, but I am very concerned about this Minister's continued assignment to the NWT Power Corporation. Thank you.

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

Member's Statement on Cabinet Directive to the NWT Power Corporation

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, let me give you my version of what I have heard over the last two days.

-- Laughter

Mr. Speaker, this is Friday and it may be comical to others, but I think it just goes to show the serious situation we find ourselves in with the state of affairs our government is in, and

has put us in to a certain degree by action or inaction from more than one party.

Mr. Speaker, in this House we have had many questions and answers and responses from both the Premier and from the Minister responsible for the Power Corporation, and through those answers we have tried to follow the sequence of events. On page 2263 of unedited Hansard the Honourable Joe Handley puts out information that as of October 2001 Cabinet gave a directive for the government to look at a one-rate zone. So much beyond what started from August 6th was in fact authority given by this Cabinet to look at a one rate zone for the Northwest Territories.

Following that it gets a little bit more confusing. The Premier stated that it was clear direction given on August 6th by the Cabinet to have the Power Corporation cease and desist any further action on a one-rate zone. I have asked the Premier if it was clear and as we can tell from Hansard that in fact we have danced around the issue again.

Today I am going to, once again, get commitment that clear wording was put in the directive to the Power Corporation, the board, that in fact they were to stop and remove their work from the application of one-rate zone.

Later on, Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Premier on that. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Reflections on Recent Debates in the House

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this being Friday, I have composed a little song or story to summarize what I have learned in this House over the last few days. It is entitled, "When I Grow Up I Want to be Just Like Joe Handley" because Joe is the king of his one-man kingdom, I will be Queen Sandy of a one-woman queendom. I have a good start because I am a Member of the Legislative Assembly just like Joe. I will get elected to Cabinet and rule the world. There will be seven others like me in Cabinet but they won't count, because I will be the queen of the one-woman queendom.

There will be MLAs who will give me their confidence to do the job, and oh, how nice, but I don't have to listen to them afterwards because they are just mushrooms in the dark anyway because I will be the queen of a one-woman queendom.

I will have a little corporation to run, and oh how nice, that will be so much fun. I will pass on the direction from the Cabinet, but whatever they do with it is fine by me, because I will be the queen of a one-woman queendom. If there is any misunderstanding, it is the board's problem.

If MLAs get upset, that's okay, I'll just say, "It's not my fault, Cabinet should have been more clear" because I am the queen. If Cabinet Members don't agree with what I say, too bad, so sad, because I am the queen and I can say whatever I want. If I have to fire the board, that's okay, because I can just say, "I didn't want to do it but I had to do it and it is everyone else's fault."

And I will just say, "Oh how sad I am" because people understand and they will all love me because I am the queen of a one-woman queendom.

Mr. Speaker, oh I can't wait until I grow up to be just like Joe Handley, Queen Sandy of the one-woman queendom. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Lafferty.

Member's Statement on Impact Benefit Agreements

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my third year that I have been an MLA I find it rather frustrating that some of the issues that I initially raised as an elected Member remain unresolved. An example of this is how the government deals with the impact benefit agreements. These agreements exist in the Territories between First Nations groups and businesses such as BHP and Diavik.

Financial compensation is being given by these businesses to aboriginal groups to allow for their traditional use of the land. During the February sitting of this House, Mr. Speaker, my colleague Mr. Nitah questioned what other territorial groups or companies have negotiated impact benefit agreements with industry other than the aboriginal groups.

Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that only First Nations groups have been recognized in these agreements. Obviously these agreements recognize that the territorial lands are the homelands of aboriginal people and with resource development and the loss of the traditional use of the land, First Nations should be compensated.

The reasoning behind IBAs is the same basis as to why treaties were created between First Nations and the Government of Canada. It is fair to say therefore that IBAs are modern treaties.

One of the pieces of legislation that we, as legislators are examining right now is related to the IBAs. It is the Human Rights Act. Some people have said that it is the most important piece of legislation that the 14th Assembly will deal with. In section 2 of the Human Rights Act it states that nothing in this act shall be construed so as to abrogate or derogate from the protection provided for existing aboriginal or treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada, by the recognition and affirmation of those rights in section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982."

Mr. Speaker, impact benefit agreements have been created with First Nations groups on the basis that initial treaties were signed between the Government of Canada and the First Nations. As such, the territorial government needs to recognize that the monies received by First Nations from IBAs are constitutionally protected. Mr. Speaker, aboriginal people should not be discriminated against because of who they are when it comes to income support clawbacks. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

Member's Statement on Medical Travel Co-Payments

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to address a topic that has been a cause of frustration for my constituents for too long. The issue I refer to, Mr. Speaker, is the medical co-payment of \$250 charged by the Department of Health to transport the residents to Yellowknife for medical treatment.

Mr. Speaker, I have had many people in my office in Hay River complaining about this co-payment since the day I got elected almost three years ago. Mr. Speaker, I have brought this issue of co-payment up several times in this House but I believe strongly that the issue needs to be addressed with the Minister again.

Mr. Speaker, for quite some time now the residents of Hay River have been without health care in certain areas. First we had a severe doctor's shortage for a period of approximately two years. Now it appears that has been somewhat rectified. Now we do not even have the necessary service such as a physiotherapist in Hay River.

This leads, Mr. Speaker, to residents of Hay River having to travel to Yellowknife to see a physiotherapist and incur a charge of \$250 to do so. This is crazy. Mr. Speaker, I might remind everyone in this House that Hay River is a tax-based community and this government is supported by tax dollars. I say that if service cannot be provided in the community, especially a designated government-funded physician such as a physiotherapist the government should pick up the tab to fly people to Yellowknife where they can receive the service that these people are entitled to.

Mr. Speaker, another scenario that I am hearing about frequently are the cases of constituents of mine who have flown over to Yellowknife for medical appointments, only to get to Yellowknife and be told that the technician is not in or they do not have an appointment. They are having to return home without being seen. This is ludicrous, Mr. Speaker. The people are having to spend \$250 to travel to Yellowknife only to be sent home again. Who can afford that? Certainly not the residents of Hay River.

Then these same people are having to fly back to Yellowknife at a later date and they have to pay another \$250 co-payment. Mr. Speaker, there are also cases of people who have to see a physiotherapist only to get a referral to see a specialist. Unfortunately, this all has to be done in Yellowknife now. Why can people not get a direct referral to see a specialist? This way it would save the patient having to fly to Yellowknife twice and incur a \$500 bill.

Mr. Speaker, I do not care how many times the Minister of Health and Social Services has heard this. I am going to continue to bring the issue up in this House. Just because the Department of Health and Social Services cannot staff medical positions across the Northwest Territories...

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Delorey, your time for your Member's statement is over.

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

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

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Just because the Department of Health and Social Services cannot staff medical positions throughout the Northwest Territories the cost of bringing residents to Yellowknife for treatment should not be on the backs of the residents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Autonomy Required by Appointed Boards and Agencies

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in regard to the issue that has been at hand all week, the Power Corporation, they exercised their authority to carry out their responsibilities as directors of a corporation. It is crucial that the independence is there of boards to set their goals and objectives, their business plans and following them. Also realizing that there is the independence between running a business and the politics of the day.

Mr. Speaker, under the existing rules and regulations that are in place, in accordance with the directorate, policy and guidelines of this government, from time to time we as government set policy direction. We have looked at energy strategies, non-renewable resource strategies, highway initiatives. Yet we as a Legislature are responsible for developing those policies, strategies and directives. I think also we have to look at what is best for the health and well-being of the Territory.

We have spent many dollars and resources with consultants, putting reports together, and a lot of those reports have never seen the light of day. We have been working with the aboriginal groups to look at different initiatives to try and find ways of dealing with our economy, we are talking about pipelines with mining developments, but we also have to realize that at the end of the day it is the cost of all these initiatives that have to be borne by ourselves as a government and the taxpayers to ensure that those expenditures are done right.

My concern, Mr. Speaker, is that as directors of corporations, regardless if the Business Development Corporation, the Power Corporation, or even our school boards, we have to allow them some autonomy to do their jobs. My concern with regard to the Power Corporation is that we have overstepped our bounds by disputing a notion or idea that we think may be right or wrong, but at the end of the day it is the consumer that has to pay.

I think when it comes to power and understanding the cost of power generation and the effect on people in our communities... Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, it is the consumer at the end of the day that has to pay for the power, the use of that power and if they can afford the use of that power. I think the one rate zone and the public hearing process would have allowed the public input in how fair and how well we are managing the power and how fair is the cost distribution in the Northwest Territories for communities on diesel generation, communities on hydro and also communities that are now on gas.

I think as a government that direction was basically hijacked by a decision of Cabinet to allow that process to move forward. With that, Mr. Speaker, I will be asking some questions in regard to what the responsibilities are of the boards we put in place and what we mean by carrying out the day-to-day operations and responsibilities, and the role of the Executive Council when those decisions are being carried out. Also how the interference in those decisions are being handled. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Frame lake, Mr. Dent.

Member's Statement on Impacts of the Health Care Professionals Shortage

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last week I held a constituency meeting for the residents of Frame Lake and earlier this week all the Members from Yellowknife held a joint constituency meeting for all of our constituents. One of the common themes that came out when we heard from all of our constituents at both of these meetings was the shortage of health care workers and the impact that shortage has on our access to health care services.

Mr. Speaker, I keep hearing that the problem is not about salaries. I hear that from the Minister and from officials. They have suggested in fact to the press, I know to Members we got a copy of the package, that a nurse only needs 7 percent more in salary to move from Calgary to Yellowknife to maintain the same standard of living. Apparently they used a computer program to prove this.

Mr. Speaker, as a business man I find this very hard to believe, no matter what a computer program says, that you can move to Yellowknife and have the same standard of living for only 7 percent more than in Calgary. I know that Stats Canada certainly says that our cost of living is way more than 7 percent higher than Edmonton or Calgary. In fact, it is close to three or four times the cost of living in Edmonton or Calgary.

Mr. Speaker, rather than campaigning to convince us that we pay nurses competitively already, I think we should look for ways to deal with the lack of money that we have to put into the health care system. I think money is really part of the problem. That is driven home when we see an article also in the paper that says we can find nurses to work here on contract and they get paid the same salary as the nurses who live here. Unlike the resident nurses, they get free accommodation. They get free travel, north and south.

You know, housing and travel are two of the most expensive components of the higher cost of living in the North. We have to get serious about dealing with this problem. We are going to have to find some more money. I want to hear that the Minister is working with his colleagues on Cabinet to identify new sources of money. We are going to have to have a discussion, if we have no new money, about reallocation perhaps. Where are we going to find that money from within? I do not think it is going to be in Health and Social Services, it is probably going to have to come from some other place. So let's start that discussion. Let's get it moving.

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

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

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, honourable Members. Mr. Speaker, we need to look for ways to find new money. Let's also take a serious look at a separate bargaining unit for health care workers. It is something they have indicated that they feel is needed. Let's really take a look at it.

Mr. Speaker, let's get the recruitment and retention plan fast tracked. Let's get it moving. Get everything that needs to be approved through Cabinet so that this can be published next week and out for the public to see. Let's get serious about solving this problem as quickly as possible.

By the way, Mr. Speaker, I have a tip for the Minister. An article in yesterday's Ottawa Citizen noted that the Royal Ottawa Hospital is laying off 70 health care workers, many of whom are nurses. I would like to encourage the Minister to ensure that he has got a good recruitment and retention plan and a good salary in hand and to go down to Ottawa and see if we cannot scalp some of those nurses to come North now that they are available. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Dana Panaktalok's Letter to the Queen

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday in this Assembly I read the text of one student's story to Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, that tied for second place in a literacy contest. Today I will read from the text of the other student who tied for second place in this worthwhile contest. It reads:

Queen Elizabeth can come to the school.

I would let Queen Elizabeth come to our classroom and meet all the students in the school. I would let her meet my mom Jana and my sister Bobbi-jo. At Beluga Jamboree, I would show and tell her about all kinds of games, skidoo races, dog mushing and let her try a donut. I would tell her about our drum dancing and try to show her how to drum dance and try to let her sing the drum dance song. I would let my sister Bobbi-jo teach her how to play card games

like zap and seven-up, as that is all she knows how to play.

-- Laughter

At the Northern Games I'd tell her all the games like canoe racing, goose plucking and tea boiling contests and let her try to drink some pop and let her have some chips. I'd show her how to play board games like Sorry, Trable and Checkers. I'd show her how to drive a ski-doo and maybe she might go really fast, or slow. She might be scared or brave on the ski-doo.

By Dana Panaktalok
Grade 6
Mangilaluk School, Tuktoyaktuk

Mr. Speaker, and honourable colleagues, I ask you to please join me in commending this student in her efforts to achieve literacy. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Steen. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

Member's Statement on Commemoration of the "Persons Case"

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today, October 18th, is a significant day for women. The reason and the history is as follows. On October 18, 1929, the British Privy Council, which at the time could overrule the Supreme Court of Canada, declared the term "qualified persons" in section 24 of the BNA Act to include women. As a result women were therefore eligible for appointment to the Senate. This decision was rendered after a lengthy legal and political struggle known as the Persons Case. Each year the Governor General's awards in commemoration of the Persons Case are presented on or around this date. Some NWT women who have received this award include the late Agnes Semmler, Elizabeth MacKenzie of Rae and Bertha Allen of Inuvik.

I congratulate all women in their ongoing struggle for equality and particularly those who have dedicated their lives to this cause. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Contributions of Arctic Tire (1980) Limited

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are a number of important small businesses in the electoral district of Inuvik Twin Lakes which succeed based on hard work and dedication of their owners and of their employees. Today, Mr. Speaker, the first in a series of four, I would like to profile Arctic Tire (1980) Limited. Arctic Tire (1980) Limited started as a tire repair and sales company in 1980. With the increased activity and growth of its business, the company moved into road

maintenance, oil field equipment, construction and contracting services, including a service station in the Inuvik industrial area.

Mr. Speaker, Arctic Tire is an integral part of the business community of Inuvik which at times employs between 15 and 120 employees based on the peak of their business.

The company continues to make valuable contributions not only in the employer-employee relations section, but is known to make contributions to charities and sports organizations in and around Inuvik.

It gives me great pleasure today to extend my congratulations to the owners of Arctic Tire (1980) Ltd for the contributions they have made in the past 22 years to the business community of Inuvik. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Additional Participants at the North American Indigenous Games

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when the session started on Wednesday I stood up as the MLA for Nahendeh to speak about the North American Indigenous Games that were held in Winnipeg this summer, July 29 to August 4. I listed out some of the participants on the team that went down to these games. There were about 226 athletes, plus the coaches, the chaperones and the managers.

They represented the Northwest Territories very well. I think there were a lot of medals that were taken home to the North. I think we have to be proud of the team that went there representing us. They took part in this televised show case that celebrated indigenous sportsmanship and solidarity in North America that includes Canada and the United States. The names I mentioned were for the most part participants in the Northwest Territories soccer team. I also have other constituents that I will name today to balance this off. I would like to add three other names to the participants from my constituency. There is a young fellow by the name of Colin Stipdonk who brought home three gold medals and one silver and one bronze for the swimming competition. I would like to congratulate Colin on that feat. Calvin Villeneuve as well participated on the softball team. Most of the softball members came from the Hay River area. I would also like to thank the coach, Debra Stipdonk.

I would also like to thank all the people who made this possible. I think the coaches and trainers did a really good job in representing us in Winnipeg this summer. Mahsi. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Antoine. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Ootes.

Member's Statement on Bishop John Sperry Receives Order of Canada

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased today to stand and congratulate an exemplary Northerner

whose good works have now been recognized nationally. Bishop John Sperry has received our nation's highest honour, the Order of Canada. Bishop Sperry is one of my constituents.

Mr. Speaker, the Order of Canada recognizes people who have made a difference to our country, and it can most certainly be said that Bishop Sperry did that. He came from England in 1950 to serve in the Anglican Mission in what was then called Coppermine, although no one who knows this Nunavut community now would recognize it as it was then. Most of the people of the region then lived on the land for most of the year and John Sperry traveled to where they were in order to live and learn with them. He did this by travelling the only way he could, by dog team in the winter and boat in the summertime.

A year after Sperry came to Coppermine his fiancée, Elizabeth McLaren, left England to go to Aklavik to work as a nurse. They married in 1952 in Kugluktuk and raised their children, Angela and John, there. Later they served in Fort Smith, Yellowknife and Iqaluit. John Sperry became Bishop of the Arctic in 1974 and retired in 1990.

Bishop Sperry did much more than one would expect from a person in such a position, Mr. Speaker. As well as ministering to his parishioners, John Sperry also learned the Inuinnaqtun language and then translated the Anglican Prayer Book and Hymnary, and the New Testament Gospels and Acts into this language. He served with many boards and organizations, including the Canadian Bible Society, the Boy Scouts of Canada, the Canadian Rangers and the Historical Advisory Council of the NWT.

Since his retirement in 1990, he has also written a wonderful book about his life in the North and the people he has worked with, which is called *Igloo Dwellers Were My Church*. He continues to be active in several ways, including being a chaplain in the Canadian Armed Forces and at Stanton Regional Hospital. Mr. Speaker, I can think of no person more deserving to receive the Order of Canada than Bishop John Sperry, and I ask the House to join me in offering our most sincere congratulations to him on this occasion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Item 3, Members' statements. Are there any further Members' statements? Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Not often do I get a chance to stand up in this House and recognize somebody from my constituency. In fact, I was told I have to be clear on this one. I have my constituency assistant in the gallery down here catching up on the activities in the Legislative Assembly, but she made a point to tell people that she is originally from Sachs Harbour, but she is in Inuvik while her husband is getting an education working out of my office. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to recognize Brenda Dillon from Sachs Harbour as a visitor in the gallery.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Steen. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to finish off Mr. Roland's recognition of people in the gallery. I would like to welcome and recognize Brenda Dillon in the gallery.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. I think we have 100 percent recognition in the gallery today.

-- Laughter

Welcome to the proceedings of your Assembly. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 351-14(5): Appointment of Federal Negotiator

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today goes to Minister Antoine, the Minister responsible for the Intergovernmental Forum. Mr. Speaker, as we sit down now, finally, to start discussing devolution and start discussing resource revenue sharing, I think that the federal government is finally coming around and at long last seen fit to appoint a head negotiator in Mr. Peterson.

I would like to ask the Minister if Mr. Peterson comes equipped with a full mandate to sit down and begin these discussions on devolution and resource revenue sharing. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The question is directed to the Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs, Mr. Antoine.

Return to Question 351-14(5): Appointment of Federal Negotiator

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the whole process of the intergovernmental forum process is finally getting off the ground. The federal government like the honourable Member has said, has settled finally on a negotiator. Mr. David Peterson, who used to be the Premier of Ontario and who is now doing legal work in Ontario has been appointed by Robert Nault, the Minister of DIAND to head up the federal government's negotiating team.

Mr. Peterson had already visited the Northwest Territories about a month ago for a meet and greet, to meet us and see who our negotiators are. There was work done during his visit. We have been ready. As the Government of the Northwest Territories we have our own negotiator, Hal Gerein. The Aboriginal Summit has Bob Simpson as their chief negotiator. They have their own team, we have our own team.

In meeting the federal government's team, the question of a full mandate came up. The process is to negotiate devolution from Ottawa to the Northwest Territories, the programs and services that still remain, as well as the resource revenue sharing, which is the net fiscal benefit to the Northwest Territories.

Upon meeting Mr. Peterson we learned that his mandate is to negotiate DIAND's programs and services to the Northwest Territories and we were hoping that he had the mandate from Finance Canada as well to deal with the net fiscal benefits.

Unfortunately, upon meeting Mr. Peterson we find that he does not have the mandate from Finance Canada so we do have a big concern here. The concern has already been relayed to federal Minister Manley last week by our Finance Minister, Joe Handley, and myself in Ottawa. We have to do some work with the Aboriginal Summit to see how we can move from here. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. supplementary, Mr. Bell.

Supplementary to Question 351-14(5): Appointment of Federal Negotiator

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Obviously a serious concern for all of us in this building and for all of the residents of the Northwest Territories, Mr. Speaker. I cannot imagine a government wanting to negotiate control, responsibility and authority for things like onshore oil and gas and minerals without the revenues that would flow from these activities, Mr. Speaker. It seems absolutely absurd. Would the Minister not agree?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The honourable Minister responsible for the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return to Question 351-14(5): Appointment of Federal Negotiator

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Yes, we agree that this is absurd. If that is all we are going to be negotiating then it is probably going to be a show stopper because the Aboriginal Summit are a third party to this Intergovernmental Forum process and the intention here is to talk about the resources and the revenues that flow from these resources. The intention is to negotiate this along with the management regime of DIAND.

It is a serious concern to all of us. It is early in the process. We have only had one meeting with the federal negotiator and it is obvious that we have some work to do with our partners, the aboriginal governments to address this issue with the federal government to see if we can expand his mandate or else try to get Finance Canada at a table, at a single table, that would be our preference and that is what we are going to be pursuing. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 351-14(5): Appointment of Federal Negotiator

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Do we have some indication then, if we are thinking of getting Finance Canada to the table on these issues for net fiscal benefit, are they willing to sit down at this same table and discuss resource revenue

sharing, not only with the GNWT but with the Aboriginal Summit? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The honourable Minister responsible for the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return to Question 351-14(5): Appointment of Federal Negotiator

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mr. Speaker, we had an initial meeting with Finance Minister Manley last week in Ottawa and following our initial meeting with the negotiator Mr. Peterson, we raised our concern that the Aboriginal Summit leaders are also involved in this process and the intention of this Intergovernmental Forum was to talk about devolution as well as resource revenue sharing. This was brought to the attention of Manley. He is fully aware of it. We intend to follow up with a letter from our Finance Minister to Manley to pursue that initiative.

This initial meeting, I think it was very positive. It got to his attention that we are very concerned about this and that we need to have someone from Finance Canada at this table along with David Peterson. Mr. Manley indicated that he will not delegate his authority of Finance Canada over to Canada to talk about net fiscal benefit, so there is a potential problem.

The other problem that we see is that in the Northwest Territories this Intergovernmental Forum is a government-to-government process with the federal government, the territorial government and the aboriginal governments. In the eyes of Minister Manley, his preference is to deal with the territorial government as a bilateral arrangement. That is a problem because our view here is that the aboriginal government want to participate equally with us with Finance Canada on this resource revenue sharing. So it is another area where we have some concern, a serious concern. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 351-14(5): Appointment of Federal Negotiator

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think clearly the last time Minister Nault, the Minister for DIAND was in town, he talked about a government to government to government relationship. A government to government to government negotiations. I think we took it at face value, Mr. Speaker. If there has been some slight of hand here and we are now finding out that we are willing to talk about X and not Y, or we will talk with you on this alone and we will not involve the Aboriginal Summit, as Mr. Antoine indicated, we have a potential show stopper here.

I would like some assurance from Mr. Antoine that we will be seeking help from the Prime Minister in addressing this so that this whole process does not come off the rails. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. I guess before we go any further I am going to start applying your rules, honourable Members. When it comes to questions, they should be short and to the point, concise and clearly put. The responses shall also be concise and clearly stated. I already have 11 people on my list and if they all ask three questions that take three minutes a piece we are going to exceed our time. Again, your

rules, so I will abide by this. Please, in order to accommodate everyone let's have shorter answers, shorter questions.

The honourable Minister responsible for the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return to Question 351-14(5): Appointment of Federal Negotiator

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this issue is an important and serious issue. This is something that we are undertaking with the federal government. I would like to have the opportunity to speak once again with Minister Nault on this issue. As well, I will be working with my colleagues in the Cabinet to address the issue with regard to bringing this matter to the attention of the Prime Minister and his Cabinet.

I just also want to further note that last night the Premier, the Finance Minister and myself had a meeting with the leaders of the Aboriginal Summit. It was a very good meeting and we discussed this issue thoroughly. We see that we have to work in partnership with each other to try to address this issue. We are in this together and we are dealing with Canada, and we need to coordinate our efforts and work closer on how we are going to address this issue that is a serious matter to all of us. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

Question 352-14(5): Cabinet Direction to the NWT Power Corporation

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, following on my Member's statement about the confusion that goes around the happenings of the Power Corporation, we found out yesterday that in fact this Cabinet had given a directive to begin looking at one rate zone for the Northwest Territories. That work had been taken on by this Cabinet and the Power Corporation.

I asked the Premier yesterday in unedited Hansard on page 2256 about the clear direction given or if there was a reissued directive to the Power Corporation. Mr. Kakfwi stated that, "Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I am not clear as to what form of communication took place between Cabinet and the Minister responsible and the chairman of the board in August." So even he at this point is not clear what that directive obviously meant in August.

Mr. Speaker, knowing that this is still hanging over us, and I am aware that when this issue first came out in the media I was concerned that there was no discussion about the subsidy structure that was in place, or what would be in place, I approached a couple of Ministers on that. I was not told at that point that this was off the rails and that there was direction not to proceed, so that is even confusing.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier, was the wording in the directive to the Power Corporation to stop work on a one-rate zone and pull it from the PUB? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

Return to Question 352-14(5): Cabinet Direction to the NWT Power Corporation

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Cabinet decision in August was made with the Cabinet understanding very clearly that it was our decision and our position that further work and consultation on the one-rate zone be deferred until after an energy strategy is completed. The wording of the Cabinet decision we thought was clear. We revisited it recently. Politically we knew the decision we made. I will not get into an argument that it meant this and to somebody else it meant that. I asked the staff and the Department of Justice to verify what it was we understood. It should be understood, I guess, that as far as I know there was no communication between the Minister who was directed to initiate action to implement that decision and the Power Corporation. As the Minister indicated yesterday, a copy of the decision was given to the chairman of the Power Corporation and he should have understood it. He did not, and that was the extent, as far as I know, of the communication. I think that is where the difficulty is.

It was not clear to the chair and the board of the Power Corporation that this, in fact, was a clear decision of Cabinet and that they should be aware of it and adjust their planning to be in line with that. There was no directive given as far as I know, other than a copy of the Cabinet decision being given to the chair of the Power Corporation. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 352-14(5): Cabinet Direction to the NWT Power Corporation

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I take it from the Premier's response that it was not clearly worded in the August 6th directive that the Power Corporation not proceed with filing its one rate zone to the PUB. Is that correct? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return to Question 352-14(5): Cabinet Direction to the NWT Power Corporation

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The wording did not give explicit direction to the Power Corporation. What the Cabinet decision said was that all work on the one rate zone, which was underway, should be deferred until after an energy strategy is completed and that the Minister responsible for the Power Corporation should initiate action to implement the decision which, to our understanding, meant the Minister should communicate the decision of Cabinet not to proceed with a one rate zone system at this time to the chair of the Power Corporation. I think that is where the difficulty arose. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 352-14(5): Cabinet Direction to the NWT Power Corporation

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again the fact is that the wording was not precise that the corporation not proceed to the PUB with the one-rate zone. Correct?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return to Question 352-14(5): Cabinet Direction to the NWT Power Corporation

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is correct. The Power Corporation read it in a way that because they were not given specific instructions by the Minister or by the Record of Decision that they did not feel they got clear and concise direction, and that is contrary to the Cabinet decision because in Cabinet we felt the decision that we made was clear and we expected the Minister to communicate that to the Power Corporation. I do not believe that was done. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 352-14(5): Cabinet Direction to the NWT Power Corporation

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think Hansard will clearly lay out the response that the Premier just gave me, but right now, is it fair to say that the Minister could have even possibly given clear direction to the board if the directive was not precise in its wording? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return to Question 352-14(5): Cabinet Direction to the NWT Power Corporation

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister had indicated yesterday in question period that there was a lack of clarity and perhaps he could have addressed that issue at that time in hindsight and offered to make that explicitly clear to the chairman. As he said, in hindsight that should have been done but it was not done. Thank you.

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

Question 353-14(5): Reassignment of NWT Power Corporation Portfolio

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, further to my little story that I attempted to tell this morning, I would like to make this my final statement on this issue regarding the NWT Power Corporation. I do believe it is very unfortunate what has transpired, and as the Member for Hay River South indicated I am not sure if we are going to get any more clarity by further questioning. What I think is important is that we move on and that we attempt to have some sort of fresh start and fresh beginning here.

Mr. Speaker, if anything has transpired in the last two days of debate is that the Minister responsible for the Power Corporation could have shown more due diligence. I have heard him questioning the clarity of the Cabinet direction and the Cabinet document, understanding of the board, and if anything else his public statements about the one-rate zone have...

MR. SPEAKER: Ms. Lee, I am going to interrupt you for a moment here. I just want to reiterate what the Speaker has said. Your rules indicate that questions should be clear and

concise. Members are going on reading from the past Hansards here which is taking a lot of time. I will not go back to this anymore. I am just going to cut you off and ask you for a question if this continues. Your question please. Ms. Lee, the floor is yours.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, given the lack of neutrality shown by the Minister and the confusion arising from all the debate, my question is to the Premier. Would the Premier consider reassigning the portfolio of the Power Corporation to another Minister who is less strong about this position? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

Return to Question 353-14(5): Reassignment of NWT Power Corporation Portfolio

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Cabinet meets everyday. I will be speaking with my Ministers about the issue, the concerns the public has of it, the concerns by Members. I think it is important for Minister Handley and myself to stand here the last couple of days to account for ourselves. I think we have done that. It is now time to come to some sort of a resolution and move on. I think we are prepared to do that. I will do what is necessary to ensure there is public confidence in the way we do our business. The Minister will also act accordingly. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 353-14(5): Reassignment of NWT Power Corporation Portfolio

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just have one supplementary and I failed to mention the importance of a Minister responsible for various portfolios to keep the Members apprised of major initiatives. A one-rate zone application is something that Members were not made aware of in due time and I would like to ask the Premier whether or not he would give that consideration as well in determining the conclusion of this issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return to Question 353-14(5): Reassignment of NWT Power Corporation Portfolio

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I have said, many things were said and done in the last few months and weeks that require all of us to look back and reflect on the things we have done, things we should have done, things we have said and things we should not have said. The important thing is to be as accountable as we can, to answer the questions the best we can.

At the end of the day, we have been elected as a Cabinet to work together and my colleagues and I are going to find some time today or next week to decide how best to keep working on your behalf. Reassignments, whatever it takes to make the adjustments if necessary to keep the confidence and momentum going so that we have the confidence of you as Ordinary Members will be considered and discussed. Thank you.

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

Question 354-14(5): GNWT Position on the Kyoto Protocol

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question this morning is for the Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, in relation to the national debate swirling about on the Kyoto question and whether our federal government and provincial governments can agree on supporting it.

We learned this morning, Mr. Speaker, that a long anticipated meeting is going to be delayed for a week. I would like to work my questions around that. Can the Minister tell the Assembly, what is the government's current position on the Kyoto initiative? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Antoine.

Return to Question 354-14(5): GNWT Position on the Kyoto Protocol

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories, we have been supporting the Kyoto Protocol. The reason for that is that we are told by people in the North that the climate is changing. We see it with our own eyes in a number of different things; shorter winters, or longer winters with this fall, and the migration routes of animals are changing, melting of permafrost. We actually see the temperature changing. Our elders tell us that this is happening.

As the Government of the Northwest Territories, we support this Kyoto Protocol for trying to do something with global warming. This is caused mainly by carbon dioxide emissions, mainly from the burning of fossil fuels. The reason why we support it is because it is the only coordinated global plan at this time that exists out there to control global greenhouse gas emissions. The responsibility for doing something about it, it is the only vehicle out there to try to deal with this issue.

We do not see any other way of trying to deal with this climate change out there. The Canadian government has the task of trying to implement a plan and we are waiting for this implementation. The honourable Member for Great Slave mentioned that a meeting, an important meeting that was supposed to be held this coming Monday on the 21st has been postponed a week to the 28th because consultations are still going on. We are anticipating some sort of implementation plan at that time. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 354-14(5): GNWT Position on the Kyoto Protocol

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly the principles behind the initiative have gained general support across this Assembly but there are more and more questions being raised across the country on the impact on the economy, jobs and industry. I am wondering if the Minister can give us

some sense, with the information we have at this time, of what the impact of ratifying and implementing The Kyoto accord could have on the Northwest Territories economy? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return to Question 354-14(5): GNWT Position on the Kyoto Protocol

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the federal government has been going through a number of different scenarios on how to implement this Kyoto Protocol. They are aiming to ratify a plan. The implementation plan is narrowed down to different options right now but there is consultation going on, the federal government is going around the country now holding a number of different meetings.

One of the reasons for the delay of the meeting on the 21st is that consultation has not been concluded. The long-awaited implementation plan by the federal government is going to be announced on the 28th now and we do not know the details of it.

Our position at the joint Ministers meeting has been that yes, we support the Kyoto Protocol but we need more information on how this is going to be implemented in Canada. The task of the territorial government would be to take whatever implementation is there and analyze it and determine from there what kind of impact it is going to have on industries in the North. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 354-14(5): GNWT Position on the Kyoto Protocol

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, I believe the federal government has indicated, or perhaps the Prime Minister has indicated, that he would like to see Canada ratify this accord by the end of the year. That does not give us a lot of time. What steps would the Minister take to get that information out in the Northwest Territories and help us understand what the consequences are and help us fine tune our position? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return to Question 354-14(5): GNWT Position on the Kyoto Protocol

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the people in the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development that are responsible for keeping an eye on this Kyoto Protocol process tell me that there are a number of different scenarios out there that shows there is going to be impact on certain industries. The main reason that is the huge amount of fossil fuels that we import in the North to run our communities and to run industry. That is going to be an impact. The actual implementation plan that the Prime Minister and his government want to implement and ratify is not known to us at this point in time. There are some scenarios that are

floating out there, but we are waiting on this implementation plan.

Once we get that on the 28th I would like to return back to the House here, if we have time, to pass on the information here and perhaps at that time, if we have time, we could have a debate about it and then we will develop a consultation plan to share with the people of the North. We have to share this information in the North because it is going to have an impact on the North. We do not know what kind of impact because we have not seen the implementation plan yet. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Final supplementary...no supplementary? Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

Question 355-14(5): Future Direction of the NWT Power Corporation

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have been around this issue of the Power Corporation for some time now and I think it is time to bring closure to this. My question is for the Minister responsible for the Power Corporation. I would like him to maybe let this House know what he is prepared to do from here on to go on with this issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation, Mr. Handley.

Return to Question 355-14(5): Future Direction of the NWT Power Corporation

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too agree that it is time to bring closure to this issue. We have had a long debate on it. I want to be absolutely clear, Mr. Speaker, that as Minister responsible for the Power Corporation I do accept responsibility for the way Cabinet's directions are communicated to the chair and to the board. That is my responsibility. I have to say though, nevertheless, that the direction that Cabinet gave to the board recently is clear and we stand by that, but we are not going to change our view in terms of revoking the board appointments.

I think we have to move on from here. I think the next steps include appointing a chair and board. I have sent letters out this morning to all of the Members and I appreciate your input into that process, as well as input from other sources. I think that once we have a new board in place -- and I have indicated to the Premier and to Cabinet that I will review the existing procedures and ensure that in future there will be clear channels of communication between myself as Minister responsible, between other members of Cabinet and particularly between myself and the chair and board for the Power Corporation.

You also certainly have my commitment that I will work to ensure that the government's direction on major policy issues is understood by the new board and the chairman. I think we have to work together to clear up that miscommunication that appears to have happened. I want to assure the Members that I do want to work closely with you. I intend to work closely with you, and certainly have always made myself and the boards that I represent open to sessions with AOC and GED or any other committee that we want to have. Mr. Speaker, I will do everything I can to ensure that communication is cleared up

and that we have a good board functioning and that they are clear on what their mandate is and the policy direction of the government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Supplementary, Mr. Delorey.

Supplementary to Question 355-14(5): Future Direction of the NWT Power Corporation

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to state for the record my confidence in the Minister responsible for the Power Corporation and will continue to do so. He has my support in that. I want to ask the Minister if he is confident that he has the ability to pick the board members. When they come forward to him, will he be the one making the decision on that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 355-14(5): Future Direction of the NWT Power Corporation

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, yes as I indicated I will and I have sent letters out to Members seeking nominations for this. I will work closely with Cabinet in the selection of those board members. If there are concerns about my own personal view with regard to what sort of rate structure is best then I want to assure you that, working with Cabinet, I will make sure that it is not simply my own selection. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Supplementary, Mr. Delorey.

Supplementary to Question 355-14(5): Future Direction of the NWT Power Corporation

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Where we are going from here with the new board and one-rate zone or whatever is put in is a different story. I am wondering about the appointment of the board and the appointment of the chair. Will the Minister be making that choice, or is that a Cabinet decision? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 355-14(5): Future Direction of the NWT Power Corporation

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, under the act that is clearly my authority but I certainly give you assurance that I will work with Cabinet in making those appointments. I will not make them on my own in isolation. I will work closely with Cabinet and hopefully achieve a consensus on a good strong board. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Final supplementary, Mr. Delorey.

Supplementary to Question 355-14(5): Future Direction of the NWT Power Corporation

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have not seen the letter from the Minister yet asking for nominations for the board, I assume it is in the mail boxes. What is the deadline for nominations for new board members? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 355-14(5): Future Direction of the NWT Power Corporation

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, the letter just went out this morning so Members may not have seen it yet. The deadline that I have asked you to send me nominations or resumes of people you are interested in putting forward is November 1st. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Lafferty.

Question 356-14(5): Impact Benefit Agreement Payments

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, the Honourable Jake Ootes. In my Member's statement I explained how impact benefit agreements are modern day treaties and as such these agreements are protected under a Human Rights Act. Mr. Speaker, it can be said that it is a breach of the Human Rights Act for this department to claw back IBA payments from income support recipients. I would like to ask the Minister if his department has taken any steps to ensure that the claw backs do not violate the Human Rights Act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Return to Question 356-14(5): Impact Benefit Agreement Payments

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Human Rights Act as we know is before the House and we do not see that we are violating the act as proposed. However, the act is not in effect yet, I should emphasize, because it is before this House. We do have, as previously stated, an interpretation on how to treat impact benefit agreements. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 356-14(5): Impact Benefit Agreement Payments

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The income support policies fall under the Social Assistance Act which came into effect in 1990. This was before IBAs and participation agreements existed in the North. Will the Minister change the income support policies so that the relationship between land claims and IBAs is recognized? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return to Question 356-14(5): Impact Benefit Agreement Payments

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week we had an opportunity to brief Members on the Social Assistance Act with regard to income support. We had a fairly extensive briefing where we outlined some of the concerns that we had with regard to our areas where we administer the income support side. We pointed out that one of the areas of concern is the relationship to the productive choice area. What is happening is that our income support levels, of course, are at a certain level that allow people to remain on income support and between the level of those who are the working poor there is a very fine line there. We have been very concerned as to how to treat areas that individuals, and issues, where people want us to change how to treat the certain areas of payments. This has been of concern to us. We are interested in continuing to look at this, Mr. Speaker, with the provision of course that we have to be extremely concerned about the level of income support payments that we make, strictly from the point of view of, does it then defeat our productive choice policy?

We have always taken that into consideration when we have concerned ourselves with IBAs and spousal support payments and bingo winnings. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 356-14(5): Impact Benefit Agreement Payments

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As bingo winnings are not protected under treaty entitlement, it is not the same as IBA payments. I would like to ask the Minister, if this is a decision of Cabinet or the department to continue with the clawbacks from IBA payments. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return to Question 356-14(5): Impact Benefit Agreement Payments

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The social assistance regulations has an area called unearned income, and it has always been treated as unearned income, Mr. Speaker. The legal opinion that we had received, a summary of which we passed on to the Member, indicated that we were correct in that process.

One of the reasons why this was done was because we have no access to the IBA agreements, which is considered a private company, and the beneficiaries, the Dogrib community people. We had no information of how to access the information contained in the agreement or what the agreement says.

I should state though, Mr. Speaker, that because IBA arrangements have extrinsic evidence that we can possibly consider, I am working on a process that will take into account

these payments. I need to take that forward to Cabinet and to the FMB to take into consideration. Also, I am checking with Aboriginal Affairs to see what implications it might have in order to proceed with recognizing IBAs and looking at not deducting that from payments.

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

Supplementary to Question 356-14(5): Impact Benefit Agreement Payments

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister did not answer my question. I would like to ask him again if the decision was made by Cabinet or the department to not recognize the treaty entitlements of IBAs as they are implemented? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return to Question 356-14(5): Impact Benefit Agreement Payments

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The decision was done in relationship to the regulations. Under the regulations it was classed as unearned income so we proceeded on that basis. As I stated though, we are looking at the moment at considering the extrinsic evidence that may be there and I want to check with Aboriginal Affairs to see if we can proceed with recognizing the IBAs as not having to deduct them from payments. Therefore, we are prepared to open the door and look at this. Thank you.

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

Question 357-14(5): Negotiating Compensation for Nurses

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for the Public Service. Mr. Speaker, health care workers, in particular nurses and allied health care workers have asked that we consider implementing a separate bargaining unit to deal with them. They believe that this would allow the government to deal with their concerns separately and in a more concise fashion.

Will the Minister responsible for the Public Service consider implementing a separate bargaining unit for health care workers?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat, Mr. Handley.

Return to Question 357-14(5): Negotiating Compensation for Nurses

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I have been approached by the health care workers on that issue. The difficulty we have is that under legislation we are not allowed to set up a separate bargaining unit for the purposes of simply paying someone differently. It just does not allow it to be done legally. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 357-14(5): Negotiating Compensation for Nurses

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think nurses and allied health care workers believe that it is more than just an issue of pay, it is an issue of understanding their concerns about their working conditions. They may not be the same as those in other areas. The Minister has right now a separate table going for the Power Corporation. What is the difference? Why could we not have a separate table going for nurses and allied health care workers just as we do for the Power Corporation?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 357-14(5): Negotiating Compensation for Nurses

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, certainly if there is a way around that then I am open to doing it. I am not sure on the advice that we could do it, I am not sure that the Power Corporation arrangement necessarily sets a precedent but I am open to it. The advice that I have received though is that we cannot do that simply for pay and benefits. When I said pay earlier I meant pay and benefits as well. That includes of course working conditions and shifts and that sort of thing.

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

Supplementary to Question 357-14(5): Negotiating Compensation for Nurses

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I find it hard to understand how the Power Corporation, being different from other government workers and nurses and allied health care workers being separate. Teachers have their own association.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister rather than saying he does not believe something, will he undertake to find out whether or not we can in fact set up a separate bargaining unit for nurses and Allied health care workers and report back to this House in the next week?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 357-14(5): Negotiating Compensation for Nurses

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have been around this one for a few months now with the health workers. We have had a couple of meetings. They have had meetings with the Minister of Health. They are looking at other alternatives besides setting up a separate bargaining unit, they have asked about a separate table. We are looking at what the options will be.

Mr. Speaker, I can look into this further and get back to this House before the end of next week. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 357-14(5): Negotiating Compensation for Nurses

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I welcome the Minister's commitment to doing that because I know to date I have seen nothing convincing to prove to me that we could not do such a thing as set up a separate bargaining unit.

Has the Minister also looked into reviewing the Hay job descriptions and the ratings that are found in there for nurses and allied health care workers?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 357-14(5): Negotiating Compensation for Nurses

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, that is an ongoing process and I will have to check with the department on how recently they have done it, but I can tell you certainly that the rating of the nurses, the health care workers and other related positions have all been reviewed recently. Thank you.

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

Question 358-14(5): Alternative to Devolution Negotiation

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question was intended for the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, however in his absence I will direct my questions to the Premier.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Nitah. May I draw your attention to the rule that you do not refer to the absence of any Member in the House. Mr. Nitah, you have the floor.

MR. NITAH: I apologize for that, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier regarding the work of the Intergovernmental Forum. Mr. Speaker, \$70 billion contributions to the GDP, 270,000 years of employment for Canadians does not seem to grasp the interest of Canadians south of the 60th parallel, Mr. Speaker.

In our discussions with the federal and aboriginal governments in the work of the Intergovernmental Forum, where we know now the financial aspects of the negotiations are not going to be included at the same table, where it is a great deal when we know the great challenges and the high cost of doing business in the Northwest Territories, especially when they are implementing the document, Towards a Better Tomorrow, Mr. Speaker.

Canadians south of 60 view us as a colony, so maybe, Mr. Speaker, it would be a good idea to recommend that we send our own King Joe down to Canada...

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Nitah, may I have a question, please?

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Manley wants to...(inaudible)...a Canadian monarchy, so maybe King Joe would work, but...

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Nitah, may I have a question, please, or else I will rule you out of order -- a question, please.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask, do we have an alternative plan to the devolution negotiations, such as confederation, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of RWED will take the question.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The Premier is exercising his prerogative and passing it to Minister Antoine.

Return to Question 358-14(5): Alternative to Devolution Negotiation

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we do not have an alternative approach, except trying to work with what we have. Throughout Canadian history, how Canada was formed, and as other provinces gain more responsibility, they take over control over their own resources, their lands and minerals and their waters. We as a Territory have been endeavouring to take over more control -- rightful control -- of our own lands and waters and minerals from the Canadian government. The only process that is there is through negotiations with the federal government. Through this Intergovernmental Forum, we agreed to get involved in this process. We are moving along on this process. As we get more and more involved, like the appointment of a negotiator, David Peterson, we realize the mandate is not a full mandate, so we have to work with the chiefs and the leaders to try to see if we could improve on this mandate. That is the only alternative we have. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Supplementary, Mr. Nitah.

Supplementary to Question 358-14(5): Alternative to Devolution Negotiation

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the first day back in session, my colleague, Bill Braden, has said that you cannot use the same line of thinking to solve the problem that the thinking created. We have been down this road before, Mr. Speaker. Why can we not find an alternative method of negotiating...(inaudible)...so that we can get a better deal than what we are getting? Canada is not listening to us. We are 40,00 people and hey, that is one neighbourhood to them. Maybe we should start looking at an alternative way of dealing with Canada.

I would like to ask the Minister, will he direct his department and have discussions amongst his Cabinet colleagues that maybe we should start looking for alternative methods so that we could put pressure on government? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return to Question 358-14(5): Alternative to Devolution Negotiation

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have already started to try to find ways to try to approach this issue. Like I indicated earlier on in my response to another Member here, we did have a dinner meeting with the Aboriginal Summit leaders. Most of the key leaders were there, and the problem or the concern that we have with this mandate and the way it is going to go is raised. We want to get the best deal for the people in the North. We need to get every dollar of every resource that we could. That is the intention on this process. We are in this process with the aboriginal government leaders. We have agreed that we need to work closer in cooperation with each other, and we need to find ways on how to move this issue forward. I think a lot of it has to do with trying to educate people in the federal government, people in the south. A lot of people in the south do not really know who we are and what we are aspiring to be. I think that is our intention, to try to find a way to do that.

The other way is that if we do not have a full mandate, we have to consider whether it is worth continuing in this process. I guess you asked for alternatives. We would like to pursue this Intergovernmental Forum, but we have a lot of work ahead of us on how to get our message across to the federal government and the different Ministers, and people in the south. That is what we intend to do. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Supplementary, Mr. Nitah.

Supplementary to Question 358-14(5): Alternative to Devolution Negotiation

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wonder if Mr. Peterson will take a cut in half of his pay because he is only doing half the work. I would like to ask the Minister, what is the plan of this government and the Aboriginal Summit if the federal government does not change their position on their mandate? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return to Question 358-14(5): Alternative to Devolution Negotiation

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we will cross that bridge once we get there. At this point in time, it is early on in the mandate and trying to find out with David Peterson where and how we are going to proceed and...(inaudible)...and Finance Canada Minister, the federal Minister Manley has also indicated some willingness to explore this area. So there are some positive messages there that we have to develop on. That is how we are going to pursue it. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Final supplementary, Mr. Nitah.

Supplementary to Question 358-14(5): Alternative to Devolution Negotiation

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in failing that, I still think that we send our own monarch down there,

maybe we will have a better chance. However, I would like to ask the Minister, what is the government doing, what is the Aboriginal Summit and the GNWT doing to educate southerners? Are we putting ads in papers? Are we putting ads on television, mass media? Maybe we should start talking to other governments like Alberta to get more of a unity going. What is this government doing to educate southern Canadians so that they know what we can contribute to their livelihoods and create good will amongst all people of Canada?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return to Question 358-14(5): Alternative to Devolution Negotiation

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of the suggestions raised last night is that if the aboriginal leaders from the summit will be available to meet with Cabinet, and maybe with the Members of the Legislative Assembly, to see how we could work together closer. That was one suggestion that was raised. The other one was talking about a joint lobbying effort. As you know, our government and Ministers have been lobbying different Ministers in Ottawa. There is a business group here, a coalition that is also lobbying in Ottawa. I think the Aboriginal Summit leaders, along with members of this government and MLAs that we lobby in Ottawa and southern Canada to bring exposure to what we are doing up here. I think there are some areas where our officials would explore. Officials were told to come out with some options on how to proceed from here. There is talk of doing a joint letter between the Aboriginal Summit and this government to both Manley and Nault, so there are different options that we are already exploring. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

Question 359-14(5): Robertson Report on Power Generation and Distribution

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation, Mr. Handley. Mr. Speaker, under the existing NWT Power Corporation Act, under section 8(3), the board shall direct the business of the corporation and may exercise its power to perform those duties under the Corporation Act and regulations. Also, Mr. Speaker, it states under section 4 that the board, in exercising its power in performing its duties and the powers and duties of the corporation under the act and regulations, shall act in accordance with the direction of policy guidelines that may be in place from time to time and issued by the Executive Council.

My question to the Minister is, a lot of time and emphasis was put on the Robertson report in regard to looking at energy in the Northwest Territories, looking at alternatives and trying to find ways of ensuring that we have a secure, safe source of power and energy in the Northwest Territories. I would like to ask the Minister, why is it that this government has not taken the Robertson report, which was tabled in this House in November, and basically proceeded to implement that report?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation, Mr. Handley.

Return to Question 359-14(5): Robertson Report on Power Generation and Distribution

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, our intention, for the last year, at least, has been that we need to have the Robertson report and the energy strategy coordinated, so that we have one comprehensive strategy in terms of how we are managing all of our energy issues, including the Power Corporation. Without that, we stand the risk of either pre-empting some things or having two reports or two strategies going in different directions. So the reason there has been to slow down the Robertson report until the energy strategy is available for discussion. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 359-14(5): Robertson Report on Power Generation and Distribution

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as we all know the energy strategy is nowhere in sight, yet we have a report that was tabled in this House two years ago and nothing is being done. I would like to ask the Minister, is it just smoke and mirrors that is allowing us to delay a decision of this government which will benefit the people of the Northwest Territories? Why is it that we are putting all our eggs in one basket with regard to the energy strategy knowing that there is already a report tabled in this House and nothing has been done with that report?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 359-14(5): Robertson Report on Power Generation and Distribution

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I realize that it has been some time since the Robertson report was done. The recommendations in it I think are as valid today as they were at that time. They are not getting outdated or anything, so they are there. At the same time we did the Robertson report, or shortly after, there was a decision by Cabinet that we needed a broader framework within which to look at energy issues. The energy strategy exercise was begun a little over a year ago and that one is being worked on. I realize the frustration of not seeing it yet, but hopefully it will be here in the near future so that we can look at both the Robertson report and the energy strategy well within the life of this government. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 359-14(5): Robertson Report on Power Generation and Distribution

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with regard to the responsibility for the energy strategy it falls under the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, yet the Minister responsible for the Power Corporation is the department that implemented the Robertson report. So directly the report was directed by your department

to carry out the review of the power generation in the Northwest Territories. The energy strategy has nothing to do with your department, so why is it that your department that is responsible for the Robertson report is not implementing it?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 359-14(5): Robertson Report on Power Generation and Distribution

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned yesterday, in October 2001 there was direction by Cabinet for the Minister responsible for the Power Corporation to carry on with public consultations on the various recommendations in the Robertson report. In August 2002, looking at where we were with the consultation on that one and the energy strategy, there was direction from the Executive Council of Cabinet that we wait until we have the energy strategy in our hands before we proceed with further consultation. It was by direction from Cabinet. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 359-14(5): Robertson Report on Power Generation and Distribution

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as we all know the Robertson report came to light because of the Hay River franchise issue which was a hotly debated issue in this House. I think with regard to the reason for it, it also looked at the question of the one-rate zone and that process was brought forth to Members of this House through our committee structure. There were workshops held in the different regions. That process was well on its way before we even considered the energy strategy, so why is it that now all of a sudden when we have a process in place, we have consultation with committees of the House, we have public meetings in our regions and workshops, and then an application has been filed and this government, at the eleventh hour, again intervenes in a process that is on its way using the excuse that we are waiting for an energy strategy? Why are we, as a government, interfering with a process at this time knowing that...

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko, the question is there. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 359-14(5): Robertson Report on Power Generation and Distribution

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said, the reason was that we have the Robertson report with a set of recommendations with regard to hydro generation and distribution and so on. Then there was a need to look at our energy policy on a more broad basis. There was a Cabinet decision in August to put a hold on further consultation on the Robertson report until we saw what was coming in the energy strategy. Mr. Speaker, that was directed by Cabinet and the reasoning for it is an issue which may be more properly directed to the Premier. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. The time for question period has ended. The chair recognizes the honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to deal with item 7.

MR. SPEAKER: We have not reached item 7 yet, that is written questions. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to go to item 6.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Thank you. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 6, oral questions. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Sorry, the chair did not hear the nay.

AN HON. MEMBER: Nay.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The chair has now heard a nay. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to the opening address. Item 10, petitions. Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motion for the first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 15: NOTICES OF MOTION FOR THE FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 28: An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, No. 2

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, October 21, 2002, I will move that Bill 28, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, No.2, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 15, notices of motion for the first reading of bills. The chair recognizes the honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to go back to item 14.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 14, notices of motion. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Krutko.

REVERT TO ITEM 14: NOTICES OF MOTION

Motion 12-14(5): Appointment of Directors to the Northwest Territories Power Corporation

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, October 21, 2002, I will move the following motion. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for North Slave, that the Legislative Assembly recommend to the Executive Council that the Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation, in accordance with section 9 of the Northwest Territories Power Corporation Act, reinstate the six directors that were members of the board.

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

Item 16, motions. There are no motions. Item 17, first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 17: FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 24: An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, that Bill 24, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. We have a motion. The motion is in order. All those in favour. Thank you. All those opposed. The motion is carried. Bill 24 has had first reading. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters; Tabled Document 35-14(5), and that is it with Mr. Lafferty in the chair.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. We have one item on the table, Tabled Document 35-14(5), Social Agenda, A Draft for the People of the Northwest Territories. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I move that we report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): The motion is in order. It is not debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. I will rise to report progress.

MR. SPEAKER: The House will come back to order. Item 20, report of committee of the whole. Mr. Lafferty.

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 35-14(5) and would like to report progress. I move that the report of the committee of the whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Do we have a seconder for the motion? The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey, seconds the motion. The motion is in order. All those in favour? Thank you. All those opposed? Thank you. The motion is carried. Item 21, third reading of bills. The honourable Minister responsible for Justice, Mr. Allen.

ITEM 21: THIRD READING OF BILLS

Bill 16: Interjurisdictional Support Orders Act

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Mr. Speaker,

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Weledeh, that Bill 16, Interjurisdictional Support Orders Act, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Allen. We have a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. All those in favour of the motion, please signify. All those opposed? Thank you. The motion is carried. Bill 16 has had third reading. Item 21, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Mr. Speaker, meetings of the Standing Committees on Social Programs and Governance and Economic Development at 12:30 p.m. today; Monday morning at 9:00 a.m. on the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight and 10:30 a.m. again of the Standing Committees on Social Programs and Governance and Economic Development.

Orders of the Day for Monday, October 21, 2002:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motion
15. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
 - Motion 12-14(5), Appointment of Directors to the Northwest Territories Power Corporation
17. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 20, Legal Registries Statutes Amendment Act
 - Bill 25, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2001-2002
 - Bill 26, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2002-2003
 - Bill 27, An Act to Amend the Elections Act, No. 2
 - Bill 28, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, No. 2

18. Second Reading of Bills
 - Bill 24, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Tabled Document 35-14(5), Social Agenda: A Draft for People of the Northwest Territories
 - Bill 1, Human Rights Act
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 Monday, October 21, at 1:30 p.m.

-- ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

